

**MAHARASHTRA STATE
GAZETTEER**

MAHARASHTRA STATE GAZETTEER



Government of Maharashtra

[Price—Rs. 4]

MAHARASHTRA—LAND AND ITS PEOPLE



BOMBAY

DIRECTORATE OF GOVERNMENT PRINTING, STATIONERY AND
PUBLICATIONS, MAHARASHTRA STATE

1968

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MAHARASHTRA STATE GAZETTEERS GENERAL SERIES

Maharashtra—Land and Its People

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PREFACE

THIS VOLUME entitled "Maharashtra—Land and its People" is one of the seven General Volumes proposed to be published by the Gazetteers Department. The work was entrusted to Dr. (Mrs.) I. Karve, Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute, Poona, and a scholar of international repute. I am extremely thankful to her for her excellent contribution.

I am also thankful to Joint Editor, Dr. B. G. Kunte and other members of the staff for the assistance rendered by them in the preparation of the press copy and correction of proofs. My thanks are also due to Shri J. W. D'Souza, Director, Government Printing and Stationery and Publications, Bombay, and Shri S. A. Sapre, Manager and other staff of the Government Central Press, Bombay.

P. SESHU MADHAV RAO,
Executive Editor and Secretary.

BOMBAY :

September 1968.

INTRODUCTION

THIS WORK was commissioned by the Editor of the Maharashtra Gazetteers about five years ago, but for various reasons I could not take it in hand till 1965. Even after that I was not sure of its completion because of many unforeseen claims on my time. It has at last been finished, thanks mostly to the perseverance and co-operation of Shri Setu Madhavrao Pagadi, Executive Editor and Secretary, Gazetteers Department and Dr. Kunte, Joint Editor. Dr. Kunte, went through the whole manuscript, suggested many changes and pointed out certain errors which were corrected. Dr. Kunte also helped in making and tracing the maps. Sincere thanks are due to both of them and to my students, Dr. Savitri Sahani, Dr. Kailash Malhotra and Mr. G. V. Dingre for valuable help. I must not forget also the help and suggestions of my family in reading the manuscript.

POONA :
August 1968.
Krishnashtami and
Independence Day.

I. KARVE.

INTRODUCTORY

THE DELINEATION OF A CULTURAL AREA is always a difficult task. The concept 'cultural area' is very elastic. Such an area may vary from a few villages to whole regions containing a few million people. The size of the cultural area depends on the particular feature or features which one wants to study. Such an area is almost never clear cut; it tangles with neighbouring areas. It was therefore necessary to choose one important social factor like language for describing a large cultural region. Language makes communication easy and so transfers cultural features from one community to another. In the same linguistic area this transfer is easier than across linguistic borders. Communication of this type over a longer period creates a number of common features over wider areas. The formation of a cultural area is a matter of historical processes. The acquisition, acceptance, consolidation and spread of cultural features are of importance in deciding the formation of a cultural region.

A cultural region must be studied in both the time and the space dimensions. A cultural region by its very nature is part of a greater cultural area and one has to give a sketch of the greater area for a better understanding of the cultural region within it chosen for study. India is the greater cultural area in this respect and a very sketchy account is given below, as a background to the understanding of Maharashtra.

Many people and many cultures have contributed to what is now the common culture of the Indian sub-continent. Three contributions stand out as distinctly recognizable today. One is the much known and studied tradition of the people speaking Sanskritic languages. The second is an equally well-known and studied tradition of the Dravidian speaking people, and the third, which is not so well realised nor so well studied, is the tradition of the Mundari speaking people. Three language families are spoken in three separate parts of India. There are parts in the north and west where we meet only the Sanskritic speaking people. In the deep south there is a solid mass of Dravidian speaking people. The region from the eastern Himalayas to the eastern part of Andhra, south-western Bengal and Orissa is now shared by people speaking the Mundari-Mon-Khmer languages with people speaking one of the Tibeto-Burman group, the Sanskritic group or the Dravidian group of languages.

The Mundari speaking people, who do not occupy one contiguous region today, represent remnants of a once solid, widespread occupation. From their legends, it appears that they had occupied land much further westward than they do today. Even now, the

Korkus of the Berar region are cut off from the other, more eastern Mundari groups. It is conceivable that these people have been pushed to their present habitat by the oncoming Sanskritic and Dravidian speaking peoples whose inroads have made them into scattered linguistic islands. These people on the Indian mainland show affinities with the Mon and Khmer languages which we find as remnant through Burma and Cambodia right up to the Pacific seaboard.

Thus the Mundaris might be a composite people who had introduced the eastern neolithic age and rice cultivation into India. India may thus be viewed as the meeting place of three cultural areas: (1) north-western India as a southern continuation of the central Asiatic pastoral people of the steppes; (2) eastern India as the western continuation of the pre or proto-Mongoloid people who occupied the land from South China to Central Burma, reaching right up to the Pacific seaboard; (3) Dravidian India, which might be a north-western projection of the world of South-east Asia and the Pacific islands. Besides these three peoples, one has traces of an ancient population which can be termed Veddid-Australoid and which is found among certain primitive people and among all castes along the west coast. Another people who have penetrated into India rather recently are the Tibeto-Burman speaking people. These recent immigrants from the north have penetrated into Burma also. Maharashtra does not seem to have any trace of these last immigrants. In each cultural feature Maharashtra presents a picture of a thorough mingling of the Sanskritic and the Dravidian. One primitive tribe in north-central Maharashtra is called Korku. They speak a Mundari language and their presence so far westward is an indication of how far the Mundari people might once have spread. The presence of small-statured, thin-limbed, scanty-haired people on the west coast is an unmistakable proof of the presence of Australoid-Veddid people. Thus all the older folk strains and cultures are represented in Maharashtra. What part of the present cultural and physical Maharashtra is the exact contribution of each of these four people cannot be judged from the data in hand, but it would be possible to make intelligent guesses if anthropological investigations are carried out intensively in a wide area.

As regards the time element, the time at which the Vedic people came into India is known to be between 2000-1500 B.C. Their language spread from the sub-Himalayan regions southwards up to the banks of the Narmada in a solid sweep, and then, from the Narmada to the middle reaches of the Godavari, the upper reaches of the Krishna, and on the coast up to the border of Kerala. The only primitive tribe which speaks a Sanskritic language are the Bhils, and they are completely surrounded by Sanskritic languages having established literatures. We do not know at which time the modern Dravidian people came into India. At the beginning of the Christian era they were already well-established with a glorious literary tradition. We do not know how far back we can trace their advent.

We do not even know whether the people who wrote the literature were the original speakers of that language or if they took the language from some indigenous people. This latter difficulty arises because of the present spread of the Dravidian languages. The literary Dravidian languages belong only to the south. There are however independent jungle tribes which are found from the high ranges of Travancore in the extreme south-west, to north-eastwards almost to the banks of the Ganges through a belt of hills and forests. This tribal region cuts across the literary Dravidian people. These tribes speak different Dravidian languages which are not dialects of the literary languages but have an independent status. Neither can they be characterised as older forms of a language from which modern literary Dravidian languages have evolved. This makes difficult any consideration of the time of arrival of the Dravidians in India or their evolution.

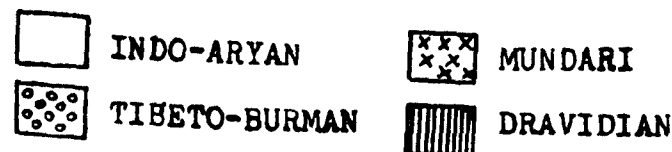
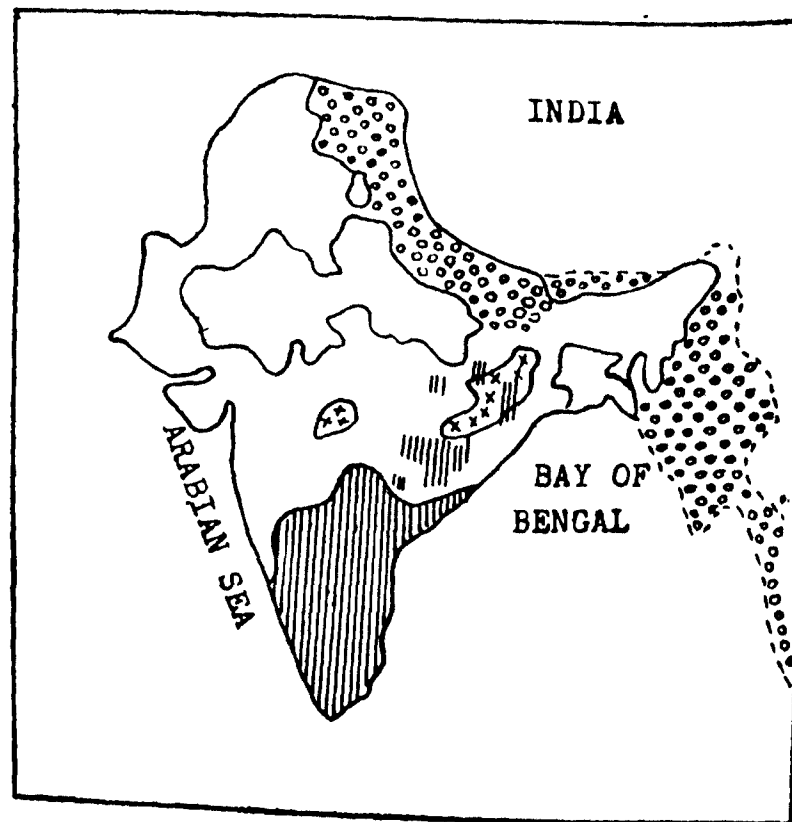
If India is bifurcated diagonally from South-west to North-east, we find roughly that the left hand triangle, broad in the North and tapering towards the South is occupied by people speaking Sanskritic languages; also that only one language amongst them, namely Bhili, has no literature. The right hand triangle with its base in the South and apex in the North is occupied by people speaking Dravidian languages, out of which only four are literary languages; the remaining 17 are only spoken. In this triangle Mundari and Tibeto-Burman languages are also spoken. This will become clear from the table below:

TABLE NO. 1

LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN INDIA

Name of the Language Family	Number of standard literary languages	Number of non-literary languages spoken by Presents and Primitives	Total
1. Indo-Aryan ...	11	17	28
2. Dravidian ...	4	17	21
3. Mundari (Austro-Asiatic).	1	5	6
4. Tibeto-Burman ...	2	25	27

The map* given below gives an idea of the distribution of the language families in India :



The Mundari people seem to be associated with the eastern neolithic cultures. While western neolithic cultures were associated with domestication of animals and pastoral pursuits, the eastern neolithic cultures have no animal husbandry associated with them. All the people speaking Mundari languages are preliterate. The time for the Mundari people or the penetration of the eastern neolithic industries into India has not been fixed with any certainty. They might have been there certainly before the Aryans and possibly before the Dravidians. This extremely sketchy picture of the whole of India is given as a background to the description of one region, namely Maharashtra, so as to gain a proper perspective of its rise, its place and its role in India.

*This map has been prepared by superimposition of four maps from Census of India, 1931, Vol. 1, Chap. X, pp. 365 & 367.

CHAPTER 1—MAHARASHTRA—THE LAND

CHAPTER 1.

Maharashtra —The Land.

THE LAND WHERE MARATHI IS SPOKEN TODAY occupies a significant position in India. It is the southernmost region where a Sanskrit language is spoken. Its four sides are : 825 km. in the west, bounded by the Arabian Sea ; 1725 km. in the north, bounded by the States of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh where Gujarati and Hindi are spoken respectively ; 750 km. in the east, bounded also by Madhya Pradesh, but inhabited predominantly by the jungle tribes ; and 1875 km. in the south, bounded by Andhra and Karnataka (Mysore State) where Telugu and Kannada are spoken. These boundaries are also those of Maharashtra State. If Goa, where Marathi is spoken, is added, then the western boundary must be extended southwards by about 100 km. Two of its boundaries touch linguistic areas belonging respectively to the northern Sanskrit family and the southern Dravidian family (see map). It is thus a culture-contact region *par excellence* and this fact gives a peculiar character to the culture of the Maratha people. Maharashtra State represents about 1/10th of the area of India (in sq. miles, India—1,228,435 ; Maharashtra—118,280) and about 1/11th of India's total population, i.e., India—439,234,771 ; Maharashtra—39,553,718.

MAHARASHTRA IN BHARAT

1/10th Land area of India = Maharashtra
1/11th Population of India = Maharashtra



CHAPTER 1.

Maharashtra
— The Land.

The river Narmada flowing from Amarkantak hills in the east to the Arabian sea in the west can be considered as the dividing line between North India drained by the Gangetic basin, and Peninsular India. Only a few miles of the Narmada form part of the north-western boundary of Maharashtra. The southern slope of the hill ranges which divides valleys of the Narmada and the Tapi bound Maharashtra in the North central region. On the coastal side of this region we have the narrow coastal strip of Western India, divided between four linguistic regions from North to South, namely Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnatak and Kerala. The Tapi meets the Arabian sea in the coastal area belonging to Gujarat. In this strip where north-south access is easy, the linguistic boundaries between Maharashtra and Gujarat are none too clear. Towards the north-east, Maharashtra again merges into a plain called the Chhattisgarh plateau before reaching the southern hills which divide it from Orissa and Andhra. This Eastern plain also has given free access to people from the north to south and *vice versa*. At both these ends of Maharashtra, that is, north-western and north-eastern there are relatively thick jungles inhabited by primitive tribes. Though superficially there are certain similarities between north-west and north-east Maharashtra, there are some very fundamental differences, geographically and also from the point of view of cultural history. In the west the Sanskritic languages have penetrated down the coast southward almost upto Mangalore. This point is the southernmost extension of the Sanskritic languages on the Indian mainland. This apparently represents the cultural fact that people speaking northern languages did not find any great resistance to their penetration southward in the west. The eastern forested plain lies mainly inland, separated from the eastern coastal plain by low hill ranges called the Eastern Ghats. The Marathi-speaking people and, further eastward, the Uria-speaking people do not seem to have penetrated beyond the Godavari. This may be due to the fact that the jungle on this side offered a greater resistance to the movement towards the south. The story of the *Ramayana* and the inscription of Samudragupta show that great resistance was offered to the northern Sanskritic people by southern kingdoms of civilized people and of jungle-folk. It is the middle boundary which is difficult and offers rather formidable barriers. The Vindhyan ranges in the north, the single deep gorge of the river Narmada and the Satpuda ranges of the south constitute a triple barrier. This barrier, however, contains many passes, the most famous being the Burhanpur¹ Pass on the Tapi and the Bhedaghat Pass further eastwards on the Narmada. The Burhanpur Pass is well-marked by Buddhist caves (the Bagh Pittalkhora and Ajanta Caves). Very probably, this was the great road to the south (*Dakshinapatha*) mentioned in the Nala story of *Mahabharata*. As one comes southwards, it is flanked on the west by a great massif called Asirgarh (Ahirgarh) and further to the east Gwalgarh (Gawilgarh). One enters straight into

1. The name Burhanpur of the township is derived from the name Burhan-din Sharif, a Sufi Saint, d. 1337-38.

landesh and goes into the heart of Maharashtra over a Ghat (hill road) to Ajanta caves and then onwards to Pratishthan (modern Patthan, near Aurangabad), the capital of ancient Maharashtra. In historical times, Alauddin Khalji penetrated southwards. Alauddin avoided the straight road from Burhanpur, went eastwards to Gawilgarh, then through Ellinipur and the Purna valley to Devgiri (Daulatabad), the capital of the Yadava Kingdom. It was through the Burhanpur Pass that the Marathas later reached and conquered Dhar, Dewas, Indore, Gwalior and Jhansi and through this Pass the Peshwas reached Delhi. The Central Railway (former Great Indian Peninsula Railway) from Delhi through Gwalior, Jhansi, Gwalior, Khandwa to Jalgaon is simply a modern information of an ancient line of communication. The railway was established in British times when the centre of gravity had shifted from ancient Pratishthan to the west coast of Bombay; and the terminal is Bombay and not another Pratishthan. The southern boundary of Maharashtra is the shortest, very heavily forested and inhabited mostly by primitive peoples.

The southern boundary is really a south-eastern boundary. It runs continuously southward from north-east to south-west. On the whole length of this boundary there is very access between Maharashtra and Karnatak on the one side and Maharashtra on the other.

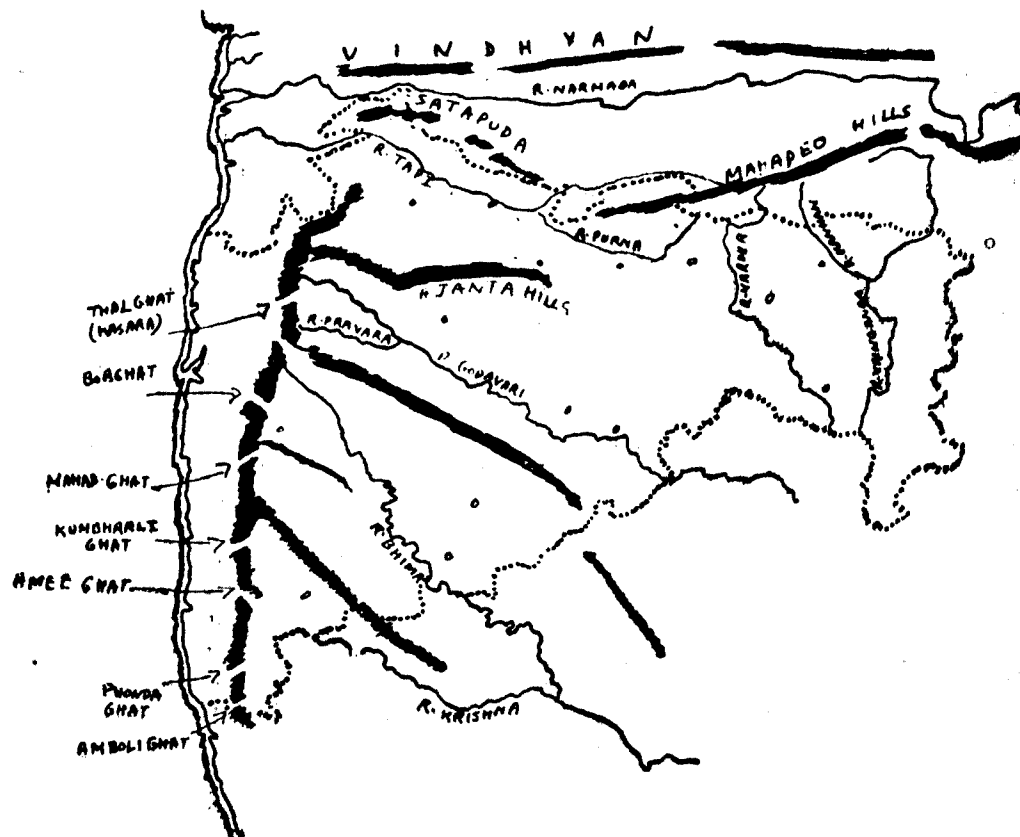
The rivers Krishna, Bhima and Tungabhadra which flow from west to east are divided in such a way that very small portion of the Krishna flows through Maharashtra and then enters into Karnatak. Two-thirds of the Bhima flows through Maharashtra and then enters into Karnatak. About half of the Tungabhadra flows through Maharashtra and then enters into Karnatak. The southern border in the south cannot be marked by any geographical barriers, but must represent a cultural barrier between the very flourishing Dravidian languages like Kannada and Telugu.

In this context it is well to remember that the land ruled over by the present dynasties from Pratishthan comprised parts of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Does this represent the region Traishashtra (Three Maharashtra) mentioned in the Aihola inscription? This easy accessibility between Maharashtra and the south explains the many southern features of Maharashtra. In spite of Marathi being a northern language, it also shows how the Marathas' struggle with Aurangzeb in the 17th century was mostly confined to the southern region and how in their guerilla fights could always retreat southwards to again in Maharashtra. One of the most famous fights of this was at Jijit, a stronghold in Tanjore.

CHAPTER 1. Maharashtra —The Land.

plateau to the east; the former comprises Nasik district, and the latter Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Parbhani and Nanded districts. The sixth region is the Krishna basin. Its northern portion is the valleys formed by the Bhima and the Neera, the northern tributaries of the Krishna, comprising the Poona, Sholapur and part of the Satara districts. The southern portion of this region is drained by the Krishna and its southern tributaries and comprise the districts of Satara, Kolhapur and Sangli.

A schematic map of Maharashtra showing main rivers, basins and mountain ranges



This schematic map shows certain features of Maharashtra which have affected its history and the nature of its population.

The rainfall in the coastal strip is over a hundred inches (250 cm.) per year. It is between 150-200 inches (350-500 cm.) on the Sahyadri ranges and then it decreases rapidly eastwards so that 40 miles eastward from the Sahyadri range is an area where the rainfall is between 10 and 15 inches per year and there are very often years without any rain at all. From north to south, the eastern portion of the Nasik district, the whole of the Nagar¹ and Sholapur

¹ The town and district of Ahmednagar are very often referred to as Nagar.

districts, eastern portions of the Poona, Satara and Kolhapur districts and parts of the Sangli district come into this region of insufficient rainfall. The soil in these districts is very fertile but they have famines every two or three years because of a lack of rain. From the earliest Marathi literature, migration of people westward during the famine years is mentioned. There is an yearly cycle of migration of certain communities from east to west. The largest of such communities are the shepherds who migrate every year in November and December from these eastern regions right down to Konkan¹. The agricultural population, however, has been helped in recent years by facilities of irrigation made possible by dams on the big rivers and their tributaries. Just as irrigation has mitigated the scarcity of rainfall, new motives of migration have arisen in the shape of industrial cities and their opportunities so that inter-regional migrations can no longer be interpreted purely in geographical or climatic terms. Modern communications, techniques and materials minimise to a great extent the effects of geographical and climatic factors, but these factors have, in the past and even today to a large extent, influenced people's habits of eating and house-building, modes of cultivation, even construction of whole villages.

The easternmost region made up of the Vainganga plains right up to Vardha and Nagpur is a rice cultivating region. The western coastal strip with 100" of rain is also a rice growing region; but geographically and climatically these two ends of Maharashtra are very different. The western strip is a very narrow strip between the Arabian Sea and the Sahyadri, and is traversed by east-west spurs of the Sahyadri. The rice cultivation depends entirely on the heavy monsoon rain. On the other hand, the eastern region is a great plain with the broad Vainganga river flowing through it and there are many big man-made lakes which irrigate the rice fields. The rainfall is between 40" and 50". The lakes are made possible by the rolling country where an earthwork dam impounds water in natural hollows. This type of lake-building spread southwards and westwards into Telangana and then into Mysore, but not into Western Maharashtra. Eastern Maharashtra lends itself to lake-building, an activity which might perhaps represent a feature of an old rice cultivating culture.

The various sub-regions divided by mountains and forming different river valleys have slightly different cultural features and dynastic histories. These will be described later in chapter 3.

¹ T. N. Walunjkar, *Social organisation, migration and change in a village community*, Deccan College, Dissertation Series, No. 28; Poona, 1966.

CHAPTER 2.

Maharashtra —
People —
Physical.

groups fall among the other groups while a few other groups fall among the primitives; (b) experience shows that every now and then, especially on the western coast, one gets people among the highest castes with some of the features of the primitives.

(2) There is an extremely large group of people who are long-headed, whose noses are neither narrow nor broad, whose heads again are neither too small nor too large, who are found in Orissa and in the whole of Maharashtra. In fact, this group nearly exhausts the Orissa population and forms an extremely large proportion of the Maharashtra population. They comprise some people who are near-primitives and also all castes up to and including Brahmins.

This population, if we add the lower mesocephals, can together be termed the indigenous population of the south. The higher mesocephals are found mostly in Karnatak, Gujarat and coastal Maharashtra, and the few brachycephals only in Gujarat and Karnatak. This population seems to be of later origin representing a migration from somewhere in the north-west (Kathiawar, Sindh) southwards, along the Maharashtra coast, up again to the Karnatak plateau, and deep south up to Coorg. The Karnatak coast is not broad-headed and the Maharashtra coast is. That is why the above route is given. Who these people were cannot be determined. Perhaps they were cattle-breeders from west-central Asia, representing Scythians of the older anthropologists. Perhaps it was the continuous pressure of population from the north-west towards the south which started a north-eastwards push of Dravidian-speaking people represented by primitive tribes speaking Dravidian who pushed the Mundari-speaking people further eastwards. The Korkus in north-central Maharashtra represent a Mundari-speaking people, who have been isolated from the main mass of the Mundari people by the Gonds pushing northwards. In Maharashtra, these movements have resulted in making the whole of western Maharashtra broader-headed than the whole of eastern Maharashtra.

The broad-headed people fall into three linguistic groups which might mean that these immigrants came at a time when the modern languages were not all formed, and so speak today languages which developed in their regions after their arrival. Or it might mean that they were so cut off from their original motherland, and so scattered, that each small group had to adopt the language of the region in which it found itself. We know definitely that one of the groups, the Parsis, came to Gujarat about the 10th century, A.D.¹ The Khatri in Bombay and the Brahmakshatri in Hyderabad are Marathi speakers and used to do trade in silk. There is a trading caste, the Brahmakshatri in Gujarat. There is a caste called Khatri in Punjab who were traders. There is a 5th century inscription from Mandsaur²

¹ "The History and Culture of the Indian People." Vol. IV, pp. 352-353; Bharatiya Vidyabhavan. 1955. Bombay.

² Mandsaur stone inscription of Bandhugupta.

CHAPTER 2.

Maharashtra —
People —
Physical.

in the former Gwalior State which records grant of land to weavers from Lata who might be these Khatri. Again, Khatri may be a community which reached Bombay from Gujarat a few centuries after this. These dates might represent the late arrival of a people who might have been wandering southwards over centuries. These are the last of the broad-headed people. One cannot place in time the earliest arrivals. Can one say that those who have penetrated southernmost were the earliest? That those who are on the Maharashtra and Karnatak plateaus represent the first wave, and that those around Bombay and Gujarat perhaps the latest?

This account shows that we may be able to construe the racial history of Maharashtra, but it must be borne in mind that the physical make-up has nothing much to contribute to the cultural history of Maharashtra as a linguistic area. The primitives may be physically Australoid or Austro-Asiatics (Mundari). The Marathi language is ultimately derived from Sanskrit and a Prakrit which was brought in by some northern Sanskrit speaking people, who and later broader heads may have brought pastoral pursuits with them. But all these things belong to a period which must be termed pre-Maharashtrian or proto-Maharashtrian. They cannot be held apart as distinct racial elements bringing distinct cultural features when one speaks about Maharashtra as a linguistic region.

In the area which we have called Maharashtra human beings have been living for at least three or four lakhs of years. These people were fashioning palaeolithic tools as recent excavations have shown. We do not think that they have left any physical traces in the population of modern Maharashtra. A long time after them, we have traces of people who fashioned what are called neolithic implements. They were there about five to ten thousand years ago. Very possibly they are represented physically in the Maharashtra of today.¹ Still later we come into the historical period with the Satavahana Kings, their inscriptions, and the many Buddhist caves which were built about this time. Of these three periods, the first, namely the palaeolithic does not come into consideration at all in the description of Maharashtra and its people. That period properly belongs to world pre-history when human beings were still evolving into their modern shape. As regards the second period, Maharashtra people of today may be related by blood in a distant way with those people of the neolithic, but hardly any cultural features of Maharashtra as a Marathi speaking region can be traced to those days. On the other hand, the third period can be claimed as part of the ancient history of the Maharashtra of today. We shall deal with this in a subsequent chapter.

¹ K. A. R. Kennedy and K. C. Malhotra—"Human Skeletal remains from Chalcolithic and Indo-Roman Levels from Nevasa. An Anthropometric and Comparative Analysis," Building Centenary & Silver Jubilee Series : 55; p. 120; Deccan College, Poona, 1966.

CHAPTER 2.
Maharashtra —
People —
Physical.

be descendants of these labourers. This Negroid element is of such recent origin and so negligible in quantity that we need not consider it in the racial survey of Maharashtra. There do not seem to be any Mongoloid elements either in Maharashtra. We may therefore say roughly that Maharashtra is made up mostly of Australoid-Europoid people. The skin colour ranges from very dark to light brown. The eye colour is predominantly very dark brown (black) to brown, with a few castes having not more than 10 per cent people with light greenish brown eyes. The hair colour is very dark, but sometimes in rare cases one may find brown hair or red hair. Most males have ample body hair, but one finds among primitives and also among non-primitives, people with scanty beards and scanty body hair. The stature ranges from short to medium i.e., 1.48 to 1.66 metres (from about 4'-9" to 5'-6") though among all castes one finds sometimes some tall and a few very tall individuals up to 1.83 metres (6 feet) and a little above. The head form is from dolichocephalic to mesocephalic. That is to say, one does not find ultra long-headed or real broad-headed people in Maharashtra. The noses generally range from platyrrhine (broad nosed) to mesorrhine (middle nosed). There are a very few people with really narrow noses. In the following pages, some measurements for people from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnatak and Orissa¹ are given in such a way that comparisons between these four regions become possible. It would have been useful if material from Andhra of that extent were available. The non-availability of such material has created a geographical gap between Maharashtra and Orissa. But the data for Orissa allow a glimpse into the possible racial make up of the Mundari speaking people and also provides an eastward continuation of the trends found within Maharashtra itself.

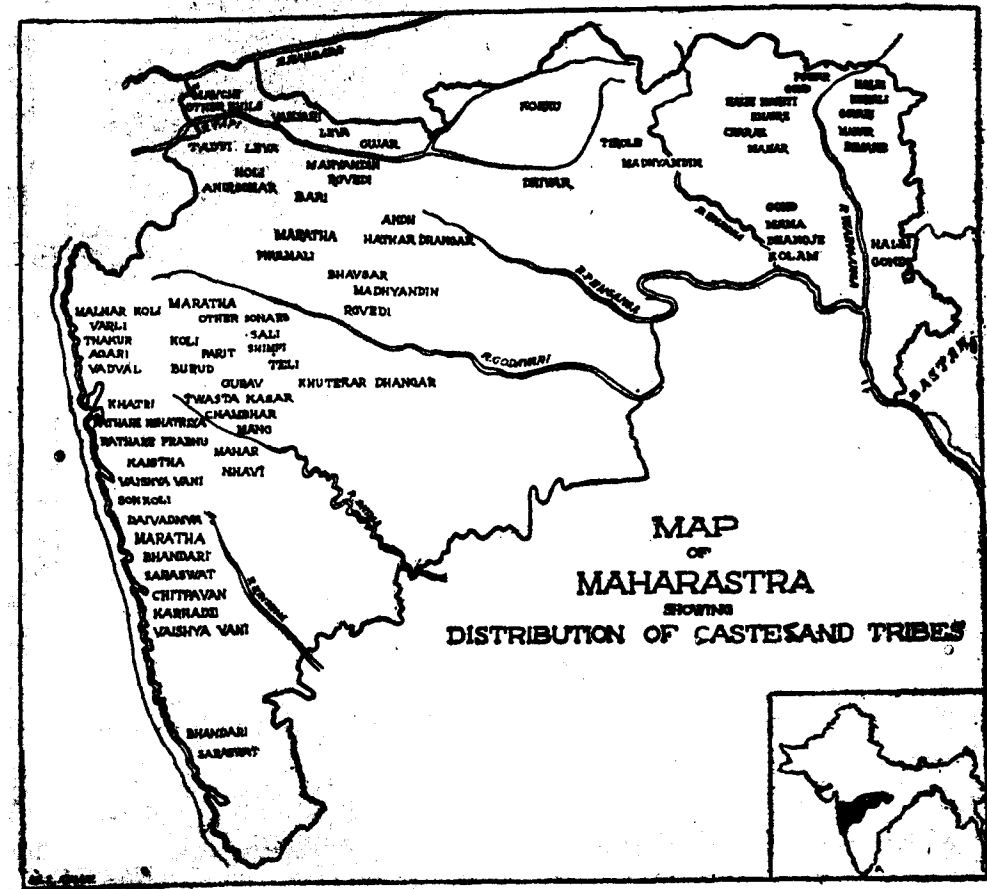
The castes included in the accompanying charts belong to Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnatak and Orissa. Gujarat has a common boundary with Maharashtra in the north-west, Karnatak is to the south of Western Maharashtra and Orissa has no contiguous boundary with Maharashtra. It is to the north-east divided by a small strip of Madhya Pradesh from north-eastern Maharashtra.

¹ For Maharashtra, Karnatak and Orissa the graphs are based on the measurements taken by the author while for Gujarat the measurements taken by Dr. D. N. Majumdar are used. See Majumdar D. N., *Race Realities in Cultural Gujarat*.

Below is given a short description of these castes based on personal observation and descriptions given by other anthropologists.¹

CHAPTER 2.
Maharashtra —
People —
Physical.

A map showing the location of Marathi castes is also given.



¹ For Maharashtra and Gujarat and parts of Karnatak, R. E. Enthoven, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. 3, 1922.

For Nagpur and Berar in Maharashtra, R. V. Russell and Rai Bahadur Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, Vol. 4, 1916.

For Marathwada—Syed Siraj-ul-Hassan

The Castes and Tribes of H. E. H. the Nizam's Dominions, Vol. 1, 1920.

For Mysore. Ananta Krishna Aiyar, *Tribes and Castes of Mysore*.

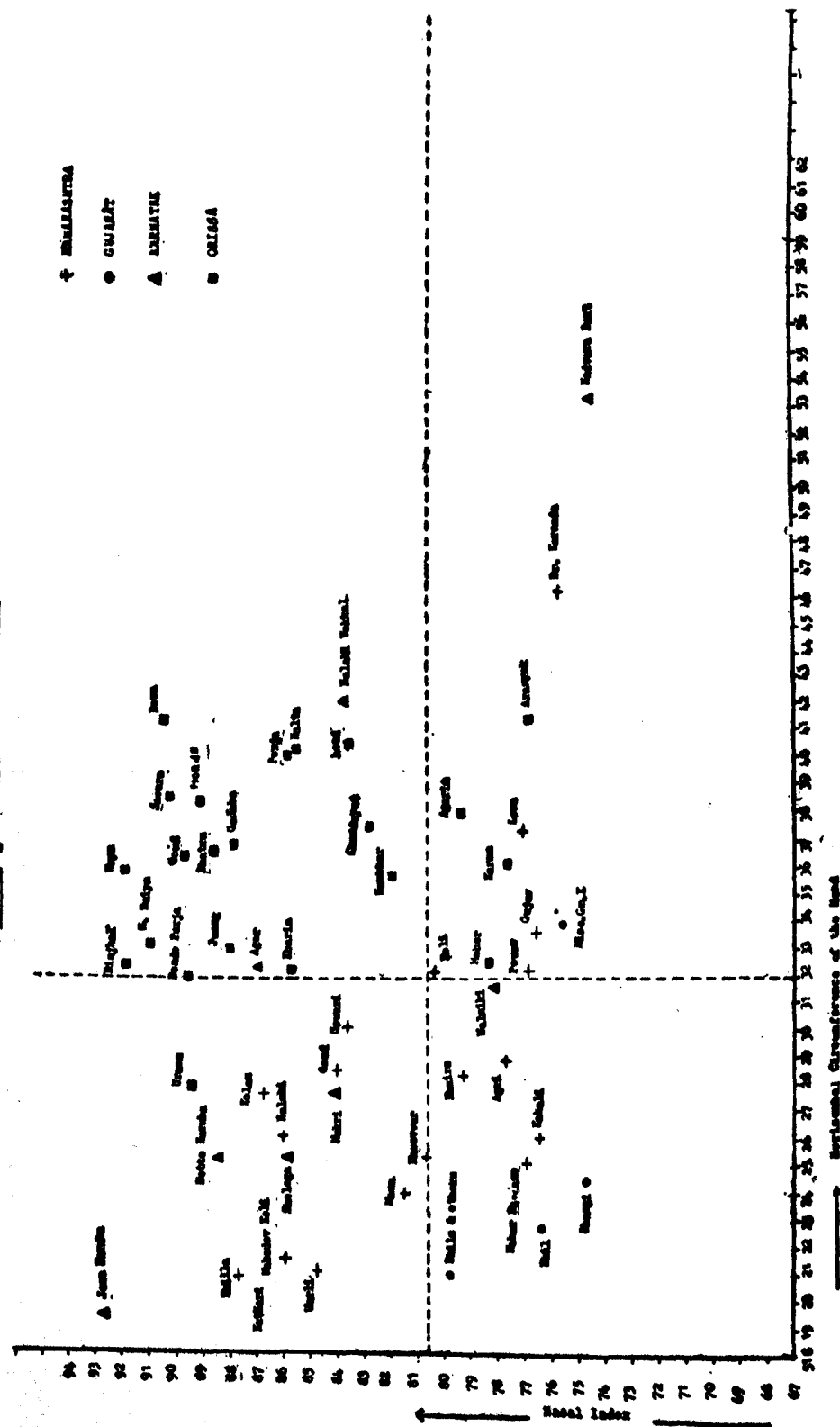
The description for Castes in Maharashtra is taken here verbatim from the Monograph by Irawati Karve and Vishnu Mahadeo Dandekar.

Anthropometric Measurements of Maharashtra, Deccan College Monograph Series No. 8 (1951) Poona.

The descriptions for Karnatak and Orissa are taken verbatim from an article by Irawati Karve. *Anthropometric Measurements in Karnatak and Orissa and a comparison of these two regions with Maharashtra. Journal of the Anthropological Society*, Bombay, 1954.

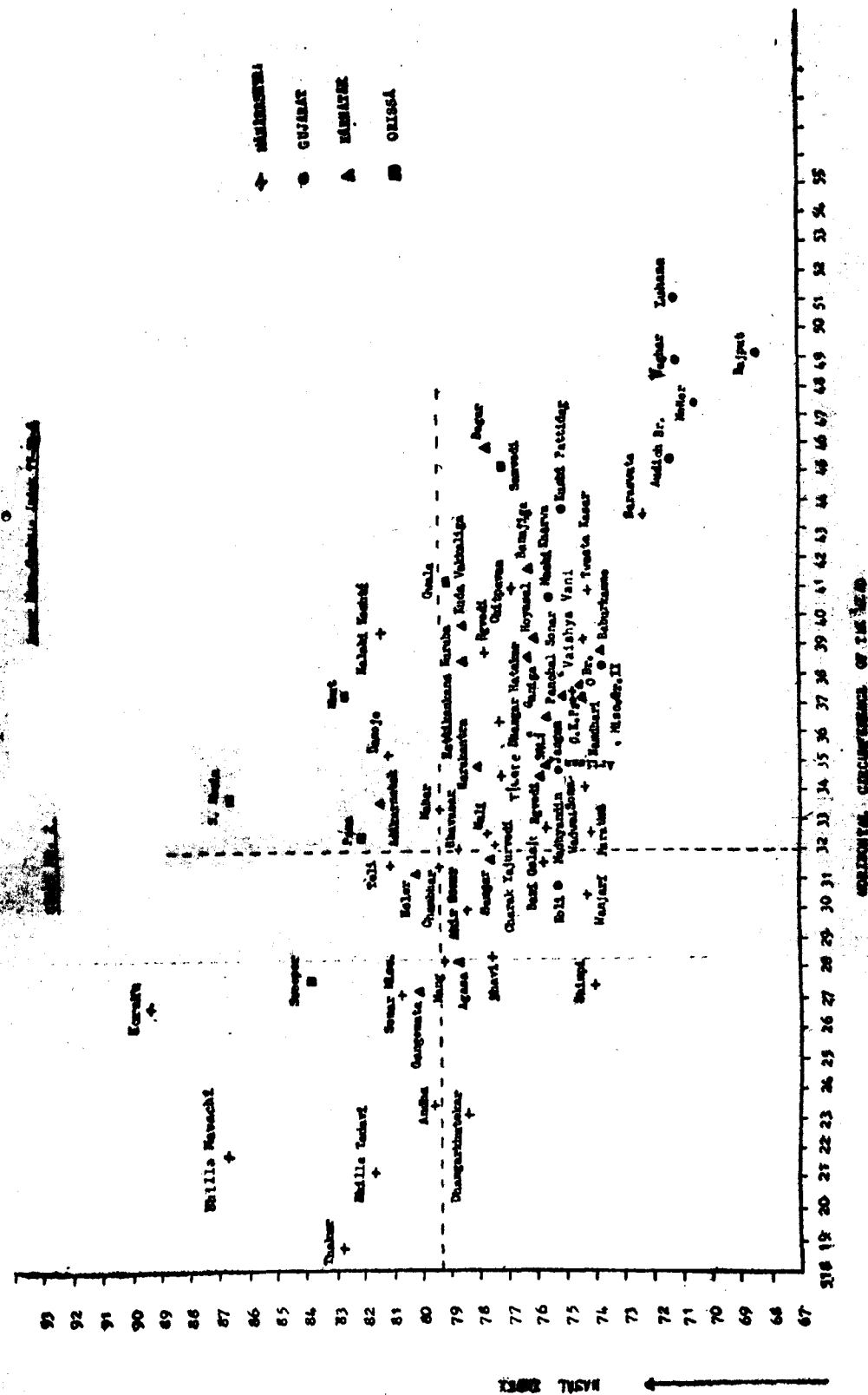
Some Physical Measurements of castes in four linguistic regions.
Dolicho-Cephalis: Index--77.

QUEST NO. 1 Answer Question Index 72-222



Some Physical Measurements of four linguistic regions.
Lower Meso-Cephalics: Index 71-79-4

100



The following descriptive notes on the castes in four States whose Physical measurements are later referred to are taken from publications referred to. Maharashtra castes are dealt with in greater detail as compared to those in the other three regions.

Agari

Agari, also known as Agale or Kharpatil, numbered about 2,00,000 in 1901. They are principally found in Thana, Kolaba and Janjira. There are no exogamous sub-divisions above families who have the same surname and who observe common mourning. Agaris claim to be Kshatriyas, but their small size and dark colour, their love of liquor and their belief in un-Brahman gods are marked enough to make them rank as a local or early tribe. A man may marry his mother's brother's daughter. Polygamy is practised. Divorce is allowed. A widow can re-marry but not in her late husband's family. Agaris employ Brahmin priests for marriage and death ceremonies. The dead are burnt or buried. Their original occupation as the name suggests is salt-manufacture but very few are occupied in it now. They are now agriculturists with small holdings or tenants. The poorer are agricultural labourers or seek employment in Bombay mills.

Andh

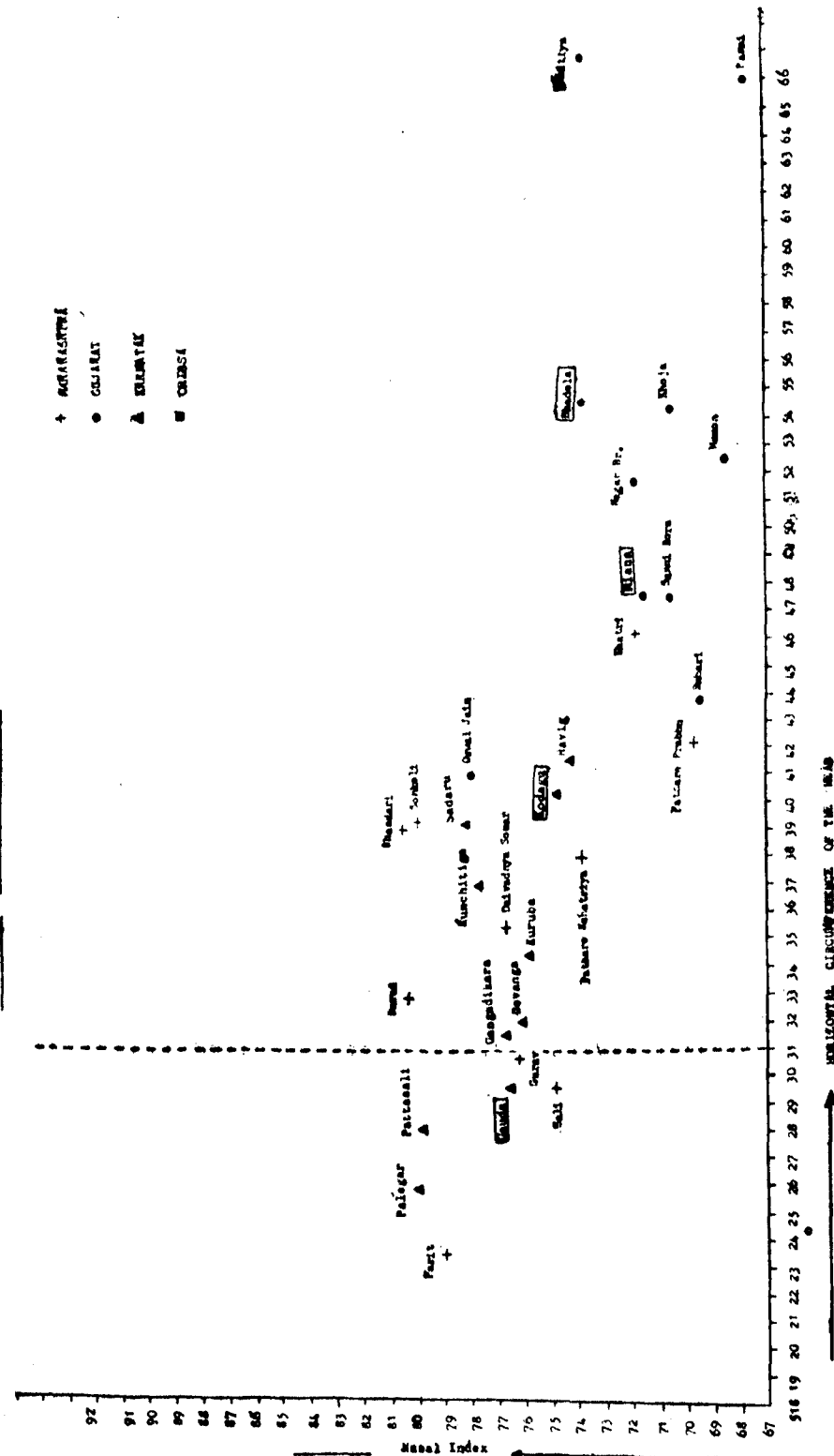
This is a cultivating and hunting tribe confined to the hilly tracts which include northern parts of Parbhani, Nanded and southern parts of Chanda and Wun (Yeotmal) districts. They appear to be a very remarkable people, with dark complexion, thick lips and prominent cheek bones. They show marked aboriginal features, resembling those of Gonds, while the fact of their entire occupation of many villages indicates traces of savage independence. On the other hand their language and customs are like those of Hindu Kumbhis. They say that their forefathers came from Mahur and adjoining districts in Berar. Cross-cousin marriage both ways is allowed. If a girl is pregnant before marriage, the father of the child is called upon by the caste council to marry her. Divorce and widow remarriage are allowed; but a widow must not marry her late husband's brother. Married persons are burnt and unmarried are buried. The Andhs worship the usual Hindu gods and village deities. They numbered less than 3,000 in 1911.

Bari

Known as Panwale or leaf-sellers, numbering 6,696 (1901 Census) are found principally in Khandesh and Thana. There are a large number of Baris in the United Provinces and Bihar. Some are said to have come from Gujarat. They seem to be originally northern Indians, who came to the Deccan via Gujarat and Berar. Cross-cousin marriage is not allowed among them. The spiritual heads of Baris are Gosavis of the Giri, Puri or Nath sect. Their

Some Physical Measurements of four linguistic regions.
Higher Meso-Cephal: Index 79.4-82

Figure No. 1. Index 79.4-82
CHART NO. 1. Index 79.4-82



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priests are Deshastha Brahmins but the death ceremonies are conducted by caste elders. The married dead are burnt and the unmarried are buried. They eat the flesh of goat, fowl and fish. Their hereditary occupation is growing betel leaves; they have now taken to market gardening also.

Bhandari

Also known as Bhavguna, numbering 1,68,667 (1901), are found in the seaboard districts of Ratnagiri, Kanara, Kolaba, Thana, Bombay city and the Savantvadi State. Their occupation is drawing toddy from the palm trees. They were employed as foot soldiers by the Marathas and the British. They worship Shiva and Devi. They generally burn their dead, though burying in a sitting or lying posture is also practised. They eat flesh of goats, sheep, fowl, hare, deer and fish. They now practise many trades besides the hereditary one. For some time they were rulers of the island of Bombay.

Bhavsar

A caste of this name is found all over south Gujarat. The Maratha Bhavsars claim to have come to Bombay Presidency about 70 to 80 years ago from Mungi Paithan. Even now they are found in great numbers in the former Nizam's Dominions. They worship besides other gods, Balaji and Hinglaj Mata (both these have their shrines in Gujarat and Kathiawad). They are calico-printers and dyers. Now they practice other trades also.

Bhilla (Mavachi, Tadvi and others)

Bhilla is the Marathi name of the tribe which is called in Gujarat and Rajputana by the name Bhil. Their number as given by Enthoven is a little over 550,000 in the Bombay Presidency. Of these a little more than half may be in Gujarat and the rest in the Maratha country. "Their original home is the hilly country between Abu and Asirgarh, from which they spread westward and southward into the plains of Gujarat and the Northern Deccan. They are found in considerable numbers in Rajputana and Central India". They are first mentioned as Bhilla by Gunadhya, who flourished in the 6th century A. D. There he mentions a great Bhil Chief mounted on an elephant fighting with another king. He calls them also Dasyus. The Dasyus are mentioned in the Rigveda as a numerous tribe opposing and fighting with the Aryans. In the Sanskrit literature they are always mentioned as dwellers of the Vindhya forest. Today, however, their greatest concentration is along the western hill ranges, the Aravalis and Western Satpuda mountains. From here they have spread eastwards into Central India, Berar and the Nagar and Nasik Districts of the Bombay Presidency and Aurangabad district of the Nizam's Dominions. In Khandesh whole villages are entirely Bhil villages. They speak the language

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of the province in which they settle, besides a dialect of their own which sounds like Gujarati or Rajasthani. If ever they had an independent language of their own, no remnant of it is traceable in their present tongues.

They practise cross-cousin marriage in Khandesh. Bhils in Gujarat assured us that cross-cousin marriage was not allowed among them. A Bhil teacher in Khandesh told Dr. Karve that all types of marriage except that in the immediate family was practised by them. We are, however, not prepared to believe either of these statements. A careful investigation of the whole Bhil tract from Abu to Aurangabad with the help of actual genealogies is necessary to establish the pattern of kinship system among them. "The country north-west of Malwa was their original stronghold from which they were gradually ousted and pushed towards the hilly tracts and the country where they are found today". In their eastern limit they meet Korkus, Gonds and Kolis. Whether they are different from these and other primitive people, who occupy the whole of the central forest belt in India, or whether they are the same people is an important and unsolved problem of Indian Ethnology.

'Mavachi' is apparently a sub-tribe or a clan, supposed to be the most respected. There are numerous other clan-names and we have not been able to find out what the mutual relation of these clans is.

'Tadvi' is the name given to the Muslim Bhils of East Khandesh (Jalgaon). They are supposed to be the mixed progeny of Aurangzeb's soldiers and Bhils. They have slightly finer noses and the faces also appear to be longer and narrower. The Tadvis resent the appellation of Bhil, though there is not the slightest doubt that they are Bhils converted to Islam.

More has been written about Bhils than about any other jungle tribe in India and yet their social customs etc., remain obscure.

Brahmins

These are the priests of the Hindus. They are found all over India but there is no marriage between Brahmins of different linguistic regions. Within a linguistic region they are again sub-divided into numerous endogamous sub-castes based on sub-regions or on the branch of the Vedic school followed. Of the many Brahmin sub-castes in Maharashtra only six major sub-castes were measured and their region and other peculiarities are listed below.

Charak Brahmins

These are not described in any of the three books mentioned above. They belong to the Krishna Yajurveda and are found only in the Nagpur region. They are landholders, professionals like doctors, teachers and pleaders and also money-lenders. How long they have

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settled in the present region we were unable to find out. They could not have numbered more than five thousand.

Konkan Brahmins

The Sarasvat, the Karahada and the Chitpavan were all originally dwellers of the west coast, though now some are found much beyond their original home. Even in Konkan i.e., the west-coast, each has a distinct region. The Sarasvats are found from Malwan to South Kanara and have spread deep into Karnatak Malabar and Tamil Nad. They follow the Rigvedic school. They claim to have come from Bengal and trace their origin to the region of Sarasvati (South Punjab). Dr. Guha maintains that they have similarity with Bengal Brahmins. They are not counted among Pancha Dravidas (the five southern branches of Brahmandom). They eat fish, while the southern Brahmins are traditionally pure vegetarians. Northwards they are found in very large numbers in Bombay. They are in government services, are lawyers, doctors, teachers and shopkeepers. They also engage successfully in trade and side by side have a great tradition of learning and scholarship. They follow the practice of cross-cousin marriage. The Karahada is a comparatively small sub-caste of Brahmins. Their home is the region between Malwan and Sangameshvar near the west-coast. They also belong to the Rigvedic school. They follow the same professions as those of the other Brahmins. There is a Karahada colony in Central Provinces which settled there in the days of the Peshwas. They are supposed to have spread right into United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) and some families, originally Karahada but now become completely Hindi are still living in the United Provinces. Some of their families had also settled in Karnatak. They are a progressive and an industrious community. They follow the practice of cross-cousin marriage.

The Chitpavans numbering a little over a hundred thousand have their home in the region from Malwan to Bombay. They are found in the coastal region north of Bombay but not in as great numbers as in the south. They started migrating to the Deccan plains during the period of Shivaji, but still more during the time of the Peshwas and are now found in almost all the upland districts of the Maratha country. Their number decreases in the Nizam's Dominions and eastern Central Provinces. They also follow the usual professions of Brahmins. Among them are found the followers of both the Rigveda and the Krishna Yajurveda. They do not allow cross-cousin marriage as a rule.

The Deshastha Brahmins are divided into two great endogamous groups—(a) The Rigvedi Deshastha Brahmins, and (b) The Shukla Yajurvedi Brahmins. The application Deshastha means that they belong to Desha i.e., the upland plateau of Maharashtra and not to Konkan. Of these (a) the Rigvedi Brahmins seem to be the older element in the population of the Maratha country. They are found in all districts of the Maratha country from the river Tapi to Krishna

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along the Western Hills and deep into the Nizam's Dominions and Berar. As the name shows they belong to the Rigvedic school. Marriages between them and the Brahmins of Telangana and Karnatak occur quite frequently. They practise not only cross-cousin marriage but also the maternal-uncle-niece marriage. They number about 3,00,000.

(b) The Shukla Yajurvedis are also very numerous and may number about the same as the Rigvedis. These are found all over the Deccan plateau (Desha) but their migration westwards into the hilly regions seems to be of later date. They are divided into numerous endogamous sub-castes according to the Vedic teachers, teaching the particular Vedic branch followed by them and also according to regions. The chief branches in the Maratha country are the Kanva and the Madhyandin. The Kanvas seem to be the older immigrants as they practise cross-cousin marriage, and have also spread southwards far beyond the river Krishna. The Madhyandins are found in Berar, C. P. and throughout the Marathi districts of the Nizam's Dominions. They have reached the Krishna and even the Madras Presidency but are in very small numbers there. They not only do not allow cross-cousin marriage but disallow marriage within the Gotra-group of the mother of a man. This is a northern practice. It appears very probable that these Brahmins entered Maratha country from U. P. via Jubbulpore, settled first in Berar and later spread along the banks of the Godavari. They have been completely Marathised for over a thousand years and have a brilliant record of literary achievement in the Maratha country.

Burud

There are over 1,00,000 Marathi-speaking Buruds. They are workers in bamboo. A man may marry his maternal uncle's daughter. Remarriage of a widow is allowed. They belong to the Hindu religion. Besides the usual gods they also worship the images of their dead ancestors. The dead are either buried or cremated. The burial rites are performed by a Lingayat priest. The hereditary occupation is making bamboo baskets, winnowing fans, birds' cages, children's cradles, sieves and mats. They also make cane chairs and cots. They eat flesh of goat, sheep, fowl and fish and drink liquor. They do not eat beef or flesh of dead cattle. They are considered to be of a very low caste but rank higher than Mahar and Mang with whom they do not eat. The meaning of the word Burud cannot be traced.

Chambhar

The word is derived from the Sanskrit word Charmakara, a leather worker. The Chambhars number about 1,00,000, and are held to be very low in the caste hierarchy but are superior to the Mahars and Mangs. They are divided into half-a-dozen endogamous sub-divisions based on region and occupation. Those that make the shoes

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of the higher castes and live on the plateau are held to be the highest. Those that make the shoes for lower castes and live in the Konkan come next and the lowest are those who tan hides and eat the flesh of buffaloes. Among them a man may marry his maternal uncle's daughter. Remarriage of widows as also divorce are permitted. The Chambhars follow the Hindu religion and worship the usual gods as also the deceased ancestors. The dead are generally burnt but those who cannot afford it practise burial also. The main occupation of the caste is making shoes. Some of them also dye skins, make bridles, whips, sandals, ropes and water-bags. They eat fish and flesh of goat, deer, sheep and fowl. They drink liquor, but abstain from eating beef or flesh of animals dying of natural causes.

Dhanagar

Dhanagars number about five hundred thousand. They are found all over the Maratha country but are more numerous in the central and southern parts. Their social position is below that of the Kunbis (cultivators) but in point of language, house, dress and food they differ little from the Kunbis. Like all non-Brahmin castes in the south they are divided into numerous totemistic clans. They are also divided into numerous endogamous sub-castes and two of these are represented in our sample. The hereditary occupation of Dhanagars is tending of sheep. They also keep goats and sometimes herds of cattle. They shear sheep and weave blankets. Cross-cousin marriage is practised. Polygamy is quite frequent as it helps in their economic pursuits. Remarriage of widows as well as divorce are permitted. Khandoba is the god worshipped by all Dhanagars as one of the wives of Khandoba, namely Banai is of Dhanagar caste. They also worship other gods and goddesses. Little terra-cotta or stone images of sheep are offered by Dhanagars every year to Banai. The Dhanagars also worship images of their dead ancestors. The dead are either burnt or buried.

Khutekar is a sub-caste of the Dhanagars and is spread over a very large region in central, western and southern Maratha country. They are supposed to be lower in status than the Hatkar Dhanagars.

Hatkar Dhanagars are found chiefly in the Nizam's State on the northern border of Nanded and Parbhani and some in Berar. Their title is Naik or Rao. They are also termed Bargi Dhanagars. They are strongly built, and have a dark complexion. Many recruits to Shivaji's armies were drawn from this caste. Holkars, the Maratha ruling house at Indore, belong to this caste. The Muslim sources describe them as proud, refractory and a domineering race of Rajputs, living in Bashim Sircars (modern Vashim in Berar), with numerous armed forces, occupying the forts and controlling the surrounding districts. They plundered the agriculturists and traders. These Naiks became so powerful that the Nizam had to seek the aid of the British Army to put them down. "Most of the Hatkars do

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not permit removal of the hair on their face. They are fine able-bodied men and have a most wonderful resemblance to each other which may be accounted for by the constant inter-marriage of three families." "Though they are called Dhanagars they have nothing in common with the shepherd or pastoral tribes who keep sheep and weave blankets." Cross-cousin marriage is practised, widow remarriage and divorce are allowed. Like other Dhanagars they worship Khandoba. They generally burn their dead though burial is also practised. (In 1946 when they were measured by Dr. Karve, they had adopted the custom of shaving like other people, only a few keeping the beards. They practised agriculture but some tended sheep too.)

Dhivar

Also called Dhimar, are found all over Berar and eastern Maratha country. They fish in ponds and rivers, some cultivate and sell singara, the water-nut, and some are palanquin-bearers and water-carriers. They are also known as Bhois in the western Maratha country. They worship Annapurna. Russell mentions that they worship Dulha Deo and Narayan Deo and keep and sacrifice pigs. These traits show their affinity to the Gonds and other primitive tribes of the Central Provinces. The Gonds also have exogamous sects called Kewat, Dhivar etc., which shows that they have been admitted into the Dhivar caste.

The Dhivars apparently do not practise cross-cousin marriage. In the Chanda district among poorer families a man simply lives with a woman on the payment of a small sum to her family and the marriage ceremony may be performed at any later time. Sometimes the marriages of grand-parents, children and grand-children are all performed at the same time, so that the old people are married in the proper way before they die. The same custom is found among the Bhils of Khandesh. There is a ceremony performed by certain Brahmin families in Khandesh when coconuts (in pairs) are married at a ceremonial marriage of the Sun-god and Sanjna Devi. At such a marriage, Bhil couples come in hundreds to get married and they are pronounced as married by the officiating priest without any fee or expense.

Widow remarriages are permitted and divorce allowed. Adultery is frequently overlooked. Their death ceremonies are not described. They hold a low position, but water carried by them is used by higher castes. They are certainly not treated as untouchables anywhere, though they were listed as such in recent years. Being palanquin-bearers, their touch could never be considered as polluting. In some parts of C. P. they also sell parched grain which is bought and eaten by people of the higher castes.

Fulmali

These are the growers of flowers and form the highest endogamous sub-group of the caste called Mali. The Malis are market

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gardeners and are divided into smaller sub-castes according to the produce grown. Thus there are Halad-Mali, those who cultivate turmeric, Jire Mali, those who grow Jira (cumin seed) etc. The tendency of all Malis is, however, to call themselves Ful-Mali or Savanta Mali and so, for this study, all Malis, whether they grow fruit, flower, sugarcane or turmeric, are included under the caption of Fulmali. In their dress, speech and customs they are like the Kunbis and the Marathas. They are economically better off and more polished in their manners. They are sober, industrious and also very enterprising. They practise cross-cousin marriage, allow widow remarriage, cremate their dead and worship all the deities of the Hindu pantheon and Vithoba of Pandharpur is their favourite god.

Gond

Gond is one of the most important of the non-Aryan forest tribes in India. In 1911 they were three million strong and were rapidly increasing. They occupy two main tracts. The first is the wide belt of broken hill and forest country which forms the Satpada plateau and is mainly comprised of the districts of Chhindwada, Betul, Seoni and Mandla. The second is the still wilder and more inaccessible mass of hill ranges extending south of the Chhattisgarh plain, and south-west down to Godavari including three Chhattisgarh districts, the Datar and Kaker States and a great part of Chanda. There is, however, no district of the Central Provinces which does not have some Gond population. Gond is a name given to these people by the Hindus. They call themselves Koi or Kui and belong to the same people as Khonds and Kolams of the eastern and the southern portion of their region. They speak a Dravidian language and seem to have come into the present region after the 12th century from the Andhra country. They founded great kingdoms which, however, rapidly crumbled before the Moghals and the Marathas. Great city walls, masonry tanks, palaces and numerous images still exist to bear witness to their greatness; but today they live as hunters and primitive agriculturists in the hills and forests. It is wrong to describe them as a primitive folk untouched by civilisation as certain anthropologists have done. Though they never practised many of the arts of mediaeval India, they ruled over civilized people and last lived in the style of mediaeval Hindu kings. When they lost their kingdom they lost also the civilised environment to which they had got used. Their present mode of life is not a continuation of the life of pristine simplicity but a throw-back into primitivity. Their clans are divided into classes and among them marriage takes place only between certain classes and not between others. These classes are supposed to bear a resemblance to the Australian class system. They allow cross-cousin marriage. Grandfather-granddaughter marriage is also on record. They also practise levirate. Divorce is allowed and widow remarriage is also sanctioned. A bride is secured either by capture or purchase or by service at the bride's house. They have totemic clans. Human sacrifice was prevalent among them

formerly. They have dormitories for unmarried girls and boys which are called Gotuls. All Gond women tattoo the back of their legs and hips.

Govari

Govaris are the herdsmen or graziers of the Marathi districts of C. P. (Central Provinces). They numbered about 1,50,000 in 1911. They have three divisions: the Gai Govari, the Inga Govari and the Gond Govari. The former rank as the highest and are probably akin to the other cowherds while the Inga and Gond Govari may have recruited from forest tribes. They are divided into exogamous totemistic clans. Marriage among some clans is forbidden on the ground that the clan-mothers were sisters. A man may marry his mother's brother's daughters. Levirate is allowed and expected. A man's sister's son may inherit his property if he has no children of his own. This and the custom mentioned above, whereby marriage is forbidden to some clans having sisters as clan mothers, may be relics of mother-right according to Russell. Widow remarriage is allowed. The dead are either burnt or buried. They worship their deified ancestors and also Dulha Deo like the Gonds. They do not worship the usual gods of the Hindu pantheon. The Govaris keep herds of milch buffaloes and take them out in great pomp and procession during the Divali festival. All Govari men are tattooed on the forehead and all women on the right arm below the elbow. They also tattoo their foreheads.

Gujar

Gujar is a great historical caste which has given its name to the Gujarat district, the town of Gujaranwala in the Punjab, the province of Gujarat and the tract known as Gujargarh in Gwalior. In the Central Provinces the Gujars are found mainly in Neemar and Hoshangabad districts and speak the Nemar dialect of Hindi or Rajasthani. These have not been measured for this survey. The Gujars measured here are all from Khandesh near the foothills of Satpuda. They speak Marathi and, as a further proof of their Marathisation, have recently allowed a cross-cousin marriage which, as a rule is forbidden among them. They have Rajput clan names in a very corrupt form. One such name was Padhyar, an obvious derivation from the Sanskrit Pratihara which establishes their kinship with the great Gurjara Pratihara clan which ruled Central India during the 9th and 10th centuries. When asked about their ancestry, the Gujars told us that they were supposed to be raiders and robbers from the north, a just description of the nomadic Central Asian tribes who successively overran and ruled over the northern plains from the beginning of the Christian era upto the coming of the Muslims. They are now farmers and landlords, taking pride in their fine cattle. They generally do not practise cross-cousin marriage. Levirate is not known. Widow remarriage is practised. They are a handsome people with big eyes and long

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noses but the faces are rather broad. They are very industrious. (Perhaps the Jain Gujars at Sholapur are also a branch of the same great Gujar clan). As women are scarce in the community very large sums are paid as bride-price. Mr. Crooke, quoted by Russell (p. 772, Vol. II) mentions that the Gujars of Bulandshahi district in the United Provinces practise polyandry whereby the wife of the eldest brother is at the disposal of the unmarried younger brothers.

Gurav

Guravs are the non-Brahmin priests of the God Shiva. They are divided into five endogamous sub-castes, of which the Shiva Guravs are the highest and they are represented in the present sample. They take precedence over all other castes (including Brahmins) in worshipping Shiva with flowers etc. in the temple. They live on the offerings before the God but now they have entered Government service and practise various trades also. A man may marry his mother's brother's daughter. Both dowry and bride-price are allowed. Divorce is allowed as also widow remarriage. Levirate is unknown. The dead are burnt. A male is burnt naked, a female dressed. They worship, besides Shiva, the God Khandoba and the Goddess Bhavani. They eschew flesh, fish and liquor. They take food only from people of their own caste and from the Brahmins.

Halbi

Also called Halba is a caste of cultivators and house servants found in large numbers in Raipur, Bastar, Kaker and Bhandara. In 1911 they numbered about 1,00,000. Grierson says about them: "Linguistic evidence also points to the fact that the Halbas are an aboriginal tribe, who have adopted Hinduism and an Aryan language. Their dialect is a curious mixture of Uriya, Chhattisgarhi and Marathi, the proportions varying according to locality. In Bhandara it is nearly all Marathi but in Bastar it is much more mixed and has some forms which look like Telugu."

The present sample is all from two or three Halba zamindaris in the Bhandara district and so belongs to the Marathi-speaking branch of the tribe. It appears that the tribe originally belonged to the Sihawa jungles and then migrated to their present home. They served the Gond kings in their wars and obtained land from them which they still hold as petty chiefs. All over the Gond country the Halbas enjoy certain special privileges. In the Bhandara district the zamindari families have formed themselves into a caste which receives daughters from other Halbas but do not give their daughters to them in return. They are divided into endogamous sub-castes based on regions and on the dialects they speak. They are further sub-divided into exogamous clans which are named after many castes and tribes of the Central Provinces. The names are Baretha (washerman), Bhoyar (Bhoi), Rawat (Herdsman), Barhi (Carpenter), Malia (Mali), Pardhan (Gond), Mankar (title of several tribal chiefs like the Mankis among Birhor), Baghel

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(a Rajput sept), Welma (Telugu cultivators) etc. Russell concludes, that people from these castes were admitted among the Halbas. Besides these, there are also totemistic clan-names. Girls are rarely expelled for pre-marital unchastity, and even postmarital unfaithfulness is connived at if a small fine is paid. A man generally marries his mother's brother's daughter. A man always shows respect to his sister's son, touching his feet in greeting. (This custom is practised among many castes in Andhra, Southern Maratha Country and Karnatak). A man usually leaves a substantial legacy, such as one or two buffaloes to his sister's son. Divorce is freely allowed, so is widow remarriage, but a bachelor must not marry a widow. Levirate is not recorded but may be practised as all the neighbours like Gonds, Govaris etc., practise it. Nearly all the Halbas are now engaged in agriculture as tenants and labourers. Seven Zamindari estates are held by members of the caste, six in Bhandara and one in Chanda and they also own some villages in Raipur and Durg. They are very skilful and industrious cultivators in the open tract of Bhandara Chanda and Raipur, though in Bastar they practise shifting cultivation. Russell says that some people of this caste took to weaving and are now called Halba Koshtis.

Halba Koshtis

These are residents of Nagpur and a small community having some nineteen exogamous clans. Though the name suggests affinities to Halbas, their appearance is entirely different from the Halbis. The Halbis are a small, slightly built people, not too dark, with small heads whereas these Koshtis are well built, of medium height, extremely dark and comparatively big-headed. One does not know what their real origin is. They live as a comparatively compact group in Nagpur and the country around it for about ten miles. They are very skilled weavers and an intelligent and progressive community.

Katkari

A small tribe in western Maharashtra living in the Sahyadri hills in Poona and Kolaba districts.

Khatri

Castes called Khatri are found in Gujarat, Karnatak and Maharashtra. This sample represents the Marathi-speaking Khatri who claim to have been living always near the Bombay Island for the last century at least. Khatri are found in other towns in the Western Maratha country but they have concentrated in great numbers in Bombay. Their hereditary profession is said to be that of silk-weavers and merchants. Now they have entered into all services like clerks, teachers and higher administrative jobs and also follow professions like law and medicine. They number only a few thousand (less than five thousand), and are concentrated in certain localities of Bombay. They are fair, tall and handsome and may have belonged to the great trading community called

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Khatri in the Punjab but they have no traditions about having migrated from that region. They do not allow cross-cousin marriage. All other customs are like those of other high caste Hindus.

Kohali

Kohali is a cultivating caste which is found mainly in the region east of the Wardha river in the Central Provinces, mainly in the Wainganga valley, in the districts of Chanda and Bhandara. They numbered 26,000 in 1911. They are noted for having built great irrigation reservoirs or tanks of this region. The water is used for irrigating rice and sugarcane crops, the latter being the favourite crop of the Kohali or Kohlis. Their origin is doubtful but the name closely resembles that of the Koiris who are also called Kohiris and Kohlis, the market gardeners of north India. The caste themselves have a tradition that they were brought to Bhandara from Benares by a Gond king. Today, however, their clan and sept names and customs are purely Marathi. Some ethnologists, however, ascribe a southern origin to them and compare them to the Kolis. A personal visit to their homes has shown that they are very much fairer than the Kolis, and that their women still retain some northern traits in their dress and speech. They are very hardworking and their whole family works at pressing the sugarcane, boiling the juice and making it into jaggery. A peculiarity in the making of jaggery, which we did not find in the cane growing tracts of Poona and Nagar was that among the Kohlis the juice when it had thickened to the right consistency was not poured into moulds as elsewhere but shaped into small lumps by hand. The thick viscous mass is very hot and it requires both courage and skill to take out a small quantity, press it quickly in the fist and release it when shaped. The jaggery juice is boiled in each individual household to the right consistency at night and then is poured on a mat or left in a shallow pan to cool slightly and then the whole family, men, women and children sit round, dip their hands in cold water, quickly dip them in the rather hot mass, take a handful, press it and release it. Elsewhere in the Maratha country jaggery-making is a man's job but here it is performed as a cottage industry. The Kohli jaggery is greatly prized and preferred to imported jaggery in the Bhandara district. They have no sub-castes and are divided into exogamous septs or clans, which have queer names like Hatwade (the obstinate), Mangusmare (killer of the mongoos), Pustode (cutter of a bullock's tail), Shahare (living in town) etc. They seem to be like nick-names given to families from certain occurrences. (This lack of totemistic clan-names would also point to a northern origin). A man may marry his mother's brother's daughter. Like other castes engaged in spade cultivation the Kohli marries two or more wives and builds separate huts for them in his courtyard if they cannot live peaceably in the same house. All wives and all children help in cultivation and jaggery-making and he does not need to hire servants. A Kohli allots different types of work to each wife. All

are kept busy and have no time to quarrel. It is said that if a Kohli has a good harvest he looks out for another wife. This leads to scarcity of women and high bride-price. All marriages in a village are celebrated on one day. Widows always marry again. A wife's wrong doings are punished but lightly and divorce is allowed but rarely. They generally burn their dead. The tanks built by the Kohlis are sometimes very large, the biggest at Nawegaon being five square miles in extent and seventeen miles in circumference. Smaller tanks are counted by thousands. At some of the tanks men are stationed day and night during the rains to give the alarm if the embankment is breached by water. The Kohlis eat flesh and fish but abstain from liquor.

Kolam

It is a Dravidian tribe residing principally in the Wun taluk of the Yeotmal district of the Central Provinces. The present sample was taken in villages near the city of Wun. They number 25,000, of which 23,000 belong to Wun and the rest to Wardha and the adjoining Hyderabad territory. They are not found elsewhere. They are considered as being akin to Gonds. The Gonds and Kolams, however, do not inter-marry. They speak a language which, according to Grierson, is akin to Gondi and agrees in certain respects with Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. It is said that their dialect has some points of analogy with that of the Todas of Nilgiri. The whole evidence is so confused that the Kolami language needs to be studied carefully again. Being however residents of the Maratha country they all speak Marathi now, though Kolami is spoken at home. The family names are Marathi and women's home songs are also Marathi. Capturing of husbands by entering into the house of bachelors and living there was practised by women. (The custom is reported for Gonds by Elwin and was also known to Marathi people as their word 'Gharghusi' of very ancient origin shows. It is used by mediaeval poets for a woman who enters the house of one she loves and refuses to leave it). Widows and widowers were debarred from capturing and were exempt from capture. The Kolams have no sub-tribes but are divided into various exogamous clans or families. A widow can remarry only a widower (a sentiment found among all Marathi-speaking people who allow widow remarriage). Divorce is also allowed. Russell makes no mention of their habitations but the author (I. K.) has seen some of them and one curious thing about them was that each Kolam colony was systematically planned. The magician priest drives four pegs in four directions and all the houses then are built within that square with the assembly shed for men in the middle. The houses were very neatly planned in rows and contrasted with the other primitive villages we have seen. We were assured by local people that all Kolam villages near Wun were models of planning and cleanliness. If the population outgrew the original area a magical ceremony was performed, the original

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pegs were removed farther and room was made for new houses. They are very industrious in rice plantations and, like other primitive tribes, delight in hunting.

Koli

Koli is the name given to two entirely different groups. One is the Koli, the sea-fisher of the west-coast to be described later, while the other is a very widespread tribe which is found in the forests of the Sahyadri and Satpuda ranges. They are mentioned as 'Kolla' in Sanskrit dictionaries and are described there as 'petty warriors of mountains and jungles'. They fish in the upland streams, do the work of water-carriers for villages and are also used to carry palanquins. They work as agricultural labourers. In the times of the Maratha kingdoms they were guardians of the middle reaches of the hill forts and as such received lands from the rulers. Throughout the British period they have been known as a turbulent element in the population, practising theft and dacoity. Only recently an organised Koli band harassed the people and the police of five districts near Poona by their daring dacoities and chivalrous distribution of their loot. At last after a desperate gun battle in the jungles their leader was caught and a case was going on involving some eighty people. The judgment covering over fifty pages makes very interesting reading. As these robbers never robbed the poor but planned and carried out daring raids on the houses of the rich and generously distributed the booty among the poor agriculturists, they found shelter in all villages and nobody would betray them to the police. In spite of such traditions, however, there is nothing primitive about them. It is impossible to distinguish them from the ordinary agriculturist. Their family names are those of the Marathas and their gods too, except that many of their shrines are on high mountains where city folk go but rarely. They practise cross-cousin marriage. Widow remarriage and divorce are allowed. The Kolis, being such a widely distributed caste, are divided into many regional endogamous sub-castes.

Koli-Malhar

Malhar-Koli is a primitive tribe living mostly in the Thana district in a condition of semi-serfdom to the cultivators and jungle-contractors there. They live in small settlements in the jungles and cultivate rice in fields prepared by felling the trees. They also work as hereditary serfs in some houses but prefer their precarious existence in the jungle to the slavery of a landlord. They are skilled hunters, small in stature and not very good looking. They are however good-humoured, intelligent and skilled agriculturists. They have small colonies of six to ten huts near the jungles. The houses are always kept scrupulously clean. They are divided into exogamous clans, some of which bear the names of trees and animals. Many of these names are like those of Warlis and Katkaris with whom they share the western jungles. Cross-cousin marriage

is practised. Divorce and widow remarriage are allowed. The practice of a widow marrying her brother-in-law does not seem to exist. Malhar Kolis have been described as non-primitive agriculturists by Enthoven. It is very difficult to draw the distinction between the primitive and the non-primitive in certain regions. They are certainly not classified definitely with Bhils and Warlis but are given by the government, help and protection which are extended to the Warlis. They speak the same dialect as the Warlis.

Korku

This is a Munda or Kolarian tribe akin to the Korwas. They live in the C. P. and Berar and belong to the west of the Satpuda plateau. Some live in the Berar plain, while a few thousand are residents of Bhopal. The tribe has a language of its own which resembles that of the Kols of Chhota Nagpur. The language of Korwas, another Munda tribe found in Chhota Nagpur is known as Korku. There is little reason to doubt that the Korwas and Korkus are the same tribe though between their regions lies a great expanse of hilly territory, mainly occupied by the Gonds and other Dravidian tribes. The tribe is divided into several septs and marriage within the same sept is prohibited, so also the union of first cousins (?). Sometimes people may live together without marriage. A girl can enter and occupy the house of a man she loves and he dare not turn her out as it would show a want of gallantry. They call themselves Hindus. The sun and moon are their chief deities. They also worship Dongar Deo (the god of the hills), Mata (the goddess of small-pox) and the tiger-god. Polygamy is allowed. A man must not marry his wife's younger sister if she is the widow of a sept-brother, nor his elder brother's widow if she is the wife's elder sister. Otherwise widow remarriage is allowed. Divorce may be effected by a simple proclamation before the tribal council. The dead are buried. Linguistically and ethnically they are an isolated intrusive group in the Maharashtra region.

Kunbis and Marathas

The Kunbis and the Marathas together make up about fifty per cent of the population of Maharashtra. They are made up of numerous regional endogamous sub-castes and their hereditary occupation is agriculture. The Marathas are landowners and cultivators of western Maharashtra.

The word Kunbi in Marathi is represented by Kanbi in Gujarat and Kurmi in the United Provinces and Bihar. It is supposed to be derived from the word 'Kutumbin' in Sanskrit and means 'a householder'—one who has a settled household and land as distinguished from those of other castes who get their living as artisans or fishermen or semi-nomadic herdsmen. The word Kunbi, like Rajput, denotes a status and not a caste, and may be compared in this respect with the latter term which has no neces-

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sary ethnic significance. The fact that the Maratha Kunbis are homogeneous to a great extent is clearly due primarily to their being Marathas and not to their being Kunbis". (Enthoven, "*Castes and Tribes of Bombay*", Vol. II, p. 284).

In Maharashtra the ruling houses of petty chiefs and of the great Shivaji belonged to the Maratha caste. People of this caste claim to be Kshatriyas and many of their family names are derived either from the Rajput clan names or from the ancient ruling houses in the Deccan. These names, however, are borne not only by descendants of the historical families but also by humbler cultivators. There are also a number of clans supposed to be very blue-blooded who bear totemistic names. Among the Marathas there are many who believe that they and the Kunbis of their region belong to a common stock. A kind of hypergamy is practised whereby the well-dowered daughter of a Kunbi is accepted as bride in a poor aristocratic Maratha family, while no Maratha will give his daughter in marriage to a Kunbi. The Kunbis allow divorce, practise widow remarriage, and the women help in agricultural operations but the Maratha women are confined to the house and neither divorce nor widow remarriage is allowed. The politically conscious and progressive leaders of the Maratha community have, during the past few decades, striven to diminish and ultimately to abolish the distinction between the Marathas and the Kunbis. The distinction has remained even today as regards marriage etc., but the term 'Kunbi' has as good as vanished and every Kunbi now calls himself a Maratha, so that for western Maharashtra the term "Maratha" includes all cultivators who do not definitely have traditions of having come from outside the region, like the Lewas, Gujars etc.

Kunbis—Tirole or Tirale

The Kunbis in this sample, all belong to Eastern Maharashtra. Just as the Marathas are divided into different endogamous regional divisions, the Kunbis of Vidarbha and Nagpur are also divided into numerous regional divisions. The majority of these are called Tirole and they occupy the region from the eastern border of Khandesh up to the river Wardha and reach beyond right up to Nagpur. They allow divorce and widow remarriage and practise levirate, a custom unknown to western Maharashtra. The Tirole also hold the highest position among all cultivating castes of this area and far outnumber all other Kunbis taken together.

Mana Kunbi

Many people do not like to give the title of Kunbi to the Manas. They are a small community serving as agricultural serfs and are found in the Chanda district. Russell suggests that they are a mixture of Gonds and Kunbis. They made the impression of a poverty-stricken people living in hovels or small huts a little apart from the other communities. The community did not seem very populous and it was reported to us that a recent epidemic of cholera

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had destroyed whole villages. They have clan names and the epidemic of cholera was so severe that only one adult male was found to represent certain clans. The marriage is outside the clan. Divorce and widow remarriage are allowed. Cross-cousin marriage apparently is not allowed but a closer investigation of genealogies is needed.

Khaire Kunbi

This is also a small regional subdivision of Kunbis found in the Nagpur district and eastwards into Bhandara. They are a community slightly better-off than the Mana. They also are divided in exogamous clans. Divorce and widow remarriage are allowed. A widow may marry the husband's brother. Cross-cousin marriage is not allowed.

Dhanoje

The Dhanoje are found in the Chanda and Wun (Yeotmal) districts of the Central Provinces. They are well-built and higher in stature than the Mana or Khaire and are better clothed too. Widow remarriage and divorce are allowed. A widow may marry the deceased husband's brother.

Lewa*

This is an agricultural caste living in the North-Eastern part of Khandesh in the Talukas of Yawal, Raver, Bhusawal, Jalgaon, and Chopda and has also spread in Berar and the southern districts of Khandesh. They are thus on both sides of the Burhanpur gap. The name Lewa suggests affinities with the Lewa Kanbi of Gujarat but four facts speak against it, viz.:

- (1) Their region is Khandesh. In this region are concentrated also other immigrant elements from central and northern India like Gujars and Vanjaris.
- (2) Among Gujars there is a group which calls itself Lewa or Rewa Gujar.
- (3) The women-folk have taken to the Marathi mode of dress in cities but in the villages their dress is like that of Central India or Marwar.
- (4) Chaudhari is the commonest family name among them. That too is very common in Central India and among the Jats of Rajputana and Bharatpur.

All these facts point to a central or northern Indian origin for these people.

They are now completely Marathised and outside of Khandesh they like to call themselves Marathas. They practise cross-cousin marriage. Widow remarriage and divorce are allowed but

*(There is no record of this community in the authorities cited above).

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rarely. Their home-tongue is Marathi and their part of Khandesh has more schools than the rest of the Province. They are a very industrious and progressive community and are making their influence felt in the educational, professional and public life of the Maratha country.

Mahars*

This is the most numerous of the untouchable castes of Maharashtra. There is almost no village in this region where there are no Mahars. One finds them from the Arabian sea-coast to the jungles of Raipur and Bastar. Everywhere they speak the Marathi language and are hereditary village servants. Though a small bit of land is given to the Mahar community of each village, it is never sufficient to procure the livelihood of the community which has to depend on the good-will of the villagers for their subsistence. The hereditary work of the Mahars is to remove the dead cattle from the village, to sweep the village streets, to run errands for the village officers, and to keep a watch on the village property etc. The Mahar is generally the principal witness in disputes about boundaries of fields etc. It is said that the Mahar walks more than all the villagers put together. In modern times the cities with their growing factories have offered the Mahars the opportunity to escape from the narrow tyranny of hereditary serfdom and untouchability and they have availed themselves greedily of this opportunity. The main labour force in the Nagpur Textile Mills is that of Mahars. The makers of native leaf-cigarettes in the eastern districts of Bhandara and Gondia are mostly Mahars. The textile mills of Bombay have drawn Mahar-labour and the sugar-mills of the Nagar district are also manned to a large extent by the Mahars. They are thus becoming rapidly urbanised. A large number was also converted to Christianity in the last century but conversions have practically stopped now except in Eastern Maharashtra where the Missions are still very active. The Mahar sample is drawn from Nagpur, Poona and Belapur (near Nagar). The Bavane sample is drawn from the region east of the Wainganga river called the Bavan Thadi and is treated separately. The Mahars are divided into numerous endogamous regional divisions. The septs are not always clearly defined. The surnames which are used as clan-names are in many cases the same as those of the Marathas and Kunbis. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed. Divorce and widow remarriage are also allowed. A widow does not marry her husband's brother. The Mahars claim to be about ten per cent. of the whole Marathi population. It is a very mixed community ranging in skin colour from very fair to dark and cannot generally be distinguished from the other communities except through their poverty and dress.

*Mahar-Bavane are the Mahars of the Wainganga valley. We got the sample in a body and as these Mahars disclaimed marriage with other Mahars we have shown them as a separate group.

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Mang

Mang as a caste is scattered all over the region but is nowhere very numerous. They live in a quarter called Mangvada separate from all others and even from the Mahars. They are ranked lower than the Mahars and very great rivalry exists between the two. The Mangs have a sub-division called Garudis i.e., snake-charmers who lead a wandering life, and are divided into several endogamous divisions which are again divided into exogamous clans. Cross-cousin marriage, divorce and widow remarriage are allowed among the Mangs. A widow must not marry a person belonging to her husband's clan. The Mangs bury their dead. The Mangs are hard working. They make and sell ropes from sisal and *Hibiscus Connabinus*. They are musicians and songsters, and weave bamboo baskets.

Nhavi

The hereditary profession of a Nhavi is that of a barber though now they are taking to other professions also. The caste is called Varik in Sholapur and in the Marathwada, while in Berar and Nagpur it is called Mhali. The barber is an indispensable member of the village community and is paid in kind at the time of the harvest. In Gujarat and northern India their social position is quite high. In the Maratha country they rank with the agriculturists and call themselves artisans while in the south they are near untouchables. Besides shaving the hair and pairing the nails, the Nhavi practises surgery, i.e., opening boils and abscesses and bleeding by applying leeches. Sometimes the Nhavis hold torches in marriage processions and serve the guests with food at Maratha weddings in Khandesh. Most of the Nhavi women act as midwives. The Maratha Nhavi refused to shave untouchables and a few other castes, Europeans, native Christians and Muslims. In their clan-names, endogamous and exogamous divisions and food habits they resemble the Marathas. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed. Some regional divisions allow widow remarriage and divorce but the highest divisions do not allow these practices. They worship the usual Hindu gods and cremate their dead. The present sample is drawn mostly from western Maharashtra.

Parit

Parits are the washermen. They are not held as untouchables. The present sample is from Western Maharashtra. The Parits are divided into regional endogamous divisions and also into exogamous clans. Cross-cousin marriage, widow remarriage and divorce are allowed. A widow must not marry into her husband's clan. They generally burn their dead. They worship all the Hindu gods and resemble Kunbis in their dress and food.

Pathare Kshatriya

Pathare Kshatriya is a tiny community confined to the Bombay region. They have a tradition that they were originally Pathare

CHAPTER 2. Prabhu but formed a separate caste owing to some obscure quarrel. They follow the professions of clerks, teachers, doctors etc. They practise cross-cousin marriage. Divorce and widow remarriage are not allowed.

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Powar

(Also called Panwar, Puar, Ponwar and Parmara Rajputa). The Powar or Parmara is one of the most ancient and famous of Rajput clans. The kings of Malwa from the ninth to the twelfth century belonged to this clan. Their capital was Dhar and even now all Powars claim to have come from Dhar. The capital was sacked by the Muslims under Shahb-ud-din Ghorī about 1190 and the Powars who were driven out of their city, spread to various places in Northern and Central India and Maharashtra. One branch of the clan came to Nagpur and from there spread and settled in the rice-country of the Wainganga Valley in eastern Maharashtra. One of their legends is that the men who first came had no wives and were therefore allowed to take widows of other castes into their houses. The existing family names show that they are of a mixed origin but the Rajput strain is clearly discernible in their fair complexion, straight noses and light eyes. They show great skill in constructing tanks and irrigating rice-fields and are the best agricultural caste in this part of the country. Both divorce and remarriage are allowed. Divorce, however, is very rare as a lenient view of a wife's misconduct is taken by the people. Widows generally fetch a very high bride price. Concubinage is practised very widely. House maids of other castes like Gonds, Dhiwar, Korku etc., are often concubines of the master of the house. Their children may have given rise to the new clan-names like Korku, Bhoyar Kohli etc. among the Powars today. Marriage by service is also practised. Cross-cousin marriage is not allowed. At the time when we measured the people we found them an enterprising community, many taking up professions like teachers, pleaders, lawyers, etc., though the majority were prosperous land-owners and cultivators.

Prabhu (C.K.P.)

The full name of the caste is Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu to distinguish it from the Pathare Prabhu. From this rather long title the first part Chandraseniya seems to have no historical importance. Chandrasena, the mythical progenitor of the caste, seems not to be a historical personage at all, but merely the product of the fancy of people who thereby thought to raise the status of the caste. The next two appellations are important. The word Kayastha is of very ancient origin and was applied to a class of people who were professional writers and sometimes traders. The Kayasthas are found all over northern India and are the most influential caste there. They play a prominent part in the fields of education, law, medicine and writing. Being professional writers they were always engaged at the courts of the ancient Hindu kings and later on by the

Muslims. They are hence an entirely urban caste. The Kayasthas of the Maratha country are very probably a branch of these northern Kayasthas. When exactly they came south and settled here cannot be determined but that must have been in very ancient times. They are now completely Marathised. The word 'Prabhu' is found as a title or a surname among other castes also. Thus we have 'Pathare Prabhu' as a caste name in Bombay. We find 'Prabhu' as a surname among the Sarasvat Brahmins. It is also found coupled with titles of revenue officers like 'Prabhu Desai.' Prabhu means literally "the ruler" but in this context it is used for some ministerial job or the function of a revenue officer. The Kayasthas as expert writers and computers were employed as revenue officers. During the Maratha fight against Aurangzeb they distinguished themselves as loyal and staunch supporters of Shivaji, Sambhaji and Rajaram and made a name as warriors also. They are today mostly government employees, teachers, lawyers, doctors etc. They are intellectually keen and are a progressive community. They allow cross-cousin marriage but neither divorce nor widow remarriage is allowed. Their way of living, dress, worship, cremation ceremonies, are like those of the Brahmins except that they eat fish, fowl and mutton. They are mostly concentrated in the region north of Bombay and are found in great numbers in the cities of Bombay and Poona. Some families are found in the villages near the Western Ghats where they hold inam lands.

Pathare Prabhu

This is a small community confined to the Bombay region only. Whatever their origin, these people held posts of revenue officers under the kings of Mahim near Bombay. They made a headway especially during the first phase after the British conquered the Maratha empire and entered the professional and commercial life of Bombay city during the latter part of the last century. Owing to the competition of other communities they have not been able to keep their former position in Bombay though they are still an enterprising and progressive community. We have not been able to find out the meaning of the appellation Pathare. They practise cross-cousin marriage. In other respects they are like the other professional communities of Bombay. Being non-Brahmins they are not vegetarians.

Sali

This is a weaver caste like Koshti and is divided into many endogamous sub-divisions. Many of the Sali sub-castes seem to be of Kannada origin. They worship the goddess Shakambhari whose shrine is situated in Karnatak. Enthoven thinks that they originated as specialised artisans from Hatkar Dhanagars, the blanket weavers. The Salis are found all over the Desh region and also in Konkan. A man may marry his maternal uncle's daughter as also his paternal aunt's daughter. This type of cross-cousin marriage also

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connects them with Karnatak. Both divorce and widow remarriage are allowed. A widow must not remarry in her husband's clan. Salis are Vaishnavites. Some have Lingayat divisions, but these are mostly in or near the border of Karnatak. The dead are generally burnt but those who die of small-pox or leprosy or cholera are buried.

Shimpi

The hereditary profession of the caste is sewing clothes. Though they now take up other professions a majority still follows the ancestral trade. They are found throughout the region and are divided into endogamous sub-castes according to regional divisions. The highest in rank among these is supposed to be the Namdev Shimpi sub-caste and as usual every one tries to pass off as one. An attempt is being made by the leaders of the caste to merge the smaller endogamous divisions into one caste called Shimpi. From the original Shimpi community there is not much objection to the scheme, but a difficulty arises from the tendency of people of other well-established castes like Brahmins to take up this lucrative profession in modern times. The Shimpis are found in all the towns and a few in the bigger villages. From the very nature of their profession they are a scattered community. They practise cross-cousin marriage. Both divorce and widow remarriage are permitted. A widow cannot marry a man from her husband's clan. The dead are cremated. In all other respects they are like well-to-do agriculturists who take food at their hands and whose food is eaten by the Shimpis in return. There is, however, no intermarriage among Kunbis and Shimpis.

Sonar

The Sonars are the gold and silver-smiths. They have many endogamous communities according to the various sub-regions in Maharashtra. The Abhir Sonars belong to Khandesh. They are treated as a separate caste as a sufficient number could be measured in Jalgaon, Dhulia and Chalisgaon. The Daivajnya Sonars belong to Konkan and are found mostly in Bombay. They also are treated as a separate caste, as a sufficient number from this community could be measured in the city of Bombay. All the other Sonars were measured at various places and are grouped together as the third sample of the community. They seem to be recruited from different folk elements. Some of their sub-castes like Malwi and Ladwan claim to have come from Central India. The Ahir and the Daivajnya and the others listed here all practised cross-cousin marriage. The Daivajnyas claim to be Brahmins and seem to have practised astrology as their name shows. Though some of them are taking to other professions, a majority still keeps to the ancestral craft as it involves great skill and is generally quite lucrative.

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Sonkolis

"Sonkolis are the fishermen of Bombay. They are found along the North Konkan coast from Bassein to Ratnagiri in the south. They are very numerous in Kolaba. Distinguished physically from the other inhabitants by their light brown complexion, the round curves of the face and the smiling expression, they are equally distinguished by their bearing, dialect and occupation". Enthoven supposes them to be a branch of the Hill Kolis. These people have a mode of dress quite distinct from all other castes in Bombay. Their ornaments also, though very artistic are extremely heavy. In this caste the men go fishing at night and return early in the morning. Once they bring the catch to the shore their duty and responsibility is over. They leave the boats and go home to have hot food and a bath and go to sleep. It is very difficult to catch the men for purposes of measurement. We did it in three or four trips early in the morning and on days when they did not put out to sea. The women take charge of the catch, sort it out, take the best to the market on their heads and dry and salt other types of fish and prawns. A fishing village has always a beautifully polished piece of open space, parts of which belong to various families. On this fisherwomen spread the catch of prawns and small fish for drying and it always makes a very colourful picture. The women are very strong and lithe, are clever and have a head for business. The whole transaction of selling the fish is their monopoly. The men-folk appear like big hulking people, but rather sheepish in comparison to the women. Some women are extremely beautiful but hard work soon ages them. They are an industrious and a well-to-do community, very hospitable, sociable and loyal. A few of them are taking to other professions. They spend considerably on drink and in marriage ceremonies.

Teli

The Telis are oil pressers. They are divided into numerous endogamous divisions according to the sub-regions, the particular oil-seeds which they use and some other customs. In Berar, Nagpur and Khandesh they are called Chowdharis which suggests that the oilmen there are immigrants from the north. In western Maharashtra they bear the same surnames as the Kunbis and have exogamous clans which are based on the so called Devak system which is also comparable to that of the Kunbis and the Marathas. The hereditary occupation of the caste is to press oil from sesamum, *hagplum* (*ambada*), linseed, *calophyllum inophyllum* (*undi*), ground-nuts, *carthamus tinctorius* (*kardi*), niger seed (*karala*), coconut and castor-seed. They allow cross-cousin marriage, marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter being the preferred form, though the other is also tolerated. Divorce and widow remarriage are allowed. The dead are cremated. They worship the usual gods of the Hindu pantheon, the planet Saturn being their special deity. The present sample is from Nagpur and Khandesh.

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Thakur

The Thakurs are a jungle tribe of the western hill ranges and extend from Nasik to Kolaba. This tribe lives in or near forests but always chooses a level spot for its hamlet. Mr. Chapekar, an ethnologist who has surveyed them recently, calls them the farmers of the high level forest lands. They hold aloof from other castes and live by themselves. They contend that they are of Rajput origin and trace their descent from Rajput fugitives from Gujarat during the reign of Mahmud Begada (1459-1511). The word Thakur or Thakor is used for a ruler in Gujarat. The men are very scantily dressed. The women wear a sari tightly round the hips and tucked up so high that the legs and part of the thighs are left bare. They do not cover the upper part of the body with their sari but wear only a bodice and a heap of heavy necklaces of white, blue and red glass beads. Their names are Marathi but some seem to be of Gujarati origin. They have two endogamous divisions called Ka-Thakurs and Ma-Thakurs, the origin of which is unknown. They are divided in exogamous clans which have surnames like those of the Marathas and have different trees as Devaks. People having the same Devak generally have the same surname and must not marry. A man may marry a maternal uncle's daughter but not the paternal aunt's daughter. Sometimes men and women live together without marriage but perform the ceremony at the time when their children get married. Divorce and widow re-marriage are allowed. The Thakurs worship Hindu gods and also many spirits of the forests. They bury their dead. They are husbandmen and till up-land fields. Some of these fields are extremely small, hardly ten feet by ten. Wherever they find a bit of plain ground they sow *nachni* and mountain rice. Their tillage is done by the hand and hoe. When they are not engaged in tillage they gather firewood and honey for sale and wild fruits and roots for their own consumption.

Tvashta Kasar

The Tvashta Kasars have the hereditary work of making pots out of brass, bell metal and copper. Theirs is skilled work requiring physical strength also. They are well made, sometimes tall, with regular features and a light complexion. They formerly claimed to be Brahmins but that claim is not put forward now as the urgency for it has vanished. In its household and customs the community is like Brahmins. These people have now taken up many professions and are quite well-to-do. They are found in large numbers in Bombay, Poona and Nasik. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed but not widow re-marriage. They worship Hindu Gods and cremate their dead. They eat fish and flesh of deer, hare, sheep etc.

Vaishya Vani

Vaishya Vani is a trading community of the west-coast. They are found in great numbers in Bombay. Though a few are petty

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traders, most people have taken to various professions. They are divided into several endogamous groups which in turn are divided into exogamous groups based on totemistic conceptions. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed. Divorce and widow remarriage are not allowed. They worship all the Hindu gods and cremate their dead.

Somavamshi Vadaval (not described by Enthoven)

Somavamshi Vadaval is a small community found in the city of Bombay and in its northern region up to Bassein. They are the owners and cultivators of beautiful plantations of bananas and chewing leaf. They also grow other fruits and vegetables. They use Warli labour for this purpose. They are an industrious people. Many of them have now taken to other professions. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed, while divorce and widow re-marriage are not. They worship Hindu gods. Some people are strict vegetarians while others eat fish and flesh of sheep, deer, hare, etc. They are a small community confined to the Bombay region.

Vanjari

The Vanjari or Banjari also known as Lamans or Lambadis is a very wide-spread tribe. It is found in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnatak and Andhra. The hereditary occupation of this tribe was to carry merchandise, chiefly grain, salt and other eatables like dates, cocoanuts etc., from one part of the country to the other on the back of bullocks. They were the grain-carriers for different armies and as such had many concessions and grants given to them by the Moghal kings. The tribe is recruited from various folk-elements but their clan-names and certain marriage rites etc., suggest origin from Rajput or other north-western castes. They travelled throughout the length and breadth of India in great caravans, sometimes made up of thousands of bullocks. They themselves defended these caravans against the onslaught of bandits. They thus combined the qualities of bravery, courage and enterprise which one sees in many of the trading communities of the Punjab, Sind, Kathiawar and Rajputana. They are worshippers of all the Hindu gods, but specially of the mother goddess, one incarnation of whom is the Hinglaj Mata whose temple is situated in Sind almost on the border of Baluchistan. No Maharashtra community worships this goddess. It therefore seems true that Vanjaris have come from the north and have now settled in Maharashtra. Even now they are settlers in the border districts of Khandesh and Berar. They have their settlements away from the villages and live in the open in small huts though some richer people have now built big stone-houses.

They have numerous endogamous sub-divisions which are again divided into exogamous groups, many of which have Rajput clan-names. Cross-cousin marriage is not allowed. Divorce is allowed.

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Widow re-marriage and levirate are also allowed. A fine is levied on a widow if she does not marry her husband's brother. The married dead are burnt and the unmarried are buried. They deal in cattle and are settled as agriculturists now. A variety of bullock, tall and with long legs is called Lamani bullock and is preferred by these people as a pack bullock. The men's dress is like that of the Marathas. The women's dress is like that of Malwa or Rajput women. They are good needle-women and do lovely embroidery on their dresses and men's blankets. They eat fish and flesh of sheep, goat, hare, deer etc. They drink liquor and a peculiar opium concoction called Kusumba.

Warli

Warlis are a hill tribe found mostly in the Thana district, though some are found in Nasik, Khandesh and Surat districts also. They are darker than the Thakurs, but fairer and better built than Kataris with whom they share this tract. The men are clad only in a loin-cloth while women wear a sari (without bodice) which also covers their breasts. In Khandesh they have the upper part uncovered by the sari, a custom similar to the Bhils.

The home tongue of the Warlis differs little from that of the local Kunbis except that they clip their words. They use several non-Marathi words, the origin of which is not yet studied. They use the word *gaytel* for clarified butter or ghee. *Gaytel* literally means "the oil from the cow". This shows that the tribe became acquainted with domestic cattle and with milk-fat when they came in contact with the agricultural castes. They are both settled and wandering. They live in small communities and grow rice in jungle clearings, but when not so occupied will wander in search of work. They work almost as hereditary serfs, bound by small debts incurred by them, in the houses, gardens and fields of Brahmins, Wadvals and other agriculturists of the districts. The Government is now freeing these serfs and giving them grants of land in the jungle tract. A few years ago there was a terrible rising of this oppressed and much-abused community against landlords and timber merchants when they burnt the houses of many of the latter. The Warlis have a few endogamous divisions and many exogamous clans bearing different surnames. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed. Divorce and widow remarriage are also allowed. Sometimes Warlis perform their marriage along with that of their children. They have their own priests and priestesses. They worship their own tribal gods. They either bury or burn their dead. They eat rice and other grains besides the produce of the jungle and all kind of game. They are immoderately fond of drinking.

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The Gujarat Castes¹

Audich Brahmins.—They are the most numerous of the Brahmin community of Gujarat.

Bhil.—The most numerous tribe of Gujarat.

Bhil and Others.—Different types of Bhils are put in this group.

Bhadela.—They are a sea-faring Muslim community of Sunni sect.

Bhatta.—They are a trading community.

Bhangi.—Sweepers of Gujarat.

Koli.—They include people from tribal origins and agricultural castes. They are fishers, boatmen, carriers and porters.

Kunbi Pattidar.—The largest agricultural castes of Gujarat.

Khoja.—A Muslim trading community.

Machi Kharwa.—A coastal population serving as salt sellers and also sailors.

Luhana.—A trading community.

Memon.—Muslim traders.

Meher.—A martial caste of Gujarat and Kathiawar.

Miana.—Wandering nomadic people. A semi-criminal tribe—Muslims. *

Nagar Brahmins.—A Brahmin caste of Gujarat.

Oswal Jains.—Trading community.

Rabari.—A pastoral caste of Gujarat and Kathiawar; keep cows, buffaloes, goats and camels.

Rajput.—The warrior and ruling caste in Gujarat.

Sunni Bora.—A prosperous Muslim trading community.

Wagher.—Partly Hindus and partly Muslims. A semi-criminal tribe.

Parsi.—See page 114 of this book.

Orissa Castes

Agaria

They live in the Sundergad Division of Orissa as a compact group in villages where the other population is Munda and Khadia. They claim to have come to their present area from Agra in the western India. They are very good looking. The richer peasants wear many gold ornaments. Their good looks and the elaborate ornaments of their women offer a great contrast to the primitive features and the poverty of their neighbours, the Khadia and the Munda.

Binzhal is a small tribe living round about Padampur (on the border of Madhya Pradesh) with chieftains who also are Binzhals. They are industrious cultivators of rich rice lands. The ruler is also

¹ These notes are based on the monograph of Shri D. N. Majumdar "Race Realities in Cultural Gujarat", Research Society, Bombay, 1950.

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their priest and perhaps was in olden days the medicineman (Barhia).

Bhatra

A caste of cultivators in the south of Orissa in Jeypore Division.

Bhuan or Bhuia

This tribe is found both in the north and the south. The northern Bhuia were measured mostly in Keonjhar and neighbouring area while the southern sample was taken in the neighbourhood of Koraput and Jeypore. They are good cultivators and live in quite big villages. The two samples are shown separately.

Bondo or Bando Porja are a small tribe living in South Orissa. They grow cereals and also gather roots and fruits and trade in wood and honey. Apparently they are a quarrelsome people and an enormous percentage of the tiny population is in jail. Almost one third of my sample is taken in the district jail. They speak a Mundari language.

Brahmins

Of the Orissa Brahmins I secured measurements of two sub-castes. The one, Aranayak in Sambalpur and Cuttack and the other the Samavedins in Cuttack and Puri. Tradition says that the Samavedins hail from Bengal while the Aranayak belong to the forested regions of north-west Orissa and may have come into Orissa through the Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh.

Dora are a southern agricultural tribe like Bhatra belonging to Koraput and Jeypore Divisions of Orissa.

Gadaba is an important tribe speaking a Mundari language and is found in the whole of Koraput and Jeypore Divisions. The measurements were taken in the little hamlets round about Jeypore and in the weekly *hats* or markets held at different villages nearby. They are a hard-working people busy in growing the cash-crop of niger-seed in winter and rice in summer.

Gond

This is a great tribe spread over a very large area in Northern and Central Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Bastar and northern Hyderabad. They speak the language of the region in which they find themselves but besides that they have a language of their own called the Gondi. It belongs to the Dravidian family of languages. This sample was taken in Keonjhar in the north and Nowrangpur in the south. They all practise agriculture.

Gwala are a caste of cowherds and are found all over Orissa. The present sample was taken at an All-Orissa Gwala Conference held at Cuttack while I was there. The conveners very kindly allowed me to take measurements after the session.

Juang are a small Mundari-speaking tribe living in the Keonjhar area.

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Kondh is a very numerous tribe found mostly in Orissa though a few are recorded from the adjoining areas of Madhya Pradesh also. They are forest cultivators who grow both rice and niger-seed. They speak a Dravidian language. Their area is known as Kondh mala i.e., the plateau of the Kondhs and it is spread from Central Orissa in Fulbani division to Koraput and Jeypore in the south.

Karan is the name given to the Kayastha caste in Orissa. It is an urban caste whose hereditary work is being revenue clerks and accountants. They are a well educated people practising many professions now.

Keut is the same as Hindi Kewata from the Sanskrit word Kaivarta which itself seems to be the name of a tribe practising fishing on the great northern rivers. Keut are people who fish the rivers. They also manufacture and sell fried and popped rice.

Khadia is a small tribe living in the Sundergad division as neighbours and agricultural labourers for the Agaria. They speak a Mundari language.

Khandayat is a cultivating caste with traditions of being fighters and soldiers. They have many analogies with the Marathas and have traditions of being mixed with the Maratha soldiers when the Marathas had occupied Orissa in the latter half of the 18th century. One of the samples I measured had a Maratha name and so had his wife and child though they did not speak Marathi.

Koya are found in the extreme south of Orissa and reach almost to the Godavari river. They practise a little agriculture and supplement it by hunting and food-gathering. They speak a Dravidian language and seem to be akin to the Gonds.

Kulta or Kolta is the chief cultivating caste round about the region of Bargadha near Sambalpur.

Kumhar is the potter caste. These people are found all over Orissa. They have a big settlement near Puri where they have to deliver hundreds of pots daily for the kitchen of the God. The present sample has been taken at Puri.

Meher is one of the weaving castes of Orissa. The present sample was taken in Padampur, where a Binzhal chieftain rules and where Binzhal measurements were taken.

Munda next to Oraons is the most numerous tribe of southern Bihar and northern Orissa. They are skilled agriculturists and have a very advanced village organisation. From place-names and the accounts of other tribal people it appears that the Munda with other related tribes (Asur, Khadia etc.) were the original inhabitants of this area. Their language is Munda and the languages allied to it are called Mundari languages.

Pana pronounced Pano or Pana are the untouchable caste of Orissa. Numerically and functionally there are many analogies

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between Pana of Orissa, Mahar of Maharashtra and Holer of Karnatak. They are found in almost all districts of Orissa, in the big cities as also next door to the primitives*.

Porja is a cultivating caste of south Orissa. Porja is the same word as Sanskrit *Praja* and means "subjects". The cultivators as well as the primitives of southern Orissa as the subjects of the Raja of Vijayanagar call themselves or are called Porja. Thus we have "Bhatra-Porja", "Bondo-Porja" etc.

Savara or **Saora** is a semi-primitive tribe. In the north they have become a part of the life of the villages and cities and are e.g. suppliers of fuel to the city of Cuttack. They are found everywhere except in the extreme north and the extreme south. In the Gunpur area there are whole Saora villages where they live in a more primitive condition than the Saora of the north. Saora is the same as Sanskrit *Shabara* and are first mentioned in the epic *Ramayana* as a tribal people living in the Vindhyan forests. They speak a Mundari language.

Bhangi or **Sweeper** is an urban caste apparently made up of very heterogeneous folk elements. Such a caste (removers of night-soil) finds no mention in classical Sanskrit texts. Bhangis in western India assert that the caste came into being with the advent of the Mahomedans. They occupied a very low position in the caste hierarchy and have no hereditary rights like the Pana and Mahar in the village community. They are found in all big cities and the present sample is taken from the Hospital Bhangis at Cuttack.

Oran or **Uraon** are the most numerous of the primitive tribes in the jungle area of South Bihar and Northern Orissa. They are skilled agriculturists and have a well developed village organisation. They speak a Dravidian language.

KARNATAK CASTES

Adikarnatak (Holeya) is the name given to or assumed by an untouchable caste of Karnatak in the Mysore State. The name suggests that they were the original inhabitants of the land but for this there is no proof. Their other name Holeya places them in the same group as the Holer of north Karnatak.

Agasa or **Madival** are washermen, a caste which according to the old caste hierarchy has a very lowly place.

Ager is a caste in Ankola and Karwar districts on the west coast of Karnatak. In the villages it lives in a locality of its own, and is held to be almost untouchable.

*Dr. Verrier Elwin has, I think, not estimated correctly the role of the Dom, the Pana and the Mahar as the groups most in contact with primitives. He writes bitterly about these castes and holds them up as the people who have spoilt the virtue and the chastity of his beloved primitives. I feel, in this estimate, Elwin is wrong in cultural evaluation of both the so-called primitives and of these untouchable castes. cf.—Elwin—*Maria Murder and Suicide*, pp. 1-10.

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Banajiga or **Shetti** is a trading caste mostly Lingayat. It is found in all districts of the Karnatak plateau.

Babbur Kamme is a Brahmin sub-caste found in Mysore belonging to Krishna Yajurveda Apastamba branch.

Rigvedi Brahmin is a Brahmin sub-caste found in north Karnatak and seems to be of Maharashtra origin.

Hoyasala Karnatak is a Brahmin sub-caste found in Mysore. They seem to have been patronised by the Hoyasala kings of Karnatak.

Havig is a Brahmin caste found mostly around the sacred town of Gokarna and in Kumta and Karwar on the west coast.

Other Brahmins. This item is made up of all other Brahmins measured, who did not belong to the castes enumerated above.

Devang Koshti are weavers of north Karnatak and found in the weaving centres of Guledgud, Dharwar, etc.

Ganiga or **Sajjan** is the oil-presser caste of Karnatak. The sample is mostly from north Karnatak.

Gangadikar Vokkaliga is the major agricultural caste of south, central and western Mysore. They have traditions of being settled here by the Ganga kings of Karnatak.

Gangemata or **Ambiger** or **Kabbaliga** are the fishermen of the upland rivers in Karnatak. They are analogous to the Koli of Maharashtra.

Gauda is an agricultural caste of Coorg.

Halakki Vokkal is an agricultural caste working as labourers in the fields of higher agriculturists in Kumta, Ankola and Karwar.

Harkantra are the sea-fishers of Kumta, Ankola and Karwar.

Holer is an untouchable caste of north Mysore.

Jangam is a caste which functions as the priests and spiritual leaders of the Lingayat community of Mysore. They are found in all districts of Mysore.

Kunchitiga is an agricultural caste of south and east Mysore.

Jenu Kuruba. Kuruba means a shepherd in Mysore. There are many sub-castes among shepherds but the word Kuruba is also applied to jungle tribes who keep no domestic animals. Jenu Kuruba is a jungle tribe of Coorg, south of Mysore. Jenu is honey and these tribals lived almost entirely on honey at certain times of the year. They also gather and sell honey.

Bette Kuruba live in the same territory as Jenu Kuruba. Bette is hill. These are hill-Kuruba.

Kuruba-Hattikankan. This sub-caste of shepherds weaves woollen rugs and blankets. It receives its name from the fact that it wears a bracelet (*kankan*) of cotton fibre (*hatti*).

Kuruba, in Mysore is a wide spread caste which calls itself simply Kuruba. This sample is taken from this caste in north Mysore State.

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Kodagu is the land-owning agricultural and fighting caste of Coorg. They live in patriarchal and patrilineal clans and are the aristocracy of Coorg.

Mukri is a lowly caste of the west-coast of Mysore. They look and dress like the primitives and have their habitations always a little removed from the villages.

Nadavara is a land owning caste of Ankola and Karwar. They claim to be the same as Bant, a Tulu-speaking agricultural caste of Mangalore. The Bant are matrilineal. While all the Nadavara families I met were patrilineal.

Namdhari is an agricultural caste of the west coast and is found in the same localities as the Nadavara and also further eastwards in the woods and hills.

Palegar is a caste which was once known as fighters and had established small kingdoms in the south. They seem to have been professional fighters though now they practise agriculture. That does not seem however to be their chief occupation. They are also called Hallikar and Naik.

Panchamsali is a name applied among the Lingayats to a large division of people who are neither Jangams nor Banajiga nor artisans. They are day-labourers and work mostly on fields. Some are tenant farmers.

Kuda Vokkaliga is a Lingayat caste of agriculturists. One does not know whether some of them gave the name of their caste as Panchamsali.

Pattasali is a weaving caste of north Mysore and is found at Dharwar, Ranibennur, and Guledgud.

Sadaru is a land-owning caste of north-Mysore.

Sholega is a primitive tribe living in the Biligiri Rangan Hills on the border of Mysore and the State of Madras.

Valmiki, also called Talawar is the caste of village watchmen. They are found in north Mysore.

Bogar is the caste which makes brass and bronze pots and is analogous in function to the Tvashta Kasar of Maharashtra.

Samagar also called Madiga are the leather workers and shoemakers.

Panchal Sonar or **Vishavakarma**, is the goldsmith caste and considers itself on par with Brahmins. It is analogous in function and status to the Daivadnya Sonars of Maharashtra.

Only a few characteristics are taken for comparison in the following description. The data on which the analysis is based is not complete. However, the following analysis is made in the hope that it would cast some light on the process of colonization of Maharashtra and help one to understand the elements which have gone into the making of the region. In the charts given on pp. 11–13, the people of Maharashtra have been put on a graph representing shape of head, shape of nose, and size of heads as judged from horizontal circumference. Anthropologists recognise mainly three types of head shape : long-headed called dolichocephalic, medium headed called mesocephalic, and broad-headed called brachycephalic. The number which represents the values of the three types gives the units of breadth per hundred units of head length. This is called the length-breadth index of the head. The index for dolicho is 77, for meso between 77 and 82 and for brachy it is 82+. There are types with extremely long heads with indices below 73, or people with extremely broad heads with indices above 85, who are called hyperdolicho or hyperbrachycephals. We need not consider these at all. In fact, the range for Maharashtra does not reach brachycephaly. In the same way, the nasal index is given by a figure representing breadth in percentages of length. Leptorrhine or narrow-nosed people are those with an index between 55 and 70, mesorrhine or middle-nosed people are those whose index is 70 to 85 and chamaerrhine are those who have an index between 85 and 100. In Maharashtra there is only one caste with nasal index below 70 and few above 85. That is to say, most of the people are mesorrhine. As regards the size of head a very rough measurement is attempted by taking the circumference of the head which ranges between 518.72 mm. and 546.20 mm. In the graphs and description below all these three measurements are combined. This graph is divided into four parts. The horizontal line has above it, people with broader noses, and below it, people with narrower noses. The vertical line has to its left people with smaller heads, and to its right people with bigger heads.

The left-hand bottom corner which represents people with medium noses and small circumference of head contains Bhils (primitive people), Bhangis (scheduled caste) from Gujarat, Valmiki (scheduled caste) from Karnatak, Bawane Mahar, a scheduled caste from the banks of the Wainganga river, Kohali and Khaire, agricultural people belonging to Bhandara and Nagpur region, and Agri, a low caste from the Konkan coast.

People in the top left-hand part have nasal indices above 80 and their head circumference is less than 532 mm. No people from Gujarat are found in this division, and only one tribe from Orissa, namely Uraon. Bhil, Mahadev Koli, Warli and Katkari are primitive tribes belonging to Western Maharashtra. Halbi are a semi-primitive tribe from eastern Maharashtra. Mang and Dheewar are castes, one western and the other eastern, traditionally supposed to belong to a very low status. Jenu Kuruba, Bette

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Kuruba, Sholega are primitive tribes of the Karnatak plateau and Mukri is a scheduled caste from the Karnatak coast. We thus see that most of the primitive people of Maharashtra and Karnatak and some scheduled castes fall into this quarter.

We see also that people who have broad noses, smaller circumference of head and who are dolichocephals are primitive people and scheduled castes from Maharashtra and Karnatak. Those with slightly finer noses are primitive tribes and scheduled castes from Gujarat.

The top right hand corner represents people with broad noses, narrow heads and larger circumference of head. Most of the Orissa tribal people are found here. They are Binzhal, Koya, northern Bhuia, Bondo Porja, Gond, Savara, Dora, Munda, Bhatra, Juang, Gadaba, Kharia, Porja, Khond, two agricultural castes, the Kulta and Khandayat, and Kumhar. There are two coastal castes from Karnatak, Ager and Halakka Vokkal. There is not a single caste or tribe from Maharashtra or Gujarat. This graph clearly brings out the physical distinction between the western primitives and the eastern primitives.

The bottom right-hand corner, representing people who are long-headed, who have bigger horizontal circumference of the head and who have smaller noses, has four Orissa castes, one Karnatak caste, and four Maharashtra castes. Of the Maharashtra castes, Leva, Gujar and Powar are immigrants from the north. The Karahada Brahmins belong to the west coast. Koli, a large group of people living in the mountainous regions of Sahyadri, occupy almost the centre of all the four sections. They are a group which is between primitives and agriculturists in social ranking. They possibly represent an old layer of inhabitants who, if the name means anything, must have spread from Maharashtra right into Gujarat. Unlike the primitives, they have a place in the caste society, have whole villages which belong only to them but are also found in multicaste villages.

This first graph on p. 11 nearly exhausts all the Orissa castes. A little less than half the Maharashtra castes are in this graph. Of these, most are primitives, lower agriculturists and immigrants from the north. Only one-fifth of the Karnatak groups are found here. They are mostly the primitives, and one or two Gujarat Castes.

The next graph on p. 12 contains people who are lower mesocephals. This graph, again divided into four, gives us people in the lower left-hand corner who have medium noses and smaller head circumference. Among these, there are eleven Maharashtra castes, which range from a Brahmin caste, to lower agriculturists, and service castes. They are Charak Brahmins, Ahir-Sonar (Sonar from Khandesh), Shimpi, Chambhar (people from scheduled tribes), Khutekar Dhanagar, Vanjari, Bari and Bhavsar. Of these, Charak and Bari belong to the east while the others belong to the west coast. The only Gujarat

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caste is represented by Koli, and there are two Karnatak castes of lower rank, Agasa and Samagara. In the upper left-hand corner, there are two Karnatak castes of lower rank, Gangemata and Holer, and one Orissa caste, again of lower rank, Sweeper. The rest are Maharashtra castes. Sonar which is a middle-ranking caste, Teli which is below Sonar, and the rest, namely, Tadavi Bhil, Mavachi Bhil, Thakur and Korku are all primitive tribes.

Among the lower mesocephals, one finds groups from all ranks in the division with smaller noses and smaller circumference of head. A few primitives which were not in the dolichocephal group find a place here among the broad-nosed lower mesocephals with a small circumference of head.

In the Upper right-hand corner, we have three Orissa castes, one Karnatak caste, two middle-ranking castes of eastern Maharashtra, namely Dhanoje and Halbi-Koshti and one scheduled caste, the Mahar, from western Maharashtra.

The lower right-hand corner is very crowded, contains two Orissa castes, eleven Maharashtra castes of middle to higher rank, fourteen Karnatak castes, also of middle to higher order and many Gujarat castes. Five Gujarat castes show noses finer than all the other castes. Among the Gujarat castes, there are people from lower to the highest rank. Thirty-one Maharashtra castes, nineteen Karnatak castes, six Orissa castes and ten Gujarat castes are found in this graph. The Maharashtra castes found in this graph seem to be both in east and west Maharashtra.

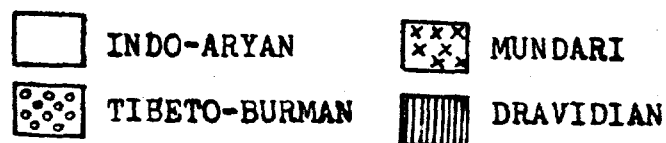
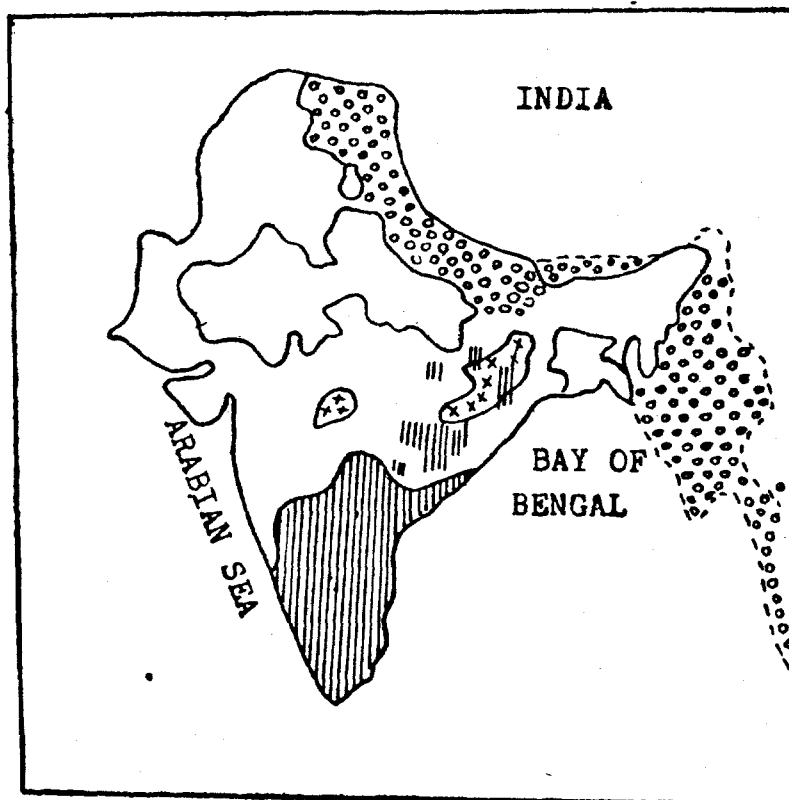
The last graph, (p. 13), which is made up of higher mesocephals and a few brachycephals does not contain any people from Orissa at all. The Maharashtra castes like Burud, Gurav, Sali, Parit belong to western Maharashtra while Bhandari, Sonkoli, Daivadnya, Pathare and Khatri are all from the west coast. There are eight Karnatak castes which all belong to middle and higher ranks. The Gujarat castes which are many, distinguish themselves from other groups in possessing bigger heads and smaller noses. They again belong to all ranks and different religions like Hindu, Muslim and Parsi.

Among the brachycephals there are no people from Maharashtra, there are two from Karnatak and four from Gujarat.

To sum up, we can say, very tentatively, the following :—

(1) The people called the primitives distinguish themselves from all the other people in having, as a group, broader noses and longer heads. The western primitives, however, distinguish themselves from the eastern primitives in possessing smaller heads. Perhaps the western primitives represent a Veddoid Australoid element in the population, while the eastern primitives a pre- or proto-Mongoloid racial element associated with the eastern neolithic. As an overall group they are distinct, but there is an overlap with the rest of the people in two ways, (a) a few primitive

The map* given below gives an idea of the distribution of the language families in India :



The Mundari people seem to be associated with the eastern neolithic cultures. While western neolithic cultures were associated with domestication of animals and pastoral pursuits, the eastern neolithic cultures have no animal husbandry associated with them. All the people speaking Mundari languages are preliterate. The time for the Mundari people or the penetration of the eastern neolithic industries into India has not been fixed with any certainty. They might have been there certainly before the Aryans and possibly before the Dravidians. This extremely sketchy picture of the whole of India is given as a background to the description of one region, namely Maharashtra, so as to gain a proper perspective of its rise, its place and its role in India.

*This map has been prepared by superimposition of four maps from Census of India, 1931, Vol. 1, Chap. X, pp. 365 & 367.

CHAPTER 1—MAHARASHTRA—THE LAND

CHAPTER 1.

Maharashtra — The Land.

THE LAND WHERE MARATHI IS SPOKEN TODAY occupies a significant position in India. It is the southernmost region where a Sanskritic language is spoken. Its four sides are : 825 km. in the west, bounded by the Arabian Sea ; 1725 km. in the north, bounded by the States of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh where Gujarati and Hindi are spoken respectively ; 750 km. in the east, bounded also by Madhya Pradesh, but inhabited predominantly by the jungle tribes ; and 1875 km. in the south, bounded by Andhra and Karnatak (Mysore State) where Telugu and Kannada are spoken. These boundaries are also those of Maharashtra State. If Goa, where Marathi is spoken, is added, then the western boundary must be extended southwards by about 100 km. Two of its boundaries touch linguistic areas belonging respectively to the northern Sanskritic family and the southern Dravidian family (*see map*). It is thus a culture-contact region *par excellence* and this fact gives a peculiar character to the culture of the Maratha people. Maharashtra State represents about 1/10th of the area of India (in sq. miles, India—1,228,435; Maharashtra—118,280) and about 1/11th of India's total population, i.e., India—439,234,771; Maharashtra—39,553,718.

MAHARASHTRA IN BHARAT

1/10th Land area of India = Maharashtra

1/11th Population of India = Maharashtra



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As regards the physical make up of the present-day groups called castes, we have something to say in another context later.

To sum up in short, the racial composition of Maharashtra is as follows :

Like the rest of India (except north-east) Maharashtra population belongs to the Europoid stock, as distinct from the other two stocks—Negroid and Mongoloid.

This stock again as in the most of the rest of India is made up of people of short-medium height, dark complexion, black hair, black or dark brown eyes. The heads are generally of middle breadth, noses medium high, medium long and medium broad. There are, however, a few people who have lighter eyes, a few who have a lighter complexion.

The longer headed people seem to belong to an older population, and are found everywhere, especially in eastern Maharashtra. There is a new immigrant long headed population in north Maharashtra which seems to have come from north-central and central India.

The broader headed (there are no really broad headed people) strains seem to be in the west coast and the western part of the plateau. They seem to connect up with Gujarat in the north and the Karnatak plateau in the south and may represent a single migration from somewhere north-west perhaps of pastoral and agricultural people.

There is an ancient strain of Veddoid or proto-australoid people found in all castes and among the jungle tribes. In the east the tribal people belong to a later non-Veddoid strain called Kolid and Molid by Von Eickstedt.

As regards blood groups it can be said that Maharashtra possesses the gene for blood group O in a greater measure than other blood groups. Next to O is B, while A is barely 20 per cent. However, in some castes, e.g., among Kayasthas A seems to be higher than B. The B blood group is supposed to be the characteristic of India. The group O is found among the primitive tribes in the southern jungles. In modern populations group A belongs mostly to western European nations; it is, however, also found in some primitive peoples, e.g., the Australian aborigines. As regards the A B O system, from the data in hand, it is not possible to neatly fix the position of Maharashtra population within India. As regards Rh blood type, Maharashtra together with India belongs to a larger region of the world—south-west Asia. So we may say again that population groups of Maharashtra physically take an intermediate position between north and south and between primitives and the non-primitives.

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Further Selected Reading :

1. William C. Boyd. ... "Blood Groups." Den Haag. 1939.
2. Mourant, A. E. ... "The distribution of the human blood groups." Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, 1954.
3. Majumdar, D. N. ... "Races and Cultures of India." Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
4. Sanghvi, L. D. ... "Genetic Diversity in the people of Western India" Eugenics Quarterly, pp. 235-39.

APPENDIX

The following short note was kindly written by Dr. Sanghvi. This does not tell us much about the population of Maharashtra but gives us a glimpse into the complexity of the problem and what is being done to solve the question—What are we?

GENES IN POPULATIONS

A collection of individuals who marry within their own group is known as an endogamous group or a Mendelian population. It is helpful to consider in such populations the proportion of different types of genes. For instance, the Chitpavan Brahmins have 16 per cent. A genes, 13 per cent. of B genes and 71 per cent. of O genes. On the other hand, the Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu (C. K. P.) have 21 per cent. A genes, 21 per cent. of B genes and 58 per cent. of O genes. There is nothing substantially good or bad about these three types of genes, but it would only mean that Chitpavans have proportionately larger number of individuals with blood type O than C. K. P., who have more individuals of blood type A, B and AB. These blood groups are very important when one needs a blood transfusion.

Genetic differences between Chitpavans and C. K. P. do not end here. As a matter of fact, out of seven genetical traits for which they were examined, they were significantly different for five of them. These genetical traits were sub-groups of A, MN, P and Rh blood groups, ability to taste a bitter substance phenylthio-uria, and red green colour blindness. Genes for all these traits can be identified by elaborate laboratory and other tests. The gene for colour vision defect is located on the sex-chromosome, whereas genes for other traits are located on the other 22 pairs. Rh-negative woman married to Rh-positive man may have babies affected with a blood disease at birth which may be fatal if not treated.

The differences shown above should not be taken to conclude that the study of different castes of Maharashtra will all reveal similar differences. Actually, the study of Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmins and the Madhyandin (Deshastha Yajurvedi Brahmins) did not reveal any significant differences for the six genetical characters for which they were studied. But, far more interesting was the fact, that no signi-

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ficant genetical difference was found between the Deshastha Brahmins and the Marathas for the same genetical traits.

It is difficult to provide a simple interpretation of these genetical facts. One of the hypotheses suggested for the absence of difference between the Deshastha Brahmins and the Marathas, is that they belonged to the same ethnic group in the past from which some individuals, who got training in our ancient universities of learning, established a separate caste of Brahmins. The Chitpavans differ from Deshastha and the Marathas in only one character viz., ABO blood groups. It is difficult, on this basis alone, to support their migration from elsewhere as has been suggested. On the other hand, C.K.P. are consistently different from the other groups in more than one character and thus seem to have come from elsewhere. One of the interesting question that can be answered by further study is whether they are related to the Kayastha of North India and Bengal. Here, one special genetical trait found only in the C. K. P., may be helpful. Among the C. K. P. with A blood groups, a significant proportion shows an intermediate type, not found in any one of the other groups mentioned above. If the Kayastha of North India and Bengal do show this type, it will strengthen the hypotheses of their common link.

Many more population groups of Maharashtra including the tribals have been studied for genetical traits, and the data are awaiting analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 3—THE ROLE OF THE SUB-REGIONS OF MAHARASHTRA

THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THE SUB-REGIONS and their role in the formation of Maharashtra is indicated in this Chapter.

Sub-regions and their dialects.—The main dialects in Maharashtra are roughly based on the sub-regions. In Khandesh the dialect spoken by people is called Ahirani. In Konkan the dialect is Konkani. Throughout the northern Konkan, in the districts of Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri, Konkani is supposed to be a Marathi language. Further southwards, in Goa, the Konkani is supposed to be a separate language by some scholars. In Berar and Nagpur the dialect is Varhadi. The Southern Krishna valley dialect is Kolhapuri. There is no regional name for the dialect spoken along the banks of the Godavari. The language developed in this region became the acknowledged literary language for Maharashtra at an early period, and exercised an influence on all other regions. as we shall see later.

Sub-regions and Dynasties.—The dynastic histories of these different regions are also different from one another.

The earliest kings who ruled during the period from three or four centuries before Christ to three to four centuries after Christ, were the Satavahanas with their capital at Pratishthan (modern Paithan), on the river Godavari about thirty miles west of the modern city of Aurangabad.

These kings ruled in the Godavari valley and north Konkan. In the *Puranas* they are mentioned as Shakaraj. An eastern inscription mentions a Satavahana King as *Aparanta-adhipa* (King of the western lands—Konkan). They called themselves *Andhra-Bhritya*. All these words being compound words can be differently interpreted. Shakaraj might mean a king who was a Shaka (belonging to the Shaka tribe of Central India) or a king who ruled over the Shakas. *Andhra-bhritya* might mean one who was nourished by and therefore servant of the Andhras or it might mean one whose servants are the Andhras. The first of these kings is supposed to have fought with the help of horses. There is also a legend which says that an early Satavahana king could not understand the Sanskrit spoken by his wife who laughed at his ignorance. The king thereon learnt within

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a short time a Prakrit language. All these legends indicate either that the king was a foreigner who did not know Sanskrit or that he was of humble origin and spoke a language of the people. The Satavahana kings have left many inscriptions, all of them in Prakrit. There is an anthology of Prakrit poems called *Gatha-Saptashati* which is supposed to have been put together by a king of this dynasty some time in the sixth or seventh century, A. D.¹ All this shows that in this kingdom a form of Prakrit called *Maharashtri* became the language of the court. All the dynasties which followed the Satavahana dynasty were patrons of *Maharashtri*. They, however, did not have Pratishthan as their capital but their capitals were not far from it. The Satavahanas were followed by Chalukyas, Vakatakas and then by Rashtrakutas. During the Rashtrakuta dynasty was written one of the most voluminous books in the *Maharashtri* dialect, namely the *Harivamsha Purana* by the court poet Pushpadanta. This is a Jain book.

The Rashtrakutas were followed by Yadavas who apparently were patrons of Marathi poets as can be inferred by the reference to King Ramachandra by Dnyaneshwar. His reference to the "city of Marathi" can be confirmed in a double sense as referring abstractly to the Marathi language as also concretely to the capital city of the kingdom of the Yadavas. The Yadavas did for Marathi what the Satavahanas did for Prakrit. Prakrit was the language of the people and the Satavahanas gave it a status by making it their official language as their inscriptions show. In the same way Marathi was the language of the people a few centuries before the Yadavas came on the throne, but they were the first to give patronage to it. Parallel with the Satavahanas, three dynasties ruled over Konkan, namely, the Maurya, the Kadamba, and the Shilahara. Their inscriptions are in Sanskrit and partly in Prakrit. In Konkan again we have one of the earlier Marathi inscriptions.

The third important sub-region comprising roughly the valleys of Purna, Vardha and Vainganga together form the kingdom known in Sanskrit literature as Vidarbha whose kings were the Vakatakas. The first historical reference is in the fourth century when a Gupta princess called Prabhavati married a Vakataka prince. It is thought that the poet Kalidas came with the princess and lived at the Vakataka court. A few centuries after Kalidas, the poet Dandin mentions the poetic style (in Sanskrit) of Vidarbha called the *Vaidarbhi* style, the best style in poetry. Kalidas in his drama *Malavikagnimitram*, which purports to refer to a king of the Shunga dynasty in Magadha, mentions some kind of a disturbance and a revolt in the then Vidarbha kingdom and the marriage of the Shunga king to a princess from Vidarbha. Kalidas does not

¹ *Lila-Charitra* an early Marathi book of the 14th century and belonging to the Mahanubhava sect mentions 'Shalivahana' as a person in the employ of the then king Mahadeva of the Yadava dynasty. Part 2, page 2 of introduction and p. 31 of text. *Lila Charitra* Part 2, 1st book, edited by H. N. Nene, Amraoti, 1933.

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give the name of the dynasty then ruling Vidarbha. He merely mentions the prince by his first name Madhavasena. The Shunga dynasty was ruling in Magadha in the 1st century B. C. In the centuries which precede the Shunga dynasty, Vidarbha is mentioned again and again. Three legends of Sanskrit literature mention three Vidarbha princesses. The first called Lopamudra belongs to a hoary past and is connected with the legend of the sage Agasti crossing the Vindhyas and opening up the south. The second legend refers to princess Damayanti, the daughter of Bhima or Bhishma, king of Vidarbha. She was married to Nala. The third legend refers to Rukmini, daughter of a king called Bhimaka, Bhima or Bhishma, who was carried away by Shri Krishna. If we place the time of the *Mahabharata* battle, that is of Shri Krishna, as somewhere near 1000 B. C., then we have a thousand year gap which is not filled either by legend or history for this area.

The short account given above, however, shows that Vidarbha was always in active contact with the north throughout the legendary and historical period. It was the southernmost outpost of the inter-related dynasties of the northern Sanskrit-speaking people. This characteristic apparently continued during the historical period, inasmuch as all the Vakataka inscriptions are in Sanskrit.

The history of this region is obscure after the Vakatakas of whom one branch or the other ruled over some portion of this region up to the eighth century. Apparently this area, especially the eastern portion from Nagpur to Bhandara, was ruled by Gond kings. The twelfth century inscriptions show that parts of Vidarbha were nominally under the Yadavas. Not until Chhatrapati Shahu sent the Bhosles to rule over Nagpur did this region come again effectively under the rule of Maratha kings. In spite of the long domination of Sanskrit, the Marathi language was the language of the people from at least the thirteenth century onwards.

The southern portion, after the Chalukya era, was ruled by local chiefs some of whom held sway over parts of the coast and part of the mountain region. An eighth century inscription mentions *Punaka-vishaya* (revenue division) which approximately was the same as the township of Poona today. The Prakrit inscriptions in the Buddhist caves of this area tell of river Indra, the present Indrayani, and *Mammalavishaya*, the present Maval. These inscriptions show that Prakrit held sway in the southern portion. A connected dynastic history for this region cannot be reconstructed.

The last sub-region comprising the two Khandesh districts, called west and east Khandesh formerly, and called Dhulia and Jalgaon now, had no famous dynasties ruling in them. This portion was ruled over by people called Ahir or Abhir who are mentioned first at the end of the *Mahabharata*. These people apparently were pastoral people who destroyed the kingdoms of the Yadavas and also mixed with them. Khandesh was penetrated by the Marathi-speaking farmers from the south (Nasik area) and from the east (Berar); from the north by people from central India; and from

CHAPTER 3. the west along the Tapi river by people from Gujarat. The Marathi immigration appears to be the latest inasmuch as most of Khandesh speaks today either standard Marathi or Ahirani (a dialect of Marathi). Bhils, a very numerous primitive tribe belonging to Rajasthan, have penetrated into Maharashtra through Khandesh over the Satpuda hills. Part of Khandesh was ruled by the Bhils. Thus in the north the western (Khandesh) and the eastern (Bhandara and Chanda districts) portions were held by primitive people. The eastern Gond kingdoms, however, seemed to have been more powerful and not as primitive as the small Bhil chieftainships of Khandesh. The most ancient dynasty, that of Satavahanas was on the banks of the Godavari. The later dynasties upto the Yadavas ruled in the east but not directly on the river Godavari and influenced the north, the south and also Konkan¹. From the 13th century onward, the centre shifted gradually westwards.

After the conquest of the Yadava kingdom by the Khiljis in 1318 a Muslim dynasty known as the Bahamanis assumed an independent status in the Deccan in 1347. It continued to rule for well over 125 years. The Bahamani kingdom broke up into five independent kingdoms by the beginning of the sixteenth century with their capitals based at Ahmednagar, Bidar, Bijapur, Golkonda and Ellichpur.

Even during the period of these dynasties, the Godavari area continued to be of importance. But new forces, political and social, were arising further south in the Krishna basin. Maratha *rajas* held territories under the Muslim kings, and paid tribute to them. The Muslim kingdoms feuding among themselves, had also to deal with quarrels among their Maratha and Muslim *sardars*, and became locked in a fight for life with the Moghals who wanted to extend their empire into the Deccan. In the second quarter of the seventeenth century, Shivaji, the son of a Maratha *raja*, under the sovereignty of the Bijapur dynasty raised the flag of revolt. The peculiarity of this revolt was that Shivaji did not fight to extend or augment his own holdings but fought to establish a Hindu kingdom. Aurangzeb succeeded in destroying the southern Muslim kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda. He established at Hyderabad his own representative, but he had to face the rising tide of the Maratha revolt which at last succeeded in establishing a Hindu kingdom in the south-west. Shivaji's father held hereditary lands round about Poona and all the fights of the Marathas first against the Bijapur King and then against Aurangzeb were fought mainly in the Bhima-Krishna basin and, as already noted above, deep into Dravidian India.

The decline in the importance of the central Godavari area which began with the defeat of the Yadavas was completed by the time the Marathas had established their kingdoms in the south. A factor

¹ The Vakatakas ruled from Vatsa-gulma (modern Vashim) in Berar. The Chalukyas ruled from Vatapi (Badami) and Kalyani (near Gulbarga), the Rashtrakutas ruled from Manyakheta near Wadi.

which further contributed to this decline was that this part of Maharashtra together with the Purna valley became part of the southern kingdom established by the descendant of one of the famous generals of Aurangzeb viz., Gaziuddin Firoz Jung, who founded the Hyderabad dynasty soon after Aurangzeb's death.

Sambhaji, the eldest son of Shivaji was executed by Aurangzeb. His son Shahu was taken prisoner. Rajaram, the younger son of Shivaji, was crowned king of the Marathas. He, however, died in 1700. After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the successor of Aurangzeb released Shahu. Many Marathas joined him as the rightful heir of Sambhaji. Tarabai, the widow of Rajaram crowned her son, King of the Marathas and established a kingdom with its capital at Kolhapur. This split the Maratha ranks into upholders of Shahu and upholders of Rajaram's successor. Shahu established his capital city at Satara and appointed Balaji Vishwanath with the family name Bhat as his chief minister with the Persian title "Peshwa". The Peshwa title and office became hereditary and the family of Bhat established Poona as their residence and from then on Poona became almost the capital of Maharashtra. In this narration, we see how from early seventeenth century almost to the establishment of British rule, the most important region was the Bhima-Krishna basin. Chhatrapati Shahu as noted earlier granted in jagir eastern Berar to one of his supporters from the Bhosle family. His descendants still hold the *Raja* title though divested of political power by the British. The British in mid-nineteenth century, annexed Berar from the Nizam of Hyderabad and joined it to Nagpur. The region from Aurangabad to the district of Nanded remained under the Nizam till the merger of Hyderabad in 1948. This was called Marathwada.

In 1818, the British defeated the Marathas and British rule was finally established. The British divided India into Presidencies and Provinces, the boundaries of which were determined more by the chance of conquest rather than through any other considerations. The two districts of Khandesh, the Konkan districts, and Nasik, Nagar, Poona, Sholapur and Satara districts became parts of Bombay Presidency which was made up of Sind, Gujarat, the above-named Maharashtra districts and a few districts of Karnatak. The Purna valley, called Berar, and the Nagpur area became the southern parts of a Province which was called Central Provinces and Berar (C. P. and Berar) and Marathwada remained with the Hyderabad dynasty called the Nizam's dynasty. Bombay became the capital of Bombay Presidency. It was becoming an important city not only as a capital but as a centre of commerce, trade and industries. The government moved to Poona for four months of the year, so that Poona also retained some of its old importance, especially in army and government circles and the traders belonging to the camp established outside the old city. Matters continued thus until India gained its independence and later the present State of Maharashtra came into existence by an Act of the Parliament of the Union of India on

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1st May, 1960. For the first time, in the history of this linguistic region, it became politically one. As with the older centres, Pratishthan and Poona, Bombay also is rapidly becoming not merely the political capital of Maharashtra, but also its cultural centre.

Nagpur¹ as the capital of the Bhosles helped to consolidate the Marathi culture and language on its north-east border. It was greatly influenced by northern immigrants and it has absorbed many people from Andhra. It still continues to be a very active centre of the Marathi people though the shift of the capital to Bombay has reduced its importance to a certain extent.

This very short account of the dynastic history of Maharashtra shows how different sub-regions took part in the formation of Maharashtra at different periods and how gradually the centre of interest shifted from the Godavari southwards into the Krishna basin and then slightly north-westward into the altogether new city of Bombay. Pratishthan and Poona were purely Marathi in their character. Bombay, a small fishing village, was developed by a foreign power and attracted entrepreneurs from Gujarat and Sind and later from all other provinces in India. In Bombay today the number of people whose mother tongue is Marathi constitute about 43 per cent (1,775,114) of the total population (4,152,056) of the city. If the number of Konkani speakers (192,773) is added to this, the percentage will be well over 47. They thus represent the largest concentration of Marathi-speaking people in any city. The existence of the various communities belonging to different religions and different provinces with a very large sprinkling of western businessmen has made Bombay a cosmopolitan city. This character has influenced Bombay's social life. Poona had led in the political, cultural and educational effort during the first half of the British period. But, however wide the influence of Poona, and however great the political leaders, they never lost their provincial character. Bombay's educational effort was in the hands of foreign missionaries and the government. It entered the educational field rather late, but has rapidly made up for the time lag. While in Poona the effort was made mainly by Marathi people, the educational institutions in Bombay were started and have been maintained by such varied communities as Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi and Tamil people. In the same way, the political leaders have belonged to both the Marathi and Gujarati communities. Its dimensions of life are broader than those of Poona and these are well-reflected in the many-sided cultural activities. It is dominated by the Marathi intelligentsia, but Marathi culture itself has been shedding its purely provincial character.²

The slight distinctions and the inter-relations of the six sub-regions become very clear if we study the type of village names found in them. A comprehensive study of the village names is now being conducted at the Deccan College, Poona, and all the results are not in hand. The following analysis is merely a preliminary analysis

¹ D. G. Landge—"Nagpurcha Sanskritik Itihasa", Madhya Pradesh Samshodhana Mandal Granthamala, 4, Nagpur, 1954.

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of place-name suffixes. A similar preliminary account of the content of the place-names is also given¹.

In the table attached, forty-two suffixes are listed in a descending order of frequency. In the final analysis some of the suffixes might be lumped together, for example, *khede* and *kheda*, *pur* and *puri*. But here the list is given with only one consideration, that of frequency. Only those suffixes which occur at least twenty-five times in a sample of 9216 names are given here. In the table twenty-five districts of Maharashtra State excluding Bombay are listed, one after the other, in such a way that the districts coming into one sub-region are listed together. Ratnagiri, Kolaba and Thana make the sub-region Konkan; Poona, Satara, Kolhapur, Sangli, Sholapur and Osmanabad form the southern region comprising the valleys of Krishna and Bhima; Dhulia and Jalgaon make up the Tapi valley or Khandesh; Nasik, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Nanded and Bhir form the Godavari valley; Buldhana, Akola and Amraoti are in the Purna valley; and Vardha, Nagpur, Bhandara, Yeotmal and Chanda are in the Vardha-Vainganga valley.

¹ The Government of Maharashtra has published in connection with the 1961 Census a list of Maharashtra place names: "*Maharashtratil Khedyanchi va Shaharanchi Varnakrami*", 1965.

The first volume of a book on the study of Maharashtra place names is recently published.

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Important place-name Suffixes by Region

Suffix	Total	Konkan			Khandesh			Godavari Valley						
		Thana	Kolaba	Ratnagiri	Dhulia	Jalgaon	Nasik	Ahmednagar	Bhir	Aurangabad	Parbhani	Nanded		
Gaon	..	1,130	24	24	13	12	47	73	75	53	108	70	70	
Pura	..	555	2	2	3	15	5	13	26	15	63	28	47	
Vadi	..	361	2	2	4	4	10	7	5	94	32	28	29	
Kheda	..	166	..	..	1	2	2	2	1	4	41	17	4	
Vall	..	114	35	34	22	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	
Oli	..	110	8	10	5	1	1	2	1	1	4	2	2	
Li	..	74	4	3	4	2	1	1	..	1	..	4	..	
Khede	..	71	..	..	..	9	38	12	1	..	..	..	..	
Vada	..	67	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	3	5	3	2	
Ur	..	64	2	2	1	3	2	2	4	5	..	2	14	
Ale	..	58	4	4	1	5	7	4	1	1	3	3	..	
Di	..	57	1	3	1	..	4	3	4	2	4	1	2	
Ghar	..	56	10	20	6	2	..	1	..	..	1	..	1	
Puri	..	51	..	..	..	1	3	..	3	7	15	4	2	
Gavhana	..	48	1	..	..	4	5	3	2	3	7	7	2	
Vade	..	46	3	5	13	2	..	1	8	..	..	..	..	
Ne	..	38	4	2	1	3	6	5	3	..	..	1	..	
Ada	..	37	5	6	1	2	4	2	1	..	3	3	..	
Le	..	37	..	9	5	5	2	4	2	1	..	3	..	
Vadi	..	37	..	..	..	1	1	1	..	..	1	1	..	
Abad	..	35	..	..	..	1	1	1	4	..	8	3	..	
Ala	..	35	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	2	
Oli	..	34	3	4	6	1	..	2	3	..	4	..	1	
Kheda	..	32	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	5	..	
Ora	..	31	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	5	
Pada	..	31	2	4	..	7	..	13	..	..	..	..	..	
Palli	..	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	
Vad	..	29	1	2	..	4	6	1	2	..	1	2	..	
Ve	..	28	2	1	5	1	6	2	3	..	..	..	..	
Shet	..	28	8	9	1	..	..	4	2	..	..	..	..	
Orl	..	27	..	..	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	2	..	
Ra	..	27	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	3	1	..	
Da	..	27	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	
Ri	..	26	1	1	1	..	2	..	1	2	..	..	..	
Ni	..	26	3	1	..	..	1	1	1	..	2	3	..	
Gad	..	26	2	1	4	2	..	3	..	..	2	..	..	
De	..	26	1	1	4	1	4	3	1	..	..	2	..	
La	..	25	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	5	
Shi	..	25	1	..	5	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	1	
Ja	..	25	..	5	1	..	..	2	1	2	2	..	2	
Ge	..	25	..	1	2	..	2	..	..	..	1	1	..	
Gram	..	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	

and Districts (Maharashtra)

Barar														Osmanabad
Belhara	Akola	Amravati	Vadga	Nagpur	Bhandara	Chanda	Yestmal	Poona	Satara	Kolhapur	Sangli	Sholapur		
53	39	38	34	48	30	91	48	43	25	6	15	41	50	
19	31	71	45	33	5	35	33	11	6	8	8	14	17	
3	12	11	2	7	2	4	4	14	11	12	13	10	39	
38	26	17	1	..	1	1	4	1	..	..	..	..	2	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9	10	..	..	2	..	
1	3	7	2	12	1	11	6	3	7	3	3	8	6	
..	1	3	3	10	5	10	2	5	2	..	3	..	3	
..	1	6	1	2	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	
2	6	6	2	10	6	14	4	..	..	..	..	..	2	
..	1	1	1	..	1	4	3	2	1	4	2	3	4	
4	..	4	..	..	..	..	1	3	1	3	3	2	4	
1	4	5	4	4	1	3	3	1	2	1	..	1	2	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8	7	..	..	..	
2	3	..	..	3	1	1	2	3	..	..	..	1	..	
..	2	4	..	..	..	..	1	3	..	..	1	..	..	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	4	2	2	..	..	
..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	3	1	..	4	3	
1	1	..	..	2	..	..	3	..	1	..	1	..	1	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	1	..	2	1	
..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	11	..	2	3	1	
2	3	4	2	..	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	2	
2	6	1	1	5	1	9	4	..	..	1	..	..	..	
..	..	..	1	1	1	..	1	1	1	1	..	..	1	
..	1	12	1	7	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
4	6	3	3	1	..	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	2	
..	1	1	..	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	
..	..	..	..	..	..	23	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
..	..	2	..	..	..	..	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	3	1	..	2	..	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	..	..	
1	3	4	1	5	2	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	
..	3	1	2	6	3	2	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	
03	1	5	1	6	1	6	2	..	..	..	..	..	1	
..	1	1	1	3	2	3	2	1	..	..	..	1	3	
1	2	2	1	..	..	1	2	..	3	..	1	..	1	
1	..	2	..	1	..	2	1	1	4	..	..	..	..	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	3	3	1	1	..	1	
..	2	..	4	1	2	7	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	
..	1	..	1	1	..	..	3	3	5	..	1	..	..	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	1	..	3	2	3	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	5	10	

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The most frequent suffix is *gaon* derived from Sanskrit *grama* which occurs in 1,130 cases, that is about 12 per cent. The distribution of this suffix is as follows:—

1. Konkan	..	..	..	61
2. Krishna-Bhima	..	..	..	180
3. Khandesh	..	..	..	59
4. Godavari basin	..	..	..	449
5. Purna	..	..	..	130
6. Vardha-Vainganga	..	..	..	251
Total ..				1,130

We find that the Godavari, Purna and Vardha-Vainganga region which have together fourteen districts, as against Konkan, Khandesh and Krishna basin which have eleven districts have 830 : 304 "*gaon*" suffixes. One can say that this particular suffix which is found in all districts is found over two times more frequently in eastern Maharashtra than in western and southern Maharashtra. In Konkan, the frequency is the least. The suffix which is second in frequency is *pur* (555). It too shows a very similar distribution. It is as follows:—

1. Konkan	..	..	..	7
2. Krishna-Bhima	..	..	..	64
3. Khandesh	..	..	..	20
4. Godavari	..	..	..	192
5. Purna	..	..	..	121
6. Vardha-Vainganga	..	..	..	151
Total ..				555

This suffix is found four times as often in the east as in the west and south : *puri* occurs 51 times and is found in :

1. Konkan	..	..	..	0
2. Krishna-Bhima	..	..	..	4
3. Khandesh	..	..	..	4
4. Godavari	..	..	..	31
5. Purna	..	..	..	5
6. Vardha-Vainganga	..	..	..	7
Total ..				51

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Again, this suffix belongs predominantly to eastern Maharashtra (Western Maharashtra 8 versus eastern Maharashtra 43).

The third suffix *vadi* (361) has the following distribution:—

1. Konkan	..	..	..	8
2. Krishna-Bhima	..	..	..	99
3. Khandesh	..	..	..	14
4. Godavari	..	..	..	195
5. Purna	..	..	..	28
6. Vardha-Vainganga	..	..	..	19
Total ..				361

Again, eastern Maharashtra has it twice as many times as western Maharashtra, namely 240 to 121.

The fourth most frequent suffix is *khed*, found in the alternate forms like *khede*, *kheda* and *khedi*. All these suffixes are derived from the word *kheta* which in its turn is derived from *kshetra*. It means a field or a small rural settlement. In all there are 283 such names. In the table below, the distribution for these different types of suffixes is given:—

	Khed	Khede	Kheda	Khedi	Total
1. Konkan	1	0	0	0	1
2. Krishna-Bhima	4	0	0	0	4
3. Khandesh	4	47	0	5	56
4. Godavari	69	13	8	4	94
5. Purna	81	7	13	1	102
6. Vardha-Vainganga	7	4	11	4	26
Total ...					283

This again shows that this type of suffix is almost absent in the whole of the coast and the Bhima-Krishna region. It is also not very frequent in the Vardha-Vainganga basin. As against that, the Purna basin, the Godavari basin, and Khandesh (the Tapi basin) have it in the largest number. This table shows that for this particular type of suffix, Khandesh has something in common with the Purna and Godavari valleys. Khandesh distinguishes itself from these others in the grammatical form of the suffix. That is, it has *khede* instead of *khed*.

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Maharashtra.The next two suffixes *vali*, *oli* together form 224 place-names :—

1. Konkan	..	..	..	114
2. Krishna-Bhima	..	..	..	51
3. Khandesh	..	..	..	2
4. Godavari	..	..	..	13
5. Purna	..	..	..	11
6. Vardha-Vainganga	..	..	..	33
Total ..				224

This suffix is found most in Konkan and in the Krishna basin. It is found again in Vardha-Vainganga basin.

Another suffix, *ghar*, is found mostly in the west; *vade* is found again in the west. *Vadi* is found, however, predominantly in Bhima-Krishna Valley, as can be seen in table below :—

	<i>Ghar</i>	<i>Vade</i>	<i>Vadi</i>
1. Konkan	36	21	0
2. Krishna-Bhima	15	14	32
3. Khandesh	2	2	1
4. Godavari	3	9	3
5. Purna	0	0	1
6. Vardha-Vainganga	0	0	0

There are in all 2755 places which have no separate, easily recognisable suffixes. For example Pune (Poona) is derived from some such name as Punaka which becomes Puna and modern Pune. Such names have been listed as without suffix for the present. An analysis shows that again eastern Maharashtra has more such names than western Maharashtra and that the least number of such names is found in Kolhapur and Sangli, the southernmost districts of Maharashtra.

PLACE NAMES WITH NO SUFFIX

	District.	No.	Total of Sub- regions
Konkan.	1. Thana	150	405
	2. Kolaba	147	
	3. Ratnagiri	108	
Krishna-Bhima,	4. Poona	139	405
	5. Satara	103	
	6. Kolhapur	23	
	7. Sangli	43	
	8. Sholapur	66	
	9. Osmanabad	89	

PLACE NAMES WITH NO SUFFIX

	District.	No.	
Khandesh	10. Dhulia	148	267
	11. Jalgaon	119	
Godavari Basin	12. Nasik	109	680
	13. Ahmednagar	103	
	14. Bhir	79	
	15. Aurangabad	114	
	16. Parbhani	144	
	17. Nanded	131	
Berar or Purna basin	18. Buldhana	111	376
	19. Akola	147	
	20. Amravati	118	
Vardh-Vainganga basin.	21. Wardha	64	564
	22. Nagpur	153	
	23. Bhandara	49	
	24. Chanda	147	
	25. Yeotmal	151	
			2,755

This very preliminary survey shows that :—

(1) many of the suffixes are Sanskritic in origin and seem to possess the meaning given to them in Sanskrit text books on human settlements ;

(2) suffixes like *gaon*, *pur*, *vadi*, denoting settlements of the type recorded in classical Sanskrit are found in the Godavari basin and in the Vidarbha area which were the two areas which had powerful ancient empires. These seem to be the more ancient parts of Maharashtra. Suffixes like *oli* and *vali* which can be derived from *palli*, meaning a hill or mountain-settlement are found in the west which is rugged and mountainous*. In the extreme north-east the Vainganga river seems to be the Benna of Prakrit texts. A smaller river near Nagpur is called Kanhan from Sanskrit Krishna, so that the region between the two can be designated as between Kanha-Benna. In the south, near Mahabaleshwar (a spur of the Sahyadri) we meet two rivers with purely Sanskrit names, Krishna and Venna. It might be surmised that the eastern settlement is older than the southern settlement, on the general principle that Prakrit names generally antedate purely Sanskrit names ;

(3) this type of comparison apparently provides a tool for a fine analysis between sub-regions. In certain respects, we have seen how certain sub-regions stand apart from all others. An explanation in cultural-historical terms is not always possible but may emerge when a detailed analysis for one linguistic province is made and when similar material is available for neighbouring linguistic provinces.

*Names like Winsai, Ghatsai (Sanskrit, Vindhya-Shrayi, Ghat-Shrayi) mean mountain lean-to.

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A special case would make this clear. There are three suffixes, *vad*, *od*, and *de* which together number 47. In the coastal region, we have only 4 such villages; in Krishna-Godavari, none at all, 1 in Purna valley and 2 in Vardha-Vainganga and all the rest, that is to say 37 in Khandesh. This peculiar position of Khandesh is easily understandable when we know that Gujarat has many place-names with these three suffixes so that the position of Khandesh as an area open for immigration from Gujarat becomes at once clear.

The sociological significance of some of these place-name suffixes will be considered later when we deal with the social structures of the people of Maharashtra, especially their organisation of space.

We have already mentioned that in Maharashtra up to about the eighth century the language used in the Godavari basin as also in the approaches to the coast (Naneghat inscriptions) was Prakrit. The *Saptashati* of Hala compiled some time in the seventh or eighth century was also a collection of poems in Prakrit. The "great tradition" was thus embodied in Prakrit, which was the language of the literary people as also of the coast. For a few centuries after that we have no continuous record. In the village of Akshi in Kolaba district on the west coast, we find a Marathi inscription which belongs to 1012 A. D. At about the same time, a poet who calls himself Ko-uhala (9th century) wrote a story in a language which he called *Marahatta-deshi bhasha*¹, that is a language spoken in the *desh* (land) of *Marahatta* (Maharashtra). In this story, Ko-uhala claims² that he is writing in this language so as to be understood by the common people and women. The language of this book is very different from the Prakrit of *Saptashati*. A number of verb forms and noun forms are Marathi, but the whole language is not yet Marathi. It might be called proto-Marathi. From the kind of claim the poet makes, we gather that the language was easily understood by the masses. We can take it that though it may not be exactly the spoken language of those times, it was certainly a language understood by all. About two centuries later, we find Dnyaneshwar writing a commentary on the *Gita* in a language which he calls Marathi or *deshi*. This commentary was composed and recited to a temple audience and was written down by a writer. So it was primarily an oral communication. Here again, Dnyaneshwar tells that what was locked in the inaccessible Sanskrit was made easily available to all the people. The language of *Dnyaneshwari*, as the book is popularly known, is Marathi. Obviously it was also the language of the people. A little later, but in the same century, the Mahanubhava sect was putting on paper the sayings of its founder

¹ Apparently, the word *deshi* was used for a few centuries to denote a spoken language of a region as against the more universally understood Sanskrit or even Prakrit. Dnyaneshwar, writing in 1290 A.D. talks of the language as *deshi* or Marathi. In the same way, Hemachandra in 13th century A.D. composed his famous dictionary of regional words and called it *Deshi-nama mala*.

² Upadhye A. N. "*Litavai*" published by "Sindhi Jain Granthamala" Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1949.

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so that we have a record of contemporary spoken Marathi prose. Dnyaneshwar's verses as also the prose of the Mahanubhavas cannot be easily understood by Marathi speakers of today, but the difference between that Marathi and the present Marathi is not so great as for example between Chaucer's English and the present-day English.

One of the earliest Marathi inscriptions is found in Karnatak at the foot of a Jain statue. It contains three words, but the words and the grammatical construction is pure Marathi. We may therefore say that Marathi had come into its own as a language spoken over a wide area and had acquired a literary form which was used for inscriptions and for communication over wide areas. The transition from Prakrit to Marathi must have occurred between the 7th and the 10th centuries.¹ We find the language already in its full flowering in the thirteenth century. From the "little tradition" Marathi had definitely passed into the "great tradition" by about the twelfth century. We have evidence of this in two rather late works. The one is a life of Christ written in Marathi, called *Christa-Purana* by Father Stephens (1549-1619) of Goa. The other is the story of St. Peter written by a Frenchman, Delacroix, in 1602 A. D. This means two things: one, that people as far south as Goa acknowledged themselves as belonging to the Marathi linguistic region; and two, that the fact that this type of proselytising material was in the literary language of the land, means that it was understood by everyone.

¹ Certain analogies and contrasts suggest themselves in this study of Maharashtra as a linguistic region. A certain land area gradually became one linguistic region. Throughout its history, barring the last few years, this area was always governed simultaneously by different dynasties. Sometimes the dynastic rules belonged to people of different religions since the coming in of Muslims. But the linguistic unity and consciousness, once reached, was not disturbed. This process cannot be called universal. Sometimes, as in western Europe, a linguistic unity is established and then the dynasties, whether one or many, generally are native and because of Christianity, Christian. It would be interesting to spell out the differences and similarities of the formation of cultural regions in India and in the West. In India, southern regions belonged to a linguistic family different from the northern regions while in western Europe the languages all belong to the Indo-European family. (The Lapps, the Finns, the Hungarians, even the Turks, are peripheral to Western Europe.) On the other hand, all the Indo-European languages in India can be traced back to Sanskrit and are not so different from one another, as for example the Latin-derived southern languages and the Germanic northern languages.

CHAPTER 4—SOCIAL ORGANISATION

IN HUNTING AND FOOD GATHERING SOCIETIES EVERY MAN was his own food producer. He provided whatever clothing he had and also the shelter under which he lived. In such societies there are chiefs and magician-priest-medicine men. The chief and the medicine-man may be provided partially with food and shelter by the other people in the group. But such provision is generally only partial. In such societies, there is not much specialisation in the work done by people and there are also no significant sub-groups except those based on sex and age. On the other hand, societies which have taken to agriculture begin to show specialisations of all types. Agriculture in most parts of the world is a seasonal activity which leaves certain months of the year free from agricultural work. These months may be used in activities other than agriculture. In most primitive agricultural societies, agriculture is supplemented by hunting and gathering. Social groups are still comparatively small and social differentiation is not very marked. The same man who does agriculture may be doing other things like building a house, fashioning implements, and hunting and gathering during the non-agricultural period. If the agriculture is such that it leaves enough surplus, a new class of people who fashion implements, clothing etc., may arise. The chief and the medicine-man may become wholly supported by the community. This is the beginning stage of a fully developed agricultural society. In such a society, there are social groups which are drawn away from the main labour of food procurement and who specialise in some work which is paid for from the surplus of the agriculturist and who directly or indirectly help or protect the agriculturist. The chief and his band of warriors become a class of warriors. The medicine-man or men are the priests. The makers of clothing, weapons, utensils, and ornaments become the artisans. The agriculturist lives on the land owned by himself or works on the land owned by the rulers or the priests and becomes the main food producer. And there is generally another class of people who belongs to none of the above groups but provides labour needed by the agriculturist or by the other people. In agricultural societies, there is also the class of people who bring goods from one community and sell them to others in exchange for other goods, ultimately in exchange for money. These

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are the shopkeepers and traders, the shopkeeper being the more stationary part, and the trader the more mobile, the ruling class becomes more and more powerful, the priests become more numerous, the artisans branch out into many arts and crafts, and the trader crosses not only the overland routes but also the seas to reach new places and bring in new merchandise. The most developed examples of the agricultural communities are all the ancient civilisations from Egypt through Asia to South America. These societies built great empires including the beginning of the Western empires of the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. Up to about the fifteenth century all the societies of the world were at the agricultural stage. The western agricultural societies became the imperial powers and the eastern agricultural societies became their colonies. Later the western societies were gradually transformed by new knowledge and new technology based on scientific advances and new sources of power starting with the steam engine.

Before we come to the transformation of the agricultural into industrial and technological societies, it would be better to describe the old agricultural societies of which India and therefore Maharashtra forms a part.

We do not have a statistical measure of the number of people engaged in different activities in these societies. Census figures for India might give some idea of the dimensions involved. The figures for the All-India Census of 1901 show that 69.5 per cent. people worked in food procuring, predominantly agriculture. The activities like fishing and keeping of cattle were negligible as compared to agriculture. In fact, pure pastoralism could not account for even one per cent of the population¹. As against that, fishing was an important source of food procurement. The sea-water fishermen, living on the coast, together would form less than five per cent of the coastal population. The little bit of fishing which was done by a few farming communities and by tribals and semi-tribals need not be considered here. These generally fished the inland waters². This economy resembles that of other agricultural communities from ancient times. The proportion of people procuring fish may be larger in some countries like Japan or England and other European countries. Fishing belongs to the hunting and gathering stage and has kept its importance as a primary food gathering activity of certain groups among the agricultural communities. Recent studies have shown a certain rivalry between fishing folks and agriculturists³. This agricultural society supported

¹ Summation for pastoral groups as given in *Castes and Tribes Volumes*, 1901 and 1911.

² The inland Koli and Dhevar of Maharashtra, the Kcut or Khevat of Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, distinguish themselves culturally and physically from the fishermen of the sea.

³ Karve and Damle—*Group Relations in Village Community*: p. 50; *Deccan College Monograph Series* 24, Poona, 1963.

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between twenty and thirty per cent. people of classes like magician-priests, chiefs (kings) and warriors, artisans and traders. The artisans were the people who expanded and thrived most and contributed to the glory of this civilisation. The varied products of the artisans and different types of produce were carried from one settled community to another. The traders traversed almost half the world to carry goods from one country to another. To a certain extent, the traders plying over the seas (South Sea Islands) and the land surfaces were also a takeover from the hunters and gatherers but their extent and function increased enormously during the agricultural period. The nomadic pastoral people who belonged to the Asiatic steppes played a very important role in the history of all the lands from Egypt to China.

In India, nomadic pastoral people came *via* the north-west and records of them are left in the ancient and modern world. The first known and recorded people were the Arya. Then are mentioned people called Abhira, about 1000 B.C. Then came the Huns who were apparently driven out,¹ then the Gurjaras who founded the Gurjara-Pratihara empire of the twelfth century. The north-west portion of Maharashtra called Khandesh, has a dialect known as *Ahirani* apparently spoken by the Abhiras who were at one time supposed to have ruled Khandesh. The mesocephalic to brachy-cephalic element which one sees in Gujarat, western Maharashtra and the plateau of Karnatak may perhaps represent a late intrusion of the pastoral nomadic people from the north-west.

In contemporary Maharashtra, except for the Dhangars and a few Gavalis, there are no purely nomadic pastoral castes like Bharwad, Rabari and Ahir of modern Gujarat. We have noted above that a certain type of rivalry exists between fishermen and agriculturists. A similar rivalry exists between the shepherds and the Maratha farmers. A rivalry between the farmers and the cowherds (Gwala) is mentioned for Andhra Pradesh where the Reddys (agriculturists) patronise the Mala, one of the two big scheduled castes, and the Gwala are supposed to be partisans of the Madiga the other big scheduled caste of Andhra Pradesh*. This type of rivalry and patronage has not come to my notice nor do I find any records of such a rivalry in Maharashtra. We find that in the traditional agricultural community there are primary food procurers who are agriculturists, fisherfolk, cattle keepers, shepherds and goatherds. While the relationship among the agriculturist, the artisan and the priest etc., seems to be definitely organised into a structure of reciprocal give-and-take, and a more or less agreed status structure, the relationship among the three or four classes of food procurers is less organised and, while based on mutual need, also reveals certain basic antagonisms. We may have occasion to illustrate this

¹ Though in Punjab, certain people bear the family name Hoon, the Sanskrit equivalent of Hun.

*Personal communication by C. von Fürer Haimendorf.

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further on. In Maharashtra, for 1901, the number of people engaged in agriculture is given as between 60 per cent for western Maharashtra and 70 per cent for eastern Maharashtra as shown in the following tables. In individual districts the figures go up to 74 per cent.

TABLE No. 1.

PROPORTION OF POPULATION SUPPORTED BY AGRICULTURE IN 1901.

	Population supported by agriculture	Percentage of agricul- tural population to district population
<i>Western Maharashtra</i>		
1. Bombay City	4,755	—
2. Thana	625,518	65
3. Kolaba	440,981	72
4. Ratnagiri	890,873	76
5. Satara	832,842	73
6. Khandesh	785,404	55
7. Nasik	479,161	59
8. Ahmednagar	500,283	60
9. Poona	573,231	57
10. Sholapur	432,800	60
AVERAGE FOR WESTERN MAHARASHTRA	...	58
<i>Marathwada</i>		
1. Aurangabad	513,407	71
2. Bhil	341,495	69
3. Nanded	400,126	79
4. Parbhani	426,334	66
5. Osmanabad	391,957	73
AVERAGE FOR MARATHWADA	...	72
<i>Berar</i>		
1. Amraoti	450,826	71
2. Akola	415,582	71
3. Ellichpur	199,993	67
4. Buldhana	312,963	74
5. Wun	367,826	79
6. Basim	268,877	76
AVERAGE FOR BERAR	...	73
<i>Central Provinces (Nagpur Division)—</i>		
1. Nagpur	437,981	58
2. Bhandara	477,083	72
3. Wardha	288,550	75
4. Balaghat	234,162	72
5. Chanda	421,124	70
AVERAGE FOR CENTRAL PROVINCES	...	69
Average for all Marathi districts, in 1901	...	66
Average for Western Marathi districts, in 1901	...	58
Average for Eastern Marathi districts, in 1901	...	71

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Western Maharashtra was already getting urbanised. The figures for eastern Maharashtra for 1901 are close to the all-India figure. We find the same situation in 1961. To sum up, we may say the Maharashtra situation *vis-à-vis* the rest of India as regards agriculture has remained the same since the beginning of the century.

A word about the primary occupations which procure food. These again seem to retain their relative proportions, but this cannot be demonstrated beyond doubt. In 1901, the proportion of shepherds, cowherds and fisherfolk is not given separately in any of the reports. These have been calculated by putting together the population for the castes doing these jobs. For 1961 unfortunately, these cannot be collected either through caste figures or through the general occupational tables. In this report mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, orchards and allied activities are all lumped together. The percentage of those actively engaged in these occupations is 1.3 (dependents of these workers are not enumerated separately).

This analysis shows that Maharashtra like the rest of India was an agricultural region *par excellence*. The thirty per cent or more people who did not do agriculture were mainly priests, chiefs and warriors, artisans and traders. A more detailed description of these people will be given later when we discuss castes. Here it may be noted that the people who were priests were divided into a great landholding class and a smaller, more indigent class, who performed the rituals necessary from birth to death. In the recent pre-British history of Maharashtra, the Brahmin ministers of the king of the Marathas had become very powerful and were almost the *de facto* rulers of Maharashtra. Thus the Brahmins had also become warriors and feudal lords. In the very first years of the British period, though some of the notable Brahmin houses had helped the British, there was suspicion of this class among the British. This class possessed two contradictory characteristics. Being hereditary priests, they were very orthodox. Being hereditary priests, they were also learned in Sanskrit traditions. The first characteristic caused much struggle before Westernisation could be accepted. This struggle is vividly portrayed in the early twentieth century literature of Maharashtra and especially in the autobiographical literature of some of the early leaders in this class. The second tradition, that of learning, led this class to take eagerly to the new opportunities for learning which introduced it to English social thought. The working of these two forces led to much suffering and antagonisms of generations in Brahmin families, but apparently the impulse to Westernisation¹ triumphed, and the Brahmin community held high administra-

¹ Westernisation is a word with a wide variety of meanings. In the Brahmanical context of Poona the city was divided into a "camp" representing the British Army and an Indian population catering to the needs of the camp, and the old city mostly dominated by orthodox Maharashtrian Brahmins and a new reformist generation. Westernisation meant a minimum of Western ways of life combined with a maximum of Western knowledge. This type of Westernisation gradually led the people ultimately to take up

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tive positions, almost monopolised education, and were the leaders of Maharashtra in education, in social reform, and in the political struggle for freedom. Recently they have been losing this position because in the meanwhile other communities have also forged ahead. In the old agricultural society this class almost never did agricultural work by its own hands, though most Brahmins owned land. The Brahmins together with other priests formed about 6 per cent of the population of Maharashtra.

In Maharashtra, the chiefs and the warriors belonged traditionally to a group who called themselves Marathas. There is another group which used to call itself Kunbi who were agriculturists. These also were fighters but the Marathas considered themselves to be a closed aristocracy, marrying only among themselves and holding positions of hereditary chiefs over smaller and bigger tracts. Shivaji (1630-1680) the first king of Maharashtra after the Yadavas, was a Maratha. These people owned lands as feudal lords. This land was generally cultivated as in the case of Brahmins by the tenants who were either poorer Marathas or Kunbis. Among the blue-blooded Marathas, the women-folk were confined to the houses, and however poor, they never worked on the land. In the 1901 Census, the proportion of the Marathas to the Kunbis was 24 per cent to 76 per cent.¹ Of the Marathas, about half may be considered to be poor enough to work their own land, the rest, making 12 per cent. of the population, were certainly supported by the agriculturists. At present the Maratha-Kunbi complex at a guess makes up about 40 per cent. of the total in western Maharashtra. Of these 40 per cent about 43 per cent. were Maratha proper, that is to say 16 per cent. of the total population in Maharashtra. Some of them cultivate their own land while some are landlords and get their land cultivated by tenants. It is extremely difficult to make any guess about this. Perhaps, people supported entirely by the work of others and enjoying the status of feudal landlords and petty chiefs may not be more than 8 to 10 per cent. The priests and warriors between them would account for about 15 per cent. of the population, supported by the primary food producers.

In the post-British history of Maharashtra, the Marathas have played a very significant role. The Kunbis were mostly a rural population, and also mostly illiterate. The Marathas were chiefs and rulers, but also represented a rural aristocracy, and so were conservative, intensely proud, and largely illiterate. There were, however, among the Marathas, certain feudal states kept under the

also the ways of Western life. As against this, there is a type of Westernisation which has been assiduously practised by certain communities who came in intimate contact with the British. This consisted in learning to speak English with great facility, learning English table manners and social behaviour, and, especially for women, to be able to entertain in the Western way. Children of this class received their education in the schools run by European missionaries. In this type of schooling, Western scientific knowledge may or may not be included. The emphasis was more on style and manner, especially at the high school stage.

¹ Enthoven, *Tribes and Castes of Bombay Presidency*, 1903.

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hereditary princes by the British. The *Rajas* of Satara and Kolhapur were legally descendants of the great Shivaji and as such claimed and received great respect and honour from all the other Marathas and also from a large proportion of the population of other castes. The men holding the *Raja's* position at Satara did not take any part in Maharashtra's political or social life. The men who were successively *Rajas* of Kolhapur were, however, men with imagination. They were intensely conscious of their position as the first family of Maharashtra. They greatly resented the part played by the Brahmin *Peshwas* in historical times and by the new Brahmins who were coming up as leaders in Maharashtra. They, in a long quarrel with Brahmin priests, abolished the hereditary estate of their own priest who refused to recognise them as Kshatriyas. They also placed as religious head of the State a man who represented a liberal outlook. In the State of Kolhapur, the *Rajas* established educational institutions and free hostels for students. They also supported a bitter anti-Brahmin movement called the *Satyashodhak Samaj* (the Society of Truth-seekers)¹. While this venture freed the Marathas from Brahmanical ritualism and ideas of pollution, it also had the effect of generally loosening the grip of the priests and the introduction of liberal ideas.

Besides Kolhapur, there was a principality established by the *Peshwas* and ruled by a family called Gaekwad in Baroda, outside of Maharashtra. The Gaekwad family did not belong to the highest ranks among the Marathas, but they were also intensely conscious of their heritage. The greatest ruling prince of this family was Sayajirao Gaekwad (1881-1939). In his long reign he did much for the education of the masses, and gave patronage to learned Brahmins also. Sayajirao, as far as the cultural life of Maharashtra is concerned, takes about the highest position among the liberalisers and reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was a patron of learning, arts, and many branches of knowledge which came into their own in India long after his death. There is hardly a Maratha leader who does not owe his education either to the *Rajas* of Kolhapur or to Sayajirao Gaekwad. One might say that the late nineteenth and the middle twentieth century in Maharashtra was a period of Brahmin leadership, while the Marathas were recovering from the loss of their power, and gradually building up their strength to assume leadership. One might also say that the history between 1901 and 1960 was a continuation of the classical struggle between the priests and the rulers, a struggle which was a feature of all agricultural societies².

¹ Founded by Shri Jyotiba Phule in 1873. See further Padhye, Tikekar—*Ajkalcha Maharashtra, Bharat Gaurava Granthmala*. Vol. 100. Bombay, 1935.

² The relationship between priests and rulers in settled agricultural societies has been alternately one of co-operation and antagonism. The co-operation exists in the fact that each of these two groups lends support to the other and derives its power from the other. The priest legitimises the position of the ruler who in his turn supports the priest. The two together represent the social and secular aspects of power. The history of priests and Kings in India and the relationship of the Church and the monarchies in Europe clearly bring out the role of the two classes in advanced agricultural communities.

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The percentage of artisans worked out by adding up all those who did various kinds of hand work was about 8 per cent, in 1901. The different groups of artisans found in Maharashtra as also in the rest of India were the same as those found in other agricultural societies. While the needs of the agricultural society were the same, sometimes they were fulfilled in slightly differing ways so that a comparison of the great agricultural communities would show slight differences in the type of artisans found in each. In two ancient and developed agricultural societies, Babylonia and Egypt, we find that the art of writing was developed in different ways. In Egypt, writing was done always on papyrus rolls, the preparation of which was a skilled task and probably done by specialised artisans, while the writing was done by another specialised group, the scribes, who were probably attached to the temples. The alphabet in Babylonia was much more developed than Egyptian hieroglyphics, but the materials used were ordinary bricks. These were probably made by the same people who made bricks for Babylonian houses. Thus the same primary need is met in different ways by different groups of artisans working in combination with each other. In Europe, we have evidence of stone and pottery lamps being used from proto-historic right upto historic times. Somehow in medieval Europe these lamps were replaced by candle-sticks which also made use of animal fat. The candle-stick maker was one of the new types of artisan in Europe. In India on the other hand, the easy availability of oilseeds and the use of the oils for eating and for other purposes gave rise to a very important group of artisans, the oil-pressers. On the other hand, lamps (oil-holders) continued to be made of clay and all types of metals so that the potters and the metal-workers made lamps along with the other things they manufactured. No special class like candle-stick makers arose in India. Keeping these differences in mind we may take it that the important artisans of the agricultural communities were more or less the same everywhere. Some selected examples are given below.

The metal workers.—Among these are iron workers, brass and copper workers, and gold and silver workers. The iron worker was never as important in India as he was in Europe. Not every village had an ironsmith. Some people were itinerant while others combined mining and the making of simple utensils and implements. In parts of Maharashtra small veins of iron were found in the laterite formation in Satara district and other places which were worked by these people who also fashioned articles out of them. These people generally smelted and beat iron to make simple articles. More sophisticated ironwork was done generally in bigger towns and involved also the work of pouring metal into prepared moulds.

The workers in copper and brass: Copper was not found in Maharashtra but apparently it was mined in Rajputana. It was mixed with different quantities of zinc to make bell-metal or brass. In Rajputana and Gujarat, much bell-metal was used for making

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household utensils. People who made it were called *kansar* from *kansa*, (bell-metal, from Sans. *Kansya*). In Maharashtra bell-metal was used only for very restricted purposes, but brass and copper were and are even now, used for the majority of household utensils including storage jars and water pots. The Marathi word for workers in these metals is *tambat*, from *tamba* (Sans. *tamra*=copper). One does not find these artisans in villages. They are found in bigger towns especially in the older capital cities and temple towns. Among these there were also people who worked by beating the metal into sheets or drawing it into wire, and those who worked by pouring molten metal into different moulds. In olden days, a number of heavy household utensils were made by moulding the metal. Most of the idols worshipped at home and in the temple were also made in this way. The prohibitive cost of the metal as also the extreme heaviness of the moulded utensils have gradually driven them out of use, though some utensils are still made by this process. A characteristic of Maharashtra can be mentioned in this context. In the whole of the north, clay pots are used in the household for all kinds of purposes. Especially the water vessel which one takes to the village well or to the river is generally made of fired clay. In Maharashtra these vessels are generally made of brass or copper, and the most frequent sight on rural roads, in the morning or towards the evening, is of women fetching water with two or three such pots on their heads. In this preference for the use of metal, Maharashtra and Karnatak, and perhaps the whole of south India, show a cultural feature different from that of northern India.

Workers in gold and silver: They are also urban people though one might find a goldsmith in the bigger villages. They make silver ornaments which are used by poorer people and gold ornaments which are used by well-to-do people. Silver vessels for drinking and eating were used by richer people. Also, smaller and bigger idols for home worship and for temples were made in silver and gold. They also worked in beating metal sheets, drawing metal wire and pouring metal.

Workers in wood: We find a carpenter (*Sutar*) in most villages except the smallest ones. The farmer depends on him for making all kinds of agricultural implements, including the plough and the cart. They also do the woodwork of houses, like the uprights, beams, doors and windows. In India, though a necessary craftsman, a carpenter is not as important as in the more wooded Europe. In Europe, barring the bigger manors, very few houses were constructed with stone. The framework was generally of wood. In India, barring certain forested regions, the houses are built of stone or brick or mud and the carpenter does not have too much of a share in house-building. In the big houses (*vadas*) before the British times much beautiful woodwork could be seen. The main doors of these houses were big enough for "elephants to go in and out". These doors used to be of wood with carved uprights and studded with ornamental brass knobs. The windows also had ornamental frames. Many of

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these *vadas* used to have galleries supported on wooden beams. These beams were in turn supported on wooden brackets carved as swans or elephants or other figures. Some of the halls in the *vadas* as also the halls in front of the temples had beautifully carved wooden pillars. The big *vadas* also had beams of fine wood. These have become rare, but one can still see them in older houses from Nagpur to Konkan. Obviously these carpenters also were very skilled workmen, more in demand in bigger towns than in the rural areas.

Weavers.—Some fine silk and cotton weaving was done in Maharashtra, but the Maharashtra ruling houses in the British period used cloth and saris woven at famous centres outside Maharashtra but within its political influence, for example Chander (Gwalior territory), Maheshwar (Indore, Holkar territory), Ilkal (North Karnatak, in the hands of Maratha Chiefs). Some fine weaving was done at Yeola and Paithan. The rest of the weaving was mostly cotton at various centres.

Bangle makers.—The bangle makers are not so prominent in Maharashtra as in Northern India. Bangles are sold by people called Kasar. Metal bangles are always worn, and they were made of metal and made by the goldsmith and the brass-workers. Glass bangles apparently came into use rather late (fourteenth century). The word Kasar suggests somebody who was dealing in bell-metal, but now the word Kasar is also used for the seller of glass bangles.

Other Artisans.—One group of artisans are tailors (Shimpi). The word seems to be akin to the Gujarati word Chhippi. Both the words seem to be derived from Sanskrit *shilpi* which means an artisan. In Gujarat, Chhippi are people who print cloth. In Maharashtra, from *Peshwa* records it appears that printed cloth was something new but the word Shimpi in Maharashtra was always applied to a tailor. Maharashtra in the matter of clothes belongs more to the southern and eastern complex of India rather than to the western and north-western. Among the westerners and north-westerners, both men and women wear tailored clothes. In Maharashtra, women of all castes used to wear a sari and men a dhoti, both untailored garments. The upper garment for women, the *choli*, was sewn. Men also had an upper garment called *angarkha* or *barabandi* which however was not as invariably worn as the *choli*. Shimpi as tailor was a necessary artisan even for these simple garments because Maharashtra women as a general rule did not sew garments nor were they good needle-women¹. People bearing the name of an artisan group do not exhaust the artisans. People who weave rough woollen blankets called *kambla* are people belonging to the shepherd group. There are leather workers and rope makers and people who weave extremely rough cotton cloth. All of these used to be counted among people whose touch was said to pollute. So we may add about 4 per cent more to the artisan group, making it in all between 12 per cent and 13 per cent of the population.

¹ Irawati Karve—*Marathi Lokanchi Sanskriti*, pp: 278-79, Poona 1951.

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The next very important group of people supported by the primary food growers are the traders and/or shopkeepers. Each village generally has a small shop selling all kinds of goods. In the towns, there used to be greater differentiation inasmuch as different things were sold in different shops, and each type of shop was located in a different small street. Some of the shops also had their workshops at the back. The shopkeeper or the artisan lived behind his shop. Some of these shopkeepers were themselves artisans or makers of the goods they sold. But in other cases the shopkeeper was a wholesale buyer and retail seller. The trader, on the other hand, was a person who might go from place to place buying the goods, storing them in great quantities and selling them wholesale. The trader was generally on the move and made peaceful communication among distant communities which generally subsisted by land and so were to a large extent immobile. The shopkeeper was not so mobile. The bigger shopkeepers in the cities and the towns were also entrepreneurs in a small way because they were either buying one or more types of things from various places and investing capital, to be recovered with gain at some later period. These people together made about 4 per cent. Maharashtra has a very peculiar situation as regards traders and shopkeepers. It appears that Maharashtra did not have a well-developed trading and shopkeeping class of its own. That appears to have been the case even before the British times. The trading class, if it can be termed so, of Maharashtra was mainly the Madhyandin Deshastha Brahmin. The Brahmins who traded in salt and cereals besides trading, did money-lending. The money-lenders to the *Peshwas* were Madhyandin Brahmins. They had come to Poona from across the river Godavari. In rural areas, as also in townships, they lent money and kept silver and gold ornaments as security. Very often the loan could not be repaid and so these people ended up with ornaments, mostly silver, rarely gold, which they sold at slightly lower prices than the price for new ornaments which would be charged by the goldsmiths. In Marathi, this business is called *Savakari*, and the man doing it is called *Sahukar*. To a lesser extent, most of the Brahmin landlords, and some landlords of other groups also carried on this business. Investigations being carried out at present (1967) on market towns in Nasik district show vividly that trading and money-lending go hand in hand. The trading seems to have vanished but the money-lending business continued for a longer period. The people whom one finds in Maharashtra as traders are most of them immigrants from Gujarat, Rajasthan, lately from Sindh in the north, and Lingayat Vani and Komati from Karnatak and Andhra. The Muslims like the Bohra and Khoja of Bombay who are well-known trading communities are also from Gujarat. The Parsis who were Persians and had sought asylum with a king of Gujarat in the tenth century, and who during the British period became the earliest trading community in Bombay can also be reckoned as a community from Gujarat. Many of these communities still have homes and kin groups in their native land

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and spend their earnings there. Perhaps it is due to this fact that there has been some antagonism to these communities in Maharashtra. Their necessary role in a settled agricultural community has never been properly understood or appreciated nor have means been found to regulate the excessive profit-making and exploitation of consumers done by some members of these communities.

A special feature of Maharashtra in this connection is the market town. The 1961 Census lists market towns. These have weekly markets where people from a radius of upto 25 miles may come to buy and sell. Market towns of this sort are a well-known feature of other peasant societies, serving as centres of not only economic but also cultural give-and-take.

An extremely small group which is not important numerically but which helps us to understand the structure of this agricultural society is made up of entertainers. These are itinerant groups who go from place to place with animals like monkeys, bears and snakes. There are also story-tellers who are either simple story-tellers or priests of particular gods or goddesses or readers and translators into simple Marathi of the stories as told in the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, or the *Puranas*. Then there are groups who put on plays with a little bit of story, a lot of local politics, very broad jokes, a little bit of dancing and singing. Acrobats, puppeteers, ventriloquists etc., also belong to this group. These people get on the move by about November or December when the monsoon rains are over and when the harvest is being gathered. The agriculturists gladly welcome these people, feed them and pay them. All these entertainers together may not make even one per cent of the population.

A still smaller group which was called, during British times, the criminal tribes, is made up of groups of itinerant people who have some small special craft as legitimate business and who eke out their living by stealing, mostly grain, during this very period when the harvest is standing in the fields or being taken home. These obviously are the last remnants of the hunters and gatherers who have refused to come to terms with the agricultural society. Their nearest parallel in the West are the gypsies and their position in the settled agricultural communities in Europe.

Maharashtra like the rest of India was an agricultural society made up of the following sets (1) about 70 per cent. people engaged in food procuring, (2) about 8 per cent. priests, (3) about the same percentage feudal lords, (4) 10 to 12 per cent artisans, (5) 4 per cent traders, (6) a few entertainers, and (7) a sprinkling of people not adjusted to the agricultural community¹. This is the picture as it existed around the beginning of the century. Before describing what the society is in the 1960s, certain other features need to be understood.

¹ Glimpses of the Marathi Society in pre-British times are found in the two following books :—

(a) N. G. Chapekar—*Peshwaichya Sawalit*, Poona, 1937, *Bharat Itihasa Samshodhan Mandal* Publication, No. 34.

(b) S. N. Joshi—*Marathe Kalin Samaj Darshana*, Poona, 1960, *Anatha Vidyaratil Griha Prakashan*.

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The description upto now was with an aim to show that Maharashtra society was similar to the agricultural societies of the world. It had however certain unique features which it shared with the rest of the Indian society but with no other. There are analogous structures in other societies too, but there is nothing like it in depth or extent in other human societies.

The whole set of people described above has been divided into hundreds of smaller groups called *jati* in Indian languages, and "castes", by Western anthropologists.¹ Caste is a social group which has certain characteristics. The other word for caste, *jati*, is also coming into use.

The Indian word *jati* is being used more and more, especially by certain American anthropologists, because of the confusion created by words like caste and sub-caste. The word *jati* however also has different connotations in its Sanskrit context and in its modern Indian context. In Sanskrit the word *jati* is sometimes used as a synonym for *kula*, and may refer to a patrilineal or matrilineal clan, or an endogamous group of the nature of sub-caste. It can also be used for biological divisions for example, *stree-jati* (womankind), or *pashu-jati* (animal kind). In modern Indian usage also *jati* is a synonym for *kula* in parts of Andhra and Karnataka. *Jati* means the endogamous unit. It also means an exogamous part within an endogamous caste. It might, in certain contexts, also apply to a whole linguistic group as against another linguistic group though this last usage is rather rare. Throughout this book I have used the words *jati* and caste (or sub-caste) interchangeably.

A *jati* (sub-caste²) is a group (1) in which there is marriage only among members of the group, that is, it is endogamous; (2) which used to be spread over a contiguous small area; (3) members of which generally had one or more inter-connected occupations. These occupations were hereditary and there was a compulsion to follow these occupations and not others; (4) which used to have a rank relative to all similar groups. In each linguistic region there were over two hundred *jatis*. There were a dozen or so *jatis* doing the same kind of work. For example, there would be a dozen *jatis* making earthen pots, another dozen or so engaged in weaving cloth, about an equal number making ornaments and silver-ware and another set of castes engaged in ritual activities. All the dozen or so *jatis* which followed one type of occupation may have the same general name. For example, in Maharashtra the potters would be

¹ The word caste is derived from "casta", a Portuguese word meaning box.

² All the characteristics are given without mentioning certain well-known exceptions, and exception to exceptions. This is not primarily a discussion of the social structure called caste, and so only very salient features which are needed for the understanding of Maharashtra's social structure are given.

Anybody interested in caste will find material in the following: J. H. Hutton, "Caste in India". First published by the Cambridge University Press, 1946, 1st Edition.

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called Kumbhar (*Kumbha*, an earthen pot, *Kara*, maker). The ornament makers, or goldsmiths, would be called Sonar. The cloth weavers would be known by various names like Koshti, Sali, Vinkar. Some of those who perform ritual activities and priestly functions would be called Brahmin. Each one of the endogamous castes from the group of castes doing similar work, besides possessing a common designation implying its hereditary occupation, also possessed names which distinguished it from the others with which it did not marry. Among Sonars there are *jatis* in Maharashtra which call themselves *Daivadnya* Sonar, *Lad* Sonar, *Ahir* Sonar, etc.

Among Kumbhars there are Thorchake Kumbhars, Lahanchake Kumbhars, Maratha Kumbhars, Telangi Kumbhars, etc. Among Brahmins, there are Sarasvat Brahmins, Chitpavan Brahmins, Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmins, Madhyandin Brahmins, Charak Brahmins etc. These designations sometimes refer to a special implement used by the caste. (Thor-chake—using a big wheel, Lahanchake—using a small wheel) or a special attribute (*Daivadnya*—knowing astrology), region of occupation (*Deshastha*—living in the region of Maharashtra, called *Desh*) or supposed historical origin (*Sarasvat*—coming from the banks of the *Sarasvati*). It will be seen that these various devices are sometimes combined in order to make the group identity absolutely clear. For example, the Chitpavan Brahmins sometimes call themselves Konkanastha Chitpavan Brahmins which translated would mean Brahmins who have the appellation Chitpavan and who live on the west coast. All this will show that the endogamous group *jati*, though sharing certain common characteristics like occupation and region with other *jatis*, took pains to keep their group identity definite and clear.

The word 'caste' came to be applied to groups doing a similar type of work. There was a Sonar caste, a Kumbhar caste, a Brahmin caste, and the word sub-caste was used for the small endogamous groups. Then came speculations about why a caste, the bigger group, had so many smaller groups within it. All anthropologists knew that the smaller endogamous group was the really significant social entity. This knowledge led to a belief that somehow the smaller groups were splinter groups of the bigger group. On this assumption much was written about the tendency towards fission or division present in Hindu society¹. It was shown how the earliest Indian literature did not mention castes, that the literature following it mentioned but a few castes, and that a few centuries after the Christian era castes, as the endogamous groups

Karve "Hindu Society, an Interpretation", 2nd Ed. Poona, 1968, and "What is Caste" Economic Weekly, 1959-60.

G. S. Ghurye, "Caste and Race in India", Oxford, 1941 "Caste and Class", Bombay, 1951 and "Caste, Class and Occupation", 1961, Popular Book Depot, Bombay-7.

F. G. Bailey, "Closed Social Stratification in India" in Archives Ex-Europus Sociologus IV, 1963; Dumont and Pocock, various essays in volumes of "Contributions to Indian Sociology" and Leon Sinder, "Caste Instability in Mughal India, Seoul, Korea, 1962 (?). Year not given; Louis Dumout, *Homo Hierarchicus*, Paris, 1967.

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known today, began to be mentioned in literature. This also supported the view that an originally homogeneous society with a few big class-like groups in historical times became divided into innumerable small groups.

The more I study the phenomenon of caste and the other aspects of Hindu social life, the more dissatisfied I feel about this theory of continuous fission leading to the formation of smaller and smaller castes. In Indian social history there undoubtedly are authentic cases of fission of a caste leading to the formation of two new endogamous castes. There are also cases in which extremely large castes, for example Marathas and Rajputs, seem to have arisen through fusion of different ethnic elements. But neither of these two processes is important in the formation of the innumerable small groups called *jati*. I had said that Indian history from very early times is characterised by the absence of a central power which could direct religious or political or purely social behaviour. Groups were allowed to worship their own god, to belong to any sect and to retain their social habits, provided this did not come into direct conflict with the ruling power. In Maharashtra a group of people from the south doing the work of potters might have come in. This group might have had its own gods, its own marriage practices (for example cross-cousin marriage), and its own implements. It settled in a new region as a group, practising endogamy, keeping itself to itself. Another group in north Maharashtra, also doing pottery, but with special types of gods, implements, and marriage practices might have come from Gujarat and settled as a group. A third group which manufactures its pottery without a wheel might be derived directly from a primitive tribe. This same type of argument holds in the case of other groups like Sonars—the goldsmiths, and even Brahmins. Generally, each such caste was spread over a limited area. In some areas or at certain times, for example on a market day, different types of Kumbhars, Sonars, Koshtis (weavers), might come together to sell their wares. But each member of a group held fast to his group identity strengthened by the endogamy of the group. This will make evident that the phenomenon of caste is not so much a consequence of continuous fission of bigger groups as of non-fusion of groups of different geographic and ethnic origins in spite of carrying on the same or similar professions.¹ In a village there may not be more than one or two families of each artisan caste, a few families of the labouring caste, and a majority of agriculturists sometimes of one *jati*, sometimes of two or three *jatis*. How these various castes lived in a village will be discussed later.

The theory based on fission derived a certain support from the fourth characteristic of *jati*, namely rank. There is a certain amount of ranking among *jatis* which follow the same or similar profession. A Kumbhar who makes rough earthen pots for everyday use may not

¹ K. C. Malhotra—*Anthropometric Measurements and Blood groups of Maharashtra Brahmins*, unpublished doctoral thesis—Poona University, 1966.

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rank as high as a Kumbhar who makes ornamental vases or images of gods. In the same way a Sonar who makes silver vessels or ornaments does not rank as high as the one who makes gold jewellery. There is, however, a more deep-going ranking between clusters of *jatis* who do different types of work. All the Sonar *jatis* rank above all the weaver *jatis* who in turn rank above all the potter *jatis*. Agriculturists may rank above certain artisan *jatis* but may hold a lower position than certain others like Sonar. The Brahmins have tried to maintain in historical times the first rank in the *jati* hierarchy. The rank of the Brahmin above all *jatis* and the rank of *jatis* like agriculturists and artisans among themselves are again based on two principles which are historically quite distinct. While the ranking among artisan and agricultural castes seems to be a ranking on the folk level, the ranking among Brahmins and others, which we shall presently explain, is based on an elaborate ranking system perfected in Brahmanical literature and called the *Varna* system.

The classical ranking system is called by some the Brahmanical system. There is no evidence to show that Brahmins were the creators of the system. They were however, its elaborators. This system is called the *varna* system. *Varna* is a noun derived from the verb *Vru*: to choose or to place in a given order. There is also a root *varna* which means to describe or to depict, and in this sense it has come to mean describing or painting in colours. The *varna* system of the Brahmins is a system of ranking which had nothing to do with *varna*-colour (skin colour).

The present-day Indians put an exaggerated value on skin colour especially in the case of women. (An extremely fair Indian man is regarded as effeminate). This preference has made people think that the *varna* system was based on the difference in the complexion between the Aryans who were fair, and the non-Aryans who were dark. The preference for fair colour seems however to be of rather late date. Older literature does not make mention of fairness as an essential element of beauty. As regards men, we have examples of people who were known to be both extremely attractive and dark. For example, Krishna, Vasudeva, Rama, etc. In the case of Rama, the root meaning of the word is, "that which attracts". He was known to be dark. Among the Pandavas, the man most coveted by women, namely Arjuna, was dark, while the man not so coveted, namely Dharma, is described as very fair. In the case of prince Nakula, said to be the handsomest man of his times, the colour of his skin is not mentioned at all. As regards women, while Damayanti and Sita were fair, Draupadi and Satyawati were dark. The best evidence that the word *varna* when used for caste ranking did not mean colour is, I believe, a pun on the word, made by the Sanskrit poet Bana who wrote in the 7th century A.D. The word, *varna sankara* was used in different legal treatises, called *smritis*, to denote marriages between people belonging to different *varnas*. *Varna* in this context means a particular rank. *Sankara* means mixture. Bana describing a very righteous king called Shudraka tells us that in the reign of that king, there was *varna sankara* (*varna* in

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this context is colour) only in paintings, and not among human beings. The very fact that a pun of that sort could be made shows that the word *varna* when used for ranking had no connotation of colour. It would be worth investigating if the preference for white skin started in the Muslim period and became exaggerated after the British conquest of India.

Apparently, the *varna* system to start with was a class system followed by the Aryans. In the early part of the Vedic literature, only two *varnas* are mentioned. These two *varnas* were Brahman, the magician-priests, and the Rajanya, the shining, the rulers. The third *varna* mentioned later was Vis which means "all". Apparently it referred to the rest of the society after the Brahmins and Rajanya (who later on came to be called Kshatra or Kshatriya). The enumeration of the work of each of these classes in a book as late as *Bhagavadgita* also shows that originally these three together formed a complete society. According to *Bhagavadgita* the Vis were supposed to keep cattle and do farming. The ancient Aryans were people made up of three classes, the priests, the rulers, and the farmers and herders. There is in this an analogy with other ancient communities as in Persia, Greece and Rome which were also made up of the priests, the nobles, and the plebians. Very late, in the Vedic times, a fourth class was added to this society. This class was called Shudra and to start with, the only work it had was menial work for the other three classes. The Shudras apparently had different gods and rituals from those of the original Aryan society so that certain rituals, especially the initiation ceremony called *upanayana*, was not allowed to them. Very possibly, the Shudra class comprised most of the people conquered by the Aryans. The Vis gradually came to be associated with trade and commerce, while the harder work of all types including farming and herding was left in the hands of the Shudras. According to this system the Brahmins were supposed to be the first rank, and Kshatriya the second. We find however, a kind of dispute about rank going on between Brahmins and Kshatriyas throughout history from the earliest Vedic times almost to the present day. The Vis probably never had any rank, but got one only when the Shudras were added as the fourth *varna*. Originally Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vis were supposed to undergo the same type of ritual from birth to death, but at an early period the Vis somehow lost the right to the ritual. The Brahmanical theory says that true Kshatriyas died in the battle of *Mahabharata* and that all those kings who came afterwards were rulers but did not belong to the Kshatriya *varna*. According to the tradition, some famous kings like Chandragupta were Shudra. Others like Harshavardhana were Vaishya. In *Shankarabhashya*, Shankara mentions the king ruling in his times as a Shudra. The *varna* system is a system of ranked classes. It was also used especially by Manu to explain the existence and the ranking of *jatis*. Manu indulged in a mathematical exercise of permutations and combinations between the four *varnas* to create hybrids by first crossing, by crossing the hybrids back with the original four, males and females and also by crossing the hybrids

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among themselves. Manu, in a matter of three or four crossings, got hundreds of crosses. He gave the name of a particular caste known to him to some of these crosses, but was unable to find a name for each cross. I think that endogamous groups or *jatis* were an independent social fact, possibly in existence in India before the Aryans came with their three-class system. And Manu's speculations are nothing more than an attempt to explain a *jati* system in terms of and as a derivative of the *varna* system. Another learned man, Baudhayana, in his writings describes the social situation very briefly and tellingly. He said that *varnas* are four, and *jatis* are innumerable. Apparently, this was the situation all along. Whenever groups live together, there is an implicit or explicit ranking. The *jatis* may have a ranking system of their own which I have termed as "ranking at the folk level." The *varna* system was an imposition from outside and possibly because it was the system of a conquering people whose priests were literate by 700 B.C., it became an accepted general frame-work all over India*. Whenever there is a class system there are attempts to rise up to a higher class. Such attempts on an individual level are recorded in ancient Sanskrit literature. In the *jati* system, however, a man is bound to his endogamous *jati* so that in an attempt to gain a higher level either the group as a whole tries to attain a higher level, or a great individual trying to rise higher, raises his whole caste to that status. In the *jati* system with its endogamy, if a goldsmith has a higher status than say an iron-smith or a potter, it is not generally possible nor is it generally desired by a potter or a carpenter to gain the status or the skills of a goldsmith. The *jatis* are generally connected with some kind of specialised jobs. On the other hand, in the *varna* division, the connotation of the job is not so definite. And so the attempts have never been to change from one *jati* to another but to change from one *varna* to another. The attempt has been always by the *jatis* in the Shudra *varna* to acquire the *varna* status of the Vaishya or Kshatriya or Brahmin. The Vaishyas are an extremely well-to-do class, known for their munificent support of great Hindu temples. Other Vaishyas, who are Jains, have no reference in their life to Brahmanism at all. The Vaishyas cared most for the peace of the market place and so they cared for the status of neither Brahminhood nor Kshatriyahood. Kshatriyas as rulers or feudal lords also did not generally care to change their name or status. There are however well known cases of men born to Kshatriya rank wanting to be recognised as Brahmins or Rishis. Vishvamitra was one such example. Curiously, Brahmins, though asserting that they had the first rank, have always coveted recognition as being learned in weapons and as brave warriors from the most ancient times upto the present day. This might be due to what has already been mentioned as the ancient rivalry between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. It can be concluded that the only people who try as a rule to rise higher up in *varna* are the *jatis* belonging to the fourth category, that of Shudras.

*Shudras, as slaves without civil rights and without Aryan ritual, offer analogies to the slaves in the Greek Society.

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Another fact about the Shudra *varna* is that there are more endogamous *jatis* in this *varna* than in all the other three *varnas* together. If we remember that all agriculturists are supposed to belong to the Shudra *varna*, this fact is not surprising. A reference to the sets of people of which an agricultural society is composed, and which we have discussed, will show that a little over seventy per cent. agriculturists support between 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. priests, feudal lords, traders, etc. The attempt to rise in the *varna* hierarchy was a perennial feature of the Hindu society. In order to establish their Kshatriyahood, each new conqueror in the pre-Muslim days tried to establish genealogies ultimately tracing a descent from some well-known legendary Kshatriya like Rama or Krishna or the Pandavas. In many cases, as in the legends of the Chauhans of Rajasthan, new lines of Kshatriyas were supposed to have arisen out of fire, a god sacred to the Aryans. The *varna* hierarchy and what it meant had a very strong hold on people's mind. In Maharashtra, the Kayasthas and the Marathas claimed the right to Kshatriyahood and the initiation ceremony. Though such claims were opposed by certain Brahmins, other Brahmins could be found to uphold these claims. The ancient process continued during the British period and is well documented in each of the census reports when *jatis* counted mostly as belonging to the Shudra *varna* have tried to give proofs to this alien government that they were really Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas¹. The *varna* order has been upset since the influx of people like Muslims and Christians, who, because of their monotheistic allegiances, did not care to merge with the Hindu society with their god as their group god only. On the other hand, they kept their own identity and tried to convert from among the Hindus those who could be converted. The British contact which brought in ideas of Western democracy upset the *varna* idea even more thoroughly, so that today, barring the extreme right-wing political faction of orthodox Hindus, nobody gives open allegiance to the *varna* system. The ways of thought of the people are, however, so ingrained that a recent psychological investigation carried out in the Poona University², shows that a group has ideas about itself and about other groups, which are as old as those described in the *Mahabharata*. The so-called stereotypes go back in their expressions almost verbatim to the expressions used in such ancient literature as *Bhagavadgita*.

In the *varna* system, apparently from very ancient times, there were people who were supposed to be so impure that their touch polluted. In the ancient Sanskrit literature which comes immediately after the Vedas, these people are mentioned as Chandala. They were supposed to do some kind of work, "not

¹ See for example Census of India, 1931, Vol. 1, part I, page 433, where Hutton refers feelingly to the deluge of representations received by the Census Superintendent.

² A. C. Paranjpe, "A psycho-social study of caste," Chapter VII, page 218; Ph.D. Thesis, Poona University, July, 1966.

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pretty", creating revulsion¹, though the exact nature of the work is not mentioned. Later on, in Sanskrit dramas, we know that the men appointed for executing people belonged to this category. Still later on, we know that those who were appointed as watchmen of the cremation grounds also belonged to this category. Since Christian era there were many other *jatis* mentioned as "polluting"; one such was Matanga. Sometimes they were mentioned as *antevasi*, those living on the boundary. We know from this expression that they were not allowed to live with the others in a city or a village. These people belonged to the lowest category of the Shudras. In the south, especially in Tamilnad, they were supposed to be outside of the four *varnas*, and were called *panchamas*, the fifth. The touch, and even the shadow of these people was supposed to be polluting to the people of higher caste. Since the coming of the British, these people were called the Untouchables.

The word untouchable represents a peculiarly Western reaction to a phenomenon not thoroughly understood. I have said above that the *varna* system was not based on colour consciousness. I have tried to give in a few words the historical basis and growth of the *varna* system. The *varna* system was headed by the class of priests called Brahmins, a part of whom apparently, from very ancient times, was involved in ritual activities some of which were carried on continuously for days and months. These ritual activities involved taking baths and being in a "sacred" state so that the sacredness would vanish by the touch of any person not in that state. Whether this type of behaviour was already well-established in the ancient times cannot be inferred from the literature, but there is enough evidence a little before the Christian era of a Brahmin keeping himself away from others who were not Brahmins so as not to be polluted.

A woman in her menses and during the first ten days after child-birth was always confined to a special part of the house as her touch was thought to be polluting for the whole household. Generally the touch of anybody who was not a Brahmin was thought to be polluting even in recent times. This entailed considerable work on the part of Brahmin women. Not so long ago in Maharashtra, Brahmin women, especially in rural areas, and even those belonging to richer houses, had to fetch all the water needed by the large joint family because Brahmins could not use the water touched by other castes. They had to scrub all the pots and wash all the clothes. If a working woman of another caste was employed to scrub the pots, the pots would be placed after cleaning outside the house. One of the inmates would pour a bucket of water on the already cleaned pots to remove the pollution, and then bring them into the house. Food cooked by the Brahmin was acceptable to all castes so that Brahmins were employed as cooks even in the richer houses of Marathas and

¹ The actual words are "*ramaniyacharana* (*ramaniya* beautiful *charana* walk, behaviour, work) and *kapuya charana* (*kapuya*-revolting, dirty), *Chhandogyopnishad* 10 : 7 p. 128.

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Vaishyas. Similar ideas about purity and pollution were held by almost all castes belonging to the *varnas* other than the Brahmins. Even among Shudras there were castes who accepted food and water from certain castes but not from others. The phenomenon of pollution was not confined only to behaviour between castes and occasions like birth and death, but was a matter of daily occurrence in orthodox houses of Brahmin and certain non-Brahmin castes. In those houses where there was worship of household gods, a man or a woman, after bath, would wear special clothes. While the person was doing the worship, he could not be touched by others. In the same way, the daily food which is offered in the house to the household gods has to be cooked in this "sacred" condition. The person who cooks the food must not be touched by others. A society which was so used to the idea of pollution did not consider it something queer when groups doing certain types of jobs were supposed to pollute by their touch. The injustices which followed this treatment of certain groups tend to vanish when the ideas of sacredness and pollution vanish. Also, it shows why there was no objection to granting equal rights in law to these people. The difference in attitude can best be seen in the exclamation of an orthodox Brahmin woman heard on one occasion. People were trying to tell this woman how times had changed and how the "untouchables" were equal to the others. The old woman exclaimed, "I don't mind if an untouchable becomes a governor. Only let him not enter my house."¹ The people who were called Untouchable during the British times are divided into *jatis* with a hierarchy and an endogamy exactly like the other *jatis*. The number of *jatis* held as absolutely untouchable changed from linguistic region to linguistic region but one can say as a general rule that the number increased from north to south. Maharashtra holds a position somewhere between north and south. The work assigned to these *jatis* differed slightly from region to region. The proportion of these *jatis* to the other *jatis* also changed from region to region. For example, Chambhar (people who work in leather) is the most numerous untouchable caste in some parts of northern India, especially Uttar Pradesh. For some parts of Uttar Pradesh, the percentages given are as high as about 30 per cent, and the majority of these people were employed as labourers in the fields by richer landlords and agriculturists in general. In Maharashtra, Chambhar is a leather-worker only and holds the highest position among the untouchable castes. In Maharashtra the most numerous of the untouchable castes is called

¹ The historical roots of social injustice to a certain extent determine the way in which the injustice is done. In the case of American Negroes who were treated as badly as we treated our Untouchables, all kinds of personal services and close contact was permissible between Negroes and Whites. But economic or political equality was denied. In India, on the other hand though personal physical contact with the untouchables was out of question, there was no objection to granting them legal and political equality, once the idea of personal pollution was given up. Since independence, there has been a minister belonging to one of the Untouchable castes practically in every State and also at the Centre.

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Mahar. They are a sort of general messengers, sometimes watchmen and carriers of dead cattle from the village. The other untouchable caste which is rather smaller is Mang, who weave ropes, but whose hereditary work is apparently that of executioner. In Maharashtra, especially in the western parts, it has been found that the land which is owned by the Mahars as part-payment of the services which are rendered to the village is not tilled by the Mahars but by the Marathas. Thus no person from an untouchable caste did farm work. This also means that the Chambhar, the Mahar and the Mang, like many Brahmins and Vaishyas, have never held a plough in their hand¹. In the south, in Kerala and Tamilnad, it is the untouchable Pulaya and Paraiya who plant paddy. There, in spite of untouchability, he is employed in agricultural work.

After independence, in the new Constitution, untouchability was legally abolished. The untouchables were given equal rights with others. It was recognised that special provisions were necessary to bring them to the level of the other *jatis*, and certain privileges for a certain time were given to them. In the Indian Constitution, *jati* is not recognised as a social unit. Every endeavour is being made to break the caste society but ex-untouchable castes were made an exception to the rule inasmuch as people belonging to these castes were to be entitled to preferential treatment. These castes were mentioned in a special schedule for each State, and so they have been called "scheduled castes".

In the list of scheduled castes are included also people who were not necessarily untouchable but who were on the borderline, extremely backward and needing specially favoured treatment. Classical and historical record shows men and *jatis* striving to reach a higher *jati*. In the British days also, *jatis* sent applications to get recognition as belonging to higher *varnas*. Now, applications are received by the Government from *jatis* who wish to be enumerated among the scheduled castes. The word "scheduled caste" has not the opprobrium of the old word untouchable and it ensures some kind of privileged treatment. This is one of the many factors which are contributing to the old *varna* system being gradually eliminated.

In Maharashtra, the scheduled castes form 5.63 per cent. of the population. Of these, the most numerous, 35.12 per cent of the scheduled castes are the Mahars². The Mahar, Mang and Chambhar, respectively 35.12 per cent, 32.65 per cent, and 22.06 per cent. together make up 89.93 per cent. of all the scheduled castes. Bhangi (the night-soil remover), make up only 2.78 per cent. They are concentrated in the cities. (61,979 total. Of these 16,526 in Bombay, 7,134 in Nagpur, 6,533 in Poona, 4,536 in Jalgaon, 3,336 in Thana). Bhangi does not seem to be a caste indigenous to

¹ In recent years Mahars and others have acquired land and are doing agriculture.

² 1961 Census, Volume X, part V-A, p. 29; see table at the end of the Chapter.

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Maharashtra. They seem to belong mostly to the north. They are not mentioned in earlier literature either. From the deep pits lined with brick which apparently served as latrines and which have been found in recent excavations, it appears that night-soil did not need to be carried away in ancient times¹. If we add to the 89.93 per cent. given above the Bhangi and the Dhor 2.78 and 1.65 per cent. respectively, all the other castes do not make even 6 per cent. of the total scheduled castes. There are eight castes each of which has less than seven people. Many of these groups are from other linguistic areas, and have come to seek their fortune in Maharashtra. Some of them are so small that they cannot be called a caste or an endogamous group. An enumeration of these groups as "scheduled" gives them a wholly unreal significance in the social structure. It is found that the more numerous groups are those who are actively engaged in changing both their status and economic condition as a group. And the smaller groups should be put in where they belong regionally and linguistically so as to get a proper idea of the proportion of this problem for the whole of India.

For Maharashtra, the following table gives the numbers and locality of the scheduled castes:—

TABLE No. 2.
SCHEDULED CASTES OF MAHARASHTRA²

Caste	Number	Division where found.
1. Mahar	... 782,008	... All divisions.
2. Mang	... 727,006	... All divisions.
3. Chambhar	... 491,326	... All divisions.
4. Bhangi	... 61,979	... Bombay Division, Poona and Nagpur districts.
5. Dhor	... 36,747	... Districts of Sholapur, Osmanabad, and Greater Bombay.
6. Holar	... 27,602	... Poona Division.
7. Madegi	... 15,471	... Nagpur Division.
8. Khatik	... 13,584	... Nagpur Division.
9. Mahyavaushi	... 11,999	... Bombay Division.
10. Meghval	... 9,031	... Bombay Division.
11. Basov	... 7,554	... Nagpur Division.
12. Dohor	... 4,741	... Nagpur Division.
13. Holeyra	... 4,343	... Aurangabad Division.
14. Ager	... 3,897	... Bon bay Division.

¹ Sankalia, Deo and others, "From history to prehistory at Nevasa" (1954-56) pages 54-58. Deccan College and Poona University Publication No. 1, 1960.

² Census of India, Volume X, part V-A, 1961, pp. 28, 29.

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<i>Caste</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Division where found.</i>
15. Balahi	2,872	Amravati District.
16. Madiga	2,350	Aurangabad Division, Chanda district.
17. Holiya	2,302	Bhandara district.
18. Dom	2,123	Nagpur Division.
19. Kaikadi	1,946	Nagpur Division.
20. Holaya	1,781	Poona Division, Greater Bombay.
21. Pasi	1,354	Greater Bombay.
22. Ellamalwar	514	Aurangabad Division.
23. Kari	457	Nagpur Division.
24. Chalwadi	349	Districts of Sholapur and Thana.
25. Bedar	339	Nagpur Division.
26. Katia	328	Nagpur Division.
27. Shenva	321	Districts of Greater Bombay, Ratnagiri, Poona.
28. Malajangam	318	Aurangabad Division.
29. Mukri	301	Greater Bombay.
30. Gavda	275	Nagpur Division.
31. Turi	268	Districts of Greater Bombay, Nasik and Sangli.
32. Baked	250	Districts of Bombay, Sholapur.
33. Mala	234	District of Chanda, Aurangabad Division.
34. Kolupulvandhi	222	Districts of Amnabad, Chanda.
35. Garoda	209	Districts of Greater Bombay, Sangli.
36. Halleer	201	Districts of Greater Bombay, Sangli.
37. Chema Dasar	141	Poona Division.
38. Nadia	133	Districts of Greater Bombay, Ratnagiri.
39. Ghasi	135	District of Bhandara.
40. Maune	122	Districts of Nanded, Parbhani, Chanda.

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Very small castes (1 to 107 people) are as follows :—

In Aurangabad Division.

1. Dakkal.
2. Beda Jangam.
3. Holey Dasari.
4. Aray (mala).
5. Mala Sanyasi.
6. Mala Dasari.
7. Anamuk.
8. Bindla.
9. Mashti.
10. Byagara.

In Nagpur Division.

1. Bahna.
2. Sausi.
3. Khangar.
4. Mala Sale.

In Greater Bombay, Dhulia, Nasik.

1. Targar.

In Greater Bombay, Dhulia, Kolhapur.

1. Halsar.

In Greater Bombay, Dhulia, Sholapur.

1. Lingader.

In Maharashtra, the recent history of the scheduled castes has been of very great interest. The Mahars had as their leader Dr. B. R. or Babasaheb Ambedkar, (1892-1956) a man of extraordinary intelligence, vision, and ability. In learning, he was as high up as the most learned among the higher castes. He held very high posts in the government before and after independence. He was the maker of the new Hindu civil code. He could have been a leader for the whole of India in the way that some of the great Mahatras like Tilak or Gokhale were, but he chose to be the leader of the untouchables and fight against the ideas of pollution of water, etc., by the touch of the untouchables. He initiated civil disobedience and passive resistance in order to gain access to the public water supply like tanks and wells and to the Hindu temples. He was throughout his life a bitter critic of the efforts towards equality instituted by the Congress leadership and by other Hindu leaders. In Maharashtra, he was universally respected for his great learning and liberal ideas. He was made a minister in the central cabinet soon after freedom. That he was a dreamer and a scholar is demonstrated by the fact that he resigned in anger from the cabinet because his Hindu Code, with all its liberal ideas, could not be passed as a whole, but had to be taken up piecemeal. He has shown the pliancy of his mind during his life. Perhaps he might have changed again so as to assume the leadership of all liberal sections in India, irrespective of caste and creed. But he died soon after taking a very important decision which has affected the Mahar community ever since. Dr. Ambedkar toyed with the idea of conversion to Islam, Christianity or Sikhism, but gave up all these ideas ultimately to embrace Buddhism and most of the Mahars have become Buddhists at his bidding. Dr. Ambedkar was

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a Buddhist scholar. There is something very appealing in the teaching of Buddha, in the personality of Buddha, and in the early Buddhist literature. In giving up thoughts of Mohammedanism and Christianity and ultimately deciding for Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar was apparently showing a change of attitude towards the majority community. He said so in a speech¹. In his youth, he was bitter and angry. In his older age, his concern for his own community had not diminished but perhaps he recognised that by embracing Mohammedanism or Christianity, he would be cutting himself off irrevocably from all Hinduism. Buddhism on the other hand belonged to the cultural and historical tradition of Hinduism and in turning Buddhist, he registered his protest and resentment against the Hindu community, while at the same time not cutting away his community entirely from the parent stock. This analysis of Dr. Ambedkar leaves many questions to speculation. Would it have been possible for a man of his stature ultimately to liberalise Hinduism, ultimately to assume a leadership that embraced much more than his community, or can one say that the very structure of the caste society made it impossible for Ambedkar to assume a larger leadership which included all untouchables, and which included all liberal Hindus? These questions are of importance in understanding the scheduled *jati* problem in Maharashtra. The Mahars have become Buddhists, though there are a few who have not sought such conversion. A reading of the creed and the type of vows taken by the neo-Buddhists reveal unfortunately the negative and angry attitude towards Hinduism rather than the wide humanity and all-pervading piety of the Buddha². Among the Mahars it has become a new group identity, a new symbol of separateness. It separates them from the other untouchable *jatis*. It makes them intolerant of those Mahars who have not embraced Buddhism or, having embraced it, still practise some forms of Hindu belief. In western Maharashtra, Mahars are afraid of criticising Buddhist practices or acknowledging the fact that they are not Buddhists. This new identity has also separated them from other untouchable *jatis* who express the bitter feeling that Mahar leadership is good for the Mahars only. It is this ironical position which makes one wonder if the failure of Ambedkar to assume effectively the leadership for all scheduled *jatis* is partly due to the habits of thought generated by the caste or *jati* system itself. There are times when this kind of a dilemma can be tackled from outside. But the outside solution is only a partial one and one hopes that the Maharashtra Mahar community itself comes forward to solve the new social problems which have arisen out of this historical fact.

In the Indian Constitution, one of the aims mentioned in the directives is to do away with caste restrictions. In order to achieve this goal, certain groups, one of them being the scheduled castes, were

¹ "From the point of view of Hindu Society, I am actually doing a service to it. Because Buddha Dharma is part of Indian Culture." Speech given on the eve of his conversion—14th October 1956.

² S. Patwardhan—*A study of scheduled castes in an urban setting*, pp. 148-49, Ph.D. Thesis, Poona University, 1965.

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given a special consideration. Castes were not allowed to be mentioned in any census reports, but scheduled castes were mentioned by name and enumerated, and members belonging to this list were given certain preferences in Government services, and free studentships and bursaries for education in schools and colleges. This provision was supposed to be temporary and was to be discontinued if the scheduled castes had come to the level of the others. Certain advantages were definitely reaped by the scheduled castes through these special considerations, but the Mahars do not think that they have advanced enough to give up the preferential treatment. What is more pertinent is that certain rights like eating and drinking at the same table in a restaurant, drinking water of the same village well, or renting a room or a house in a part of the town where higher castes live are still denied to them. Secondly, it is felt by all the non-Mahar scheduled castes that the Mahars who have a powerful political and social organisation secure all the advantages for themselves only. And thirdly, many of the Hindus who do not belong to the scheduled castes feel that a continuation of preferential treatment by the name of a caste strengthens caste consciousness and caste separateness, which is contrary to the declared intentions of the Indian people. The Maharashtra Government has started giving educational facilities to all people who are backward and who belong to lower income groups, thus abolishing the caste label attached to certain bursaries. Nobody in India wants to deprive the backward communities of help which can be given to them so that they can come to the level of the other people. The concern is that in such an attempt we do not create new caste loyalties and new divisions. The problem is therefore one of finding terms under which nobody who deserves such help is denied it. Such help must be given on an individual basis and not on a caste or group basis.

At this time there is also an emerging consciousness of equality among the Untouchables, especially the Chambhars and the Mahars. They can be compared to the position occupied by women in Maharashtra in the twenties and thirties of this century. Much concern was shown about their backwardness. Each woman who got a class or a scholarship was publicly congratulated. Women themselves thought education a great privilege, but they soon emerged from this stage. Now they do not like to be referred to as outstanding persons from a backward group, but prefer to compete on terms of equality in the larger world. The same thing is happening to the scheduled castes. The time may not be distant when their own leaders would not care to belong as a group to some schedule. For this, the impulse must come from within.

In Maharashtra, and in most parts of India, barring the plains of the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, there is a group of people which has no place either in the *varna* system or in the caste system. These are the tribes living in the few jungles which still remain in India. In Maharashtra, these people are found in the Sahyadris, in the

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Satpudas, and in the eastern jungles. The Bhils¹ who number 575, 022 are found mostly in West Khandesh, East Khandesh, parts of Vidarbha and in parts of Ahmednagar and Aurangabad districts. The other numerous tribal people are the Gonds who are found in the exactly opposite direction, namely north-east, in Nagpur, in Chanda, parts of Nanded, right into the Amravati district. They number 274, 244. The other tribal people are as follows² :

TABLE No. 3.

Tribe.	Number.	Area of Residence.
Koli Mahadev	274,244	Nasik, Poona, Nagar, Thana Kolaba.
Varli	243,980	Thana, Nasik, Greater Bombay.
Kokna	212,836	Nasik, Dhulia, Thana.
Thakur	159,372	Thana, Kolaba, Nasik, Poona, Nagar.
Kathodi	140,672	Kolaba, Thana, Ratnagiri, Poona, Nasik, Satara.
Gomit	102,321	Dhulia, Thana.
Koli Malhar	89,047	Thana.
Andh	60,261	Parbhani, Nanded, Yeotmal.
Korku	50,279	Amravati.
Dhanka	48,089	Dhulia, Jalgaon.
Kolam	43,788	Yeotmal, Chanda, Nanded.
Pardhan	32,237	Yeotmal, Chanda, Nanded.
Pardhi	21,417	Khandesh, Nasik, Poona, Nagar, Sholapur, Yeotmal.
Koli Dher	15,461	Khandesh, Greater Bombay, Thana, Nasik, Kolhapur, Sholapur.
Dubla	13,630	Greater Bombay, Thana, Kolaba, Dhulia.
Dhodia	12,037	Greater Bombay, Thana, Dhulia.
Naikda	11,731	Greater Bombay, Thana, Dhulia.
Halba	5,430	Chanda, Yeotmal.
Kawar	2,915	Chanda, Yeotmal.
Rathawa	2,874	Sholapur.
Barda	918	Khandesh, Nasik.
Vitholia	898	Dhulia, Nasik.
Khairwar	275	Chanda.
Pomla	263	Sholapur, Greater Bombay, Dhulia.
Patelia	180	Greater Bombay, Dhulia, Thana, Kolaba.
Chodhara	157	Sholapur, Dhulia.
Thoti	109	Nanded, Chanda.
Bavacha	94	Nasik, Poona, Greater Bombay.
Kol	53	Yeotmal.
Dhanwar	40	Yeotmal.
Koya	33	Chanda, Osmanabad, Parbhani.
Nagesia	28	Chanda.
Binjhar	24	Chanda, Amravati, Yeotmal.
Birhul	22	Yeotmal.
Bhaina	12	Yeotmal.
Bhunjia	6	Amravati.
Bhattra	3	Yeotmal.
Uraon	1	Yeotmal.
Unclassified	3,836	

¹ Census of India, 1961, Vol. X, Part V-A, p. 223.

² *Ibid.*, p. 222.

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The Korkus, a small tribe of Mundari-speaking people (50,279) living on the extreme edge of north-central Maharashtra, are of scientific and historical importance inasmuch as they represent the westernmost people speaking a Mundari language. The Gonds in their northward march have apparently driven a wedge between the Korkus and other Mundari speaking tribes farther east. This surmise has not been investigated yet. I have already mentioned it in the beginning.

Like the scheduled castes the tribal people are mentioned in a separate schedule. There are special officers of the Central Government appointed to look after the welfare of these people. The state Government, in this case Maharashtra, has also a Tribal Welfare department. The tribals pose problems which are different from those of the scheduled castes. But again my experience among them shows that the most advanced among them wish to take a position with the non-tribals on terms of equality though, for the time being, they think certain special protections and privileges are necessary for their folk. Whatever the language of each tribe, in a given linguistic region, as a rule, tribals speak some dialect of the language of the region. Though they live in hills and jungles, they are in close contact with agricultural communities. Definite relationships of trade, mutual dependence, rivalries, and antagonisms have been established between these communities. The tribals cannot live independently of the agricultural community. The agricultural community in its turn depends for certain things on the tribals. The indebtedness of the tribals and the consequent gradual loss of their land are phenomena which are also to be observed in the case of poorer agriculturists. The government has effectively stopped the alienation of the land of the tribals, and has freed them from generations of indebtedness to certain Sahukars (money lenders). In its welfare effort, it tries to settle tribals on land. Many of the tribals have turned out to be good agriculturists. But there is a large number which cannot bring itself to do the monotonous work of agriculture for the puny return they get in the jungles. I feel that in the varied economy of modern times, it is not necessary that the tribals have to go through an agricultural stage from a hunting one. Their very jungle life, endurance, and keenness of certain senses may fit them for jobs other than agriculture. Not enough effort is being made in this direction. Again, their primitiveness or tribalism must not be stressed so as to create new group identities which were not in existence before. A welfare organisation must by its very nature be a transient thing aiming to finish its job so as to die. But unfortunately social institutions, once created, tend to perpetuate themselves and also, in so doing, perpetuate the conditions which had made their existence possible. The welfare must become at some time the welfare of everyone unprivileged, irrespective of whether he belongs to a caste or a tribe, and separate agencies which build up new group loyalties and create new divisions must cease to work.

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There is a question of theoretical importance for anthropologists connected with the division of Indian society into higher castes, scheduled castes and tribes. It will be seen from the graphs given for physical characteristics of the Maharashtra population that the tribal people as a whole occupy one area, that in an adjacent area there are many scheduled castes, and in a third area are all the other castes. Between the three areas there is a certain overlap. This finding may be compared with the following table for scheduled castes and tribes. This table represents the percentage of scheduled castes and tribes for different divisions and districts in Maharashtra¹.

TABLE No. 4.

	Percentage of scheduled caste population to total population.	Percentage of scheduled population to total population
Maharashtra—	5.63	6.06
Bombay Division—	2.75	12.35
1. Greater Bombay	2.98	0.54
2. Thana	1.37	30.29
3. Kolaba	1.31	9.01
4. Ratnagiri	2.08	0.17
5. Nasik	3.66	24.45
6. Dhulia	3.56	37.99
7. Jalgaon	3.47	5.59
Poona Division—	8.46	2.06
8. Ahmednagar	8.87	6.18
9. Poona	4.91	3.64
10. Satara	5.24	0.17
11. Sangli	8.29	0.05
12. Kolhapur	11.39	0.10
13. Sholapur	12.84	0.49
Aurangabad Division—	9.98	1.63
14. Aurangabad	6.05	1.60
15. Parbhani	6.96	2.89
16. Bhil	13.51	0.24
17. Nanded	11.01	3.76
18. Osmanabad	13.39	3.03
Nagpur Division—	3.75	4.27
19. Buldhana	5.30	0
20. Akola	4.70	0
21. Amravati	3.95	4.45
22. Yeotmal	3.87	14.17
23. Wardha	2.39	0
24. Nagpur	3.60	0
25. Bhandara	2.45	0
26. Chanda	3.44	14.82

¹ Census of India, 1961, Vol. X, part V-A, pp. 26, 220.

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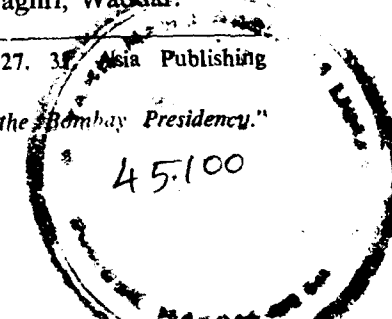
It seems as if the scheduled castes in each division and in each district are in inverse ratio to the scheduled tribes in that division and district. It also shows that the areas which find mention in the ancient dynastic records and which we had tentatively suggested as the old core of Maharashtra, namely Godavari valley, Purna valley, and Bhima and Krishna valleys have more scheduled caste population than tribal population. As against this the northern parts of Bombay division, namely Khandesh and parts of Nasik as also the eastern-most parts of eastern Maharashtra like Yeotmal and Chanda which we had thought of as late comers into Marathi influence seem to have more tribal people. It may be pointed out that parts of the region of southern Maharashtra, that is western Satara and Kolhapur, are very hilly and are jungle regions; but no tribal people live there. It has been noted by many anthropologists in India that tribal people tend to pass into Hindu caste society. The tribals while passing into the Hindu caste society, generally take up a low position¹. The exception to this rule are the chiefs and ruling houses among the tribals (e.g. Gonds, Bhils etc.) who somehow try to secure a bride, connected in some distant way, with a well-known Rajput family. Sometimes even this claim is fictitious, but it enables them to assume a higher rank in the caste society. The graphs already referred to and the inverse ratio of scheduled castes to tribal peoples revealed in the figures given above may represent this very process. No tribe seems to have taken up the work of night-soil carrying. But the other work which involves removing of dead cattle, tanning, rope making and agricultural labour (as done by U. P. Chambhars, and South Indian Pulayyas) is certainly work which can be done by any tribals. The work of the Chambhars, where it involves making of leather goods is however that of skilled artisans. Skilled leather-workers, hold the highest position among scheduled castes, in many ways taking a place nearer to the rest of the Hindu society as regards habitation also. This process gives us a glimpse of the changes which are continuously taking place in the caste society.

Apart from this peaceful type of transition from the tribal to the non-tribal, there is an extremely small fringe of people, the majority of whom belonged to the tribals but are today hovering in a no-man's-land between the tribal and non-tribal. During the British regime these people were called by the general name "criminal tribes". After Independence, the name was discarded together with the many restrictions imposed on them. Their list for the old Bombay Presidency as given in a publication² is: Banjara, Berad, Bhamta, Rajput, Bhil, Chhapparband, Kaikadi, Katkari, Koli, Mang, Mang Garudi, Mianatram,³ Pardhi, Ramoshi, Vaghri, Waddar.

¹ N. K. Bose—*Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 24, 27. Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1961.

² Kennedy, M.—*Notes on Criminal Classes in the Bombay Presidency*. Bombay, 1908.

³ Mianas and Vaghris are found in Gujarat.



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The most important among these people are Ramoshi, Berad, all types of Pardhi (Phanse-Pardhi, Gay-Pardhi) and Kaikadi. It will be seen from the list above that some people in this list are also found in the 1961 list of scheduled castes, e.g. the Mangs. The Kolis do not occur at all in the 1961 lists which means that they are now a settled people either as agriculturists or agricultural labourers. The Bhils are an important tribal people. The Ramoshis are not mentioned in the 1961 Census among either scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. The Lambadi or Banjara are also not mentioned in either though a plea was recently made that the Banjara in Marathwada districts should be included in backward castes. The Pardhis apparently range all over India. They are found both in south Maharashtra and north Karnataka. The author has seen a Pardhi village in Bijapur district (Mysore State). They live in these villages only during the rainy season. The Waddars who are mentioned as a criminal tribe are not mentioned among the 1961 scheduled tribes or castes. They are a people with very specialised skills and a mode of work which makes them the most efficient earthworkers and stoneworkers without whom no building contractor can hope to undertake any big contract. This mode of work is : working in family units. A unit may be as small as a husband and wife or as large as twenty to twenty-five people all belonging to one patrilineage. Several such gangs making up to a thousand people may work on one project where the separate family gangs may be under one or more headmen. When a family is at work, the children also are in the vicinity, the infants in makeshift cradles, the toddlers and the little children playing around, and the slightly bigger ones playing, looking after the infants and occasionally helping the elders. A family working in this way is a frequent sight among Mangs, among Dheds in Gujarat, and among Panas in Orissa. In Gujarat the families carry infants in a cradle with a stand on their heads. This phenomenon of whole families living together near the site of the work needs to be investigated before it disappears. Such investigation is necessary not purely from a historical point of view but also because it will add to the knowledge of the structure of family and the cohesiveness of family as a social unit. A family is made up of individuals who trace kinship in definite ways. A family lives together in a particular pattern. Its members work in certain ways to earn their livelihood or to keep house. The members belonging to the families have certain status, certain roles, and certain prescribed behaviour towards one another. In hunting societies, in peasant societies and in industrial societies, families differ from one another in all these aspects. The cohesiveness of family as a unit, its authority and the status of the men and the women, depend on all the factors including the mode and type and the remuneration of work that members get. I am mentioning only this one fact to show that a study of the modes of living of people, however humble and backward they may appear, reveals certain aspects of life which are useful both for students and for social planners especially those who wish to improve the conditions of certain people and in the plan of

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welfare may destroy things which are of great value. Of these people, the majority of the Banjaras and the Waddars have adjusted themselves to the peasant society. The Mangs are an important village community. It has been included in scheduled castes in 1961, and is slowly finding legitimate occupations. The same is the case with Ramoshis. But there is no doubt at all that the Ramoshi, the Kaikadi, the Pardhi, and certain groups of Bhils, represent a peculiar kind of adjustment of tribal people to the peasant society. The anomalous position they hold fortunately does not show complete disintegration of the individual or the group to which he belongs. All of the groups have strong family organisation and group loyalties. They have a code of behaviour within the group and outside the group to which they adhere far more strictly than the other so called non-criminal castes and tribes. They all have a facade of some kind of a legitimate business which however is too meagre to give them a livelihood. Their criminal activities range from lifting a few ears of standing crop to dacoity leading to manslaughter, and sometimes to murder. The Ramoshis seem to be a branch of the Bedars or Berads of north Karnataka. It is possible that they were a great tribe occupying parts of south Maharashtra and north Karnataka now divided between two linguistic regions. Each part of the tribe seems to be completely amalgamated in its linguistic region. But there is a need to study them and find out whether they really were a common people at one time. Even in the mode and the type of the crimes these people commit, there are certain characteristics for each group, and similarities which belong to similar groups. They had been used to be treated and recorded as criminal tribes. They have now been freed from this official label. In certain types of crimes, they are the first suspects, perhaps justifiably so. For example there was a police officer in a town in Satara district who made a complete list of Ramoshis in the area and hauled in a few of them for questioning whenever there was any unsolved crime. The assumption was that if they were not guilty, at least they had information which would point towards those who were. The wealthier agriculturists in many areas thought that employing a Ramoshi watchman was an insurance against thefts. Freeing them from old restrictions saddles the government with a greater responsibility towards them as also towards the settled householders whom their activities may do harm. They must be studied before a welfare department tries to reform them without any regard to their social structure, to their extremely well-developed mental faculties in certain respects and to their own ethical code.¹

We have seen that caste in the case of the majority of people is no longer an item of official record or recognition. One would like to know as to what has happened to the groups called castes, in Maharashtra. It may be understood that whatever is said of

¹ An account of most of these people will be found in Enthoven, Hiralal and Russell, books on criminal tribes written or edited by Inspectors-General of Police of old Bombay Presidency, Central Provinces, Berar, and Hyderabad.

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Maharashtra holds good in more or less the same degree for the rest of India. While describing *jati* (sub-caste) I had described four characteristics, namely, occupation of a limited contiguous territory, hereditary work, rank, and endogamy. It would be interesting to find in which of these four characteristics a *jati* has changed, if at all. For the discussion of this topic, I have drawn on the census reports wherever possible, but I also have to draw heavily on the work done by me and by my colleagues. This work embraces a microscopic section of the Indian population. Nevertheless, it may give an idea of the type and magnitude of the change. As regards occupation of contiguous territory this still holds true for some portion of each caste, for example, the Karhada Brahmins, the Chitpavan Brahmins, and the Konkan Kunbi. People from the first two *jatis* (sub-castes) are found not only all over Maharashtra but also outside Maharashtra. The Konkan Kunbi is found in western Maharashtra districts and has also spread in small numbers in the rest of Maharashtra and India. In spite of this spread which has all occurred during recent historical times, these three *jatis* (sub-castes) still have their largest numbers in the Ratnagiri and adjacent districts of the Konkan, and if one plots their numbers in various districts of Maharashtra and in the other States of India, one can in many cases draw valid conclusions about their movements from place to place. The Chitpavans are spread in large numbers in southern Maharashtra native states and Poona and Nasik districts. They are found in smaller numbers in other Maharashtra districts like Berar and Nagpur. There is a considerable number in Bombay¹. This migration, barring a few exceptions of those who had gone with the Bhosle Raja, represent a post-British influx into these areas. The Karhada Brahmins are found in the largest number in south Ratnagiri district which is supposed to be their original home. The next concentration is again in Poona and Nasik where they followed the Peshwas, their Chitpavan neighbours. During the Maratha times, they founded small colonies in Sagar (Central India), in Uttar Pradesh and in Gwalior where they migrated because the Karhada Brahmins held important posts at each of these three places. They are found in large numbers in Bombay where they have migrated recently like all the other coastal castes. The Konkan Kunbi, called the Tirole Kunbi, started their migration in the post-British period, going as labourers first to the Bombay mills, and then to the districts of Poona, Satara, and also the city of Bombay as domestic servants. In certain out-of-the way places like, for example, the narrow valley of the upper Koyna river, a narrow territory seems to have been occupied by a part of a caste for generations. Though the peasants bear names of Maratha clans who are found outside of this valley, their marriage relationships seem to be confined to this valley. To our surprise however, we found that men from over 50 per cent of the houses we interviewed were working in Bombay, and that some had been in service in Karachi about twenty years ago.

¹ Details of this migration have been worked out by Miss Maureen Patterson in her Ph.D. thesis (in preparation at Chicago university.).

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Some castes, for example the trading castes, especially of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and elsewhere show more mobility than other castes. The mobility seems to have increased or become possible for other castes by the opportunity of service in government departments like the Railways, and the Post and Telegraph, which are departments of the central government. In spite of the theoretical opportunities and practical removal from the native place, we find that a caste remains confined to either its original narrow territory or to a slightly enlarged territory near its original home because, in most cases, however far a man or a woman has gone, they try to seek marriage relations with their own caste. We thus find that this particular aspect of the caste society is intimately bound up with its endogamy. If sufficient members of a caste migrate outside, and lose their native connections, they form a new nucleus of an endogamous caste. But otherwise, even the trading castes, members of whom are found all over the world, have to come back to their native place for purposes of marriage. The old immobility whereby a caste was confined to a narrow area is broken inasmuch as individuals range far and wide. But the old local ties remain because endogamy has remained in most places intact. This same point will be taken up a little later.

As for the second characteristic, namely hereditary work, we have statistics for different castes for 1911¹. We have statistics for scheduled castes for 1961, and we have statistical data for a small market town and a rural area surrounding it. The 1911 tables show that among the castes which had already given up their hereditary work to a very large extent were Brahmins. Very few Brahmins were occupied in being priests etc., but they were found in large numbers in professions (teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc.) and in administrative services. As literacy was always a Brahmin privilege, professions needing education might be viewed almost as an extension of their hereditary work. A very large number of Brahmins possessed lands and employed tenants to work on their fields. A number of such Brahmin families were barely literate². It will be seen that less than ¼ per cent of the Brahmins are employed as unskilled labourers. In almost all the other castes there are people who work as field labourers. The Marathas and Kunbis, though largely occupied in their hereditary work, which was agriculture, also seem to be going slowly into services, especially administrative, clerical, or lower services. As a class, artisans like potters, weavers, carpenters, goldsmiths, and certain classes like the barber and the washerman show the largest percentage doing hereditary work. Among the untouchables, the Mahar, Mang, Chambhar and Bhangi, we find that Bhangis are employed in their own hereditary work. This may be due to the fact that nobody who is not born a Bhangi would take up that work. A man born in a Bhangi caste could and rarely did

¹ The statistics for 1901 did not yield material for all parts of Maharashtra, and so the 1911 figures were chosen. See table at the end of the chapter.

² Karve I—"A Family Through Seven Generations", in *Anthropology on the March*, Madras, 1963.

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take up other work, but nobody else did the hereditary work of Bhangis. The Mahars have been mentioned in the 1911 census as village watchmen and menials. The word menial needs explanation. The Mahar was never a domestic menial, being "untouchable". Of the four most numerous untouchable castes, Mahars occupied a very special position. Bhangi, as we have already noted, was not a native Maharashtra caste, and when introduced into Maharashtra, it did only its own specialised work. The Chambhar was a very specialised type of artisan who either did leather work or sought employment in urban areas. Mang was a nearly unskilled worker. Ropemaking which is his traditional work did not give him enough employment. We find also that he was listed among criminal tribes. As against these people a Mahar had no specialised work of his own. He was really a worker for the whole village where the work involved no contact with the house or people. In this capacity, he had to carry dead cattle from the fields, from the cattle-shed, from anywhere that the cattle died to a particular place provided for dead cattle. The meat of the dead cattle was eaten by the whole of the Mahar community¹. The cattle was generally taken to a piece of land given to the Mahars by the village for the services they rendered. A writer remarked that the Mahar land, because of the bones, the entrails and blood of cattle, got valuable manure². The Mahar had to sweep the office (*chavadi*) of the village headman (*patil*), accompany the *patil* whenever the *patil* went to the nearest revenue office, carry all messages about death, provide faggots for cremation. He was also the village watchman. He was the most important witness in cases of boundary disputes. As village watchman, it was his duty either to find out the thief or to convince his fellow-villagers that the thief did not belong to the village and was an outsider, in which case his suspicions were communicated to the headman of the next village, and the Mahar of that village had to prove either that the village was innocent or to produce the offender. This list of the duties of the Mahar will show that the Mahar did not do heavy manual work, that the nature of his work was such that he had to know every member of his village quite thoroughly and that he had to use his wits most of the time. The Mahar community was given a little bit of land which it never tilled itself. It was also given a share in grain by all the families who owned land. If the Mahars did not receive a share in grain from a particular family they could refuse to carry a message for it³. In Maharashtra, they had hereditary rights in most upland villages and barring a few exceptions of coastal villages there is no village of Maharashtra where a Mahar is not found. Mahars were also one of the first among the untouchable castes to seek employment in urban centres as industrial labour.

¹ This is based on a personal communication from a friend who remembered getting portions of such meat when he was a child. This was valuable protein food which unfortunately the modern Mahars have lost.

² Atre—"Gaon-gada", p. 98; 1915, printed at Poona, now in third edition 1959. Published by H. V. Mote, Bombay.

³ Karve and Damle "Group Relations in Village Community", p. 26 Deccan College Monograph Series. No. 24, Poona, 1963.

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Taking all these things into consideration, we can sum up the situation in 1911 in the following way :—

(1) Almost everybody could get out of the groove of his hereditary work theoretically. There was no higher religious or civil power which could prevent a person from engaging in a job other than his hereditary work.

(2) The main new agency giving employment was the government with its vast administrative net-work. Naturally the advantage of this opportunity was taken mostly by the literate castes. The illiterate people got employment in the Bombay Mills as unskilled workers.

(3) Whatever the hereditary work of a caste, the most preferred secondary occupations seemed to be buying land for a fortunate few, or working as field labourer especially in the case of the untouchable castes or the poorer people among the agricultural castes.

(4) The people who were mostly engaged in hereditary work seem to belong to artisan castes or to certain service castes. Some of the facts will be illustrated by the tables given below.

Table No. 5 gives the situation for 1911. As Maharashtra was divided in three provinces then we have a table for Bombay, another for Central Provinces and Berar and a third for Hyderabad State. Data for Marathi castes was collected as far as possible but it was not possible in all cases to separate the Marathi speaking component of an item grouped under one caste name like Sali, Panchal, Kumbhar etc. But still the tables show that the picture presented above held not only for the Marathi region but for the adjoining Hindi and Telugu regions also. The percentage of women working as earners is also given for each caste. It is a rough indication of the economic and social position of a caste. The highest percentage of women workers were among Sali in the Amravati and Buldhana districts. Sali are weavers and among all weavers weaving is a family business where women have a definite kind of work assigned to them. Though the Sali are quite high up among artisans, their women work. Barring such exceptions (the other example is of blanket weavers) the percentage of women workers was higher, the poorer and lower a caste was.

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TABLE No. 5.

WORK DONE BY VARIOUS CASTES AND BY WOMEN IN
EACH CASTE 1911 CENSUS.

	Percentage of women in work force	Hereditary work		Agriculture		Agricultural Labour		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
<i>Bombay—</i>								
Chitpavan	.. 13	18.7	0.3	37.9	8	0.1	0.2	
Deshastha	.. 9.9	18.2	0.6	38.8	6.2	0.2	0.2	
Vani	.. 11.2	65.7	4.1	4.2	0.9	0.1	0.1	
Maratha	.. 37	43.2	20.5	0.9	0.6	9.3	13.3	
Mali	.. 35.8	39.5	15.2	1.2	0.8	13.2	15.9	
Kunbi	.. 41.7	38.9	22.6	0.9	0.4	12.4	17.2	
Sonar	.. 19.6	54.6	2.1	20.8	11.3	1.3	2.7	
Sutar	.. 26.7	53.9	2.6	12.9	13.1	3.3	9.2	
Koshti	.. 41.8	49.7	36.8	3.8	1.3	1.6	2.4	
Sali	.. 38.2	56	35.9	1.4	0.4	0.7	1	
Lohar	.. 23.3	60.8	6.4	8.7	1.8	3.3	13.6	
Panchal	.. 14.5	68.6	2.6	11.9	3	2.1	6.5	
Kumbhar	.. 42.5	27.9	15.8	17.5	13.5	5.9	9	
Teli	.. 39.1	14.4	5.3	22.5	13.6	10.9	14.3	
Shimpi	.. 30	48.9	22.9	4	1.2	1.2	2.5	
Dhobi	.. 36.4	24.4	17.5	28.3	10.7	5.7	6.8	
Nhavi	.. 30.8	40.9	..	20	8	5.8	20.3	
Bhandari	.. 44.2	6	2.9	32.8	30.7	3.5	6.5	
Mahar, Holiya, Dhed	.. 43.4	27.2	18.8	0.4	0.1	12.8	18	
Chambhar	.. 32.6	42.8	13.1	6.7	1.6	9	15.1	
Bhangi	.. 40.8	14.6	10.9	3.6	0.5	12.5	17.2	
Mang or Madig	.. 44.2	9.2	2.8	0.2	0.2	23.2	29.5	
<i>Central Provinces and Berar—</i>								
Brahman (province)	.. 20.8	8.6	1.3	33.8	11.2	3.8	7.2	
Kayastha (province)	.. 15.8	26.1	..	26.1	7.2	5	4.8	
Maratha (province)	.. 35	2.4	..	30	9	16.3	20.8	
Mali (province)	.. 46.9	5.7	4.2	28.1	16.3	17.5	21.5	
Kunbi (Maratha division)	.. 42.5	33.3	16.5	..	..	20	25.4	
Koli fishers (Berar)	.. 47.9	2.9	0.6	18	5.4	25.1	39.8	
Sonar (province)	.. 27.1	50.1	2.5	13.4	10.5	2.9	10.8	
Sali (Amravati, Buldhana)	.. 51.5	31.7	30.1	3.9	0.5	4.4	7.4	
Koshti (Maratha division)	.. 45.9	44.4	37.8	2.4	1.4	3.8	5.3	
Panchal (Maratha division)	.. 32.1	37	11.3	3.6	4.7	2.2	10	
Darji (province)	.. 36.6	47.4	24.1	6.4	5.3	4.2	7.2	
Kumbhar (province)	.. 45.4	39.6	33.6	10.1	6.8	2.3	3.8	
Teli (province)	.. 47.5	3.6	3.9	30.3	26	13.4	15.6	
Lohar (province)	.. 41.5	35.5	10.1	11.8	12.5	5.5	17.2	

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			Percentage of women in work force.	Hereditary work.		Agriculture.		Agricultural Labour.	
				M	F	M	F	M	F.
<i>Central Provinces and Berar—contd.</i>									
Dhobi (province)	..	48.6	20	21.3	18.3	14.9	9.8	11.4	
Nhavi (Maratha division)	..	30.9	44.9	..	10.1	9	2.6	24.1	
Gowari (Maratha division)	..	48.5	9.9	0.8	7.7	6.3	30.2	39	
Dhangar (Wardha, Nagpur, Chanda).		47.4	21.5	7.6	15.1	10.8	12	25.9	
Chambhar (province)	..	48.2	8.5	2.7	26.1	25.2	13.7	18.5	
Mahar or Mehara (province)		48.8	6.5	4.8	12	9.1	21.6	31.1	
Mang (Maratha division)	..	49.1	14.8	0.7	..	0.7	22.5	34.6	
<i>Hyderabad state—</i>									
Brahman	..	14.5	30.3	..	18.6	5.9	..	..	
Maratha	..	38.7	37.2	19.7	3.9	1	10.2	12.5	
Mali	..	41	32.7	19.5	3.4	1.6	11.6	14.2	
Koli	..	37.1	40.9	15.1	2.1	0.8	9.6	16.5	
Bhoi	..	44.4	24.1	16	9.9	4.2	7.8	17.3	
Sonar	..	27.4	59.4	12.8	7.1	4.1	2.2	7.2	
Sutar	..	35.5	52.8	23.5	8.2	8.5	..	..	
Koshti	..	36.5	43.5	17.9	8.7	4.4	4.9	8.2	
Sali	..	43.6	45.6	28.3	4.4	3.1	3.7	9.3	
Lohar	..	32.5	47.3	12.1	8.3	5.2	4.4	11.4	
Panchal	..	28.9	60.1	17.4	7.2	6.3	..	..	
Kumbhar	..	42.2	41.1	25.2	7.7	4.6	3.8	9.2	
Teli	..	37.3	38.2	20.6	9.2	4.4	4.9	5.3	
Dhobi	..	46.2	33	26.8	7.1	3.6	10	11.9	
Nhavi	..	35.2	44	8.8	9.7	6.5	5.7	14.2	
Dhangar	..	38.4	32.4	12.2	13.8	7.3	9.6	13.7	
Chambhar	..	38.3	34.6	13.2	4.8	3.3	9.2	14.2	
Mang	..	45.8	28.6	13.3	7.5	5	12.9	23.5	
Mahar	..	43.8	25.5	14.4	9.4	5.2	14.1	19	

Nothing comparable is available for the 1961 census as there is no castewise enumeration except for scheduled castes. In table No. 6 are given certain figures extracted from the survey of Poona city carried out in 1945¹. Only the artisan castes and scheduled castes are enumerated. They follow the pattern revealed by the 1911 tables, except in the following items. Even among artisan castes less people seem to be doing the hereditary work. Nhavi (the barber) and Sutar (carpenter) seem to be finding it lucrative to do their hereditary job. Among scheduled castes Mahars have all given up their usual work. So have almost all Mangs. There is no scope for their hereditary work in a city. The Mehtar are north Indian sweepers and

¹ D. R. Gadgil, "Poona—A Socio-economic Survey, Part I, 1945, Part II, 1952.

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Bhangi are more Marathised but still of a northern extraction. The Mehtar seem to be doing almost exclusively their hereditary work, while a part of the Bhangi have taken to some other work. Both these are employed by the municipality for removing night soil. Investigation shows that road cleaning and road sweeping was a near monopoly of Mahars but during recent times they have given up the work and the Mangs seem to be stepping into it¹.

TABLE No. 6.

Poona 1945-52			Percentage in hereditary occupation
Sonar	..	..	69.5
Sutar	..	..	87.7
Kasar	..	..	24
Lohar	..	..	33
Sali	..	..	---
Koshti	..	..	---
Padmasali	..	..	74.2
Shimpi	..	..	48.7
Kumbhar	..	..	22.7
Teli	..	..	—
Nhavi	..	..	90
Parit	..	..	70
Mahar	..	..	---
Mang	..	..	1
Bhangi	..	..	80
Mehtar	..	..	100

Agriculture has been a paying occupation and almost everybody who can afford it possesses land in the town of Phaltan. In the villages even the non-agricultural castes have taken to agriculture. The Balutedari and the Vatan System has been nearly broken so that the villages are nearly drained of their artisans.

¹ Dr. (Mrs.) S. Patwardhan : Ph.D. thesis (unpublished). "A Study of the Scheduled Castes in an Urban Setting", Poona University, 1965.

Table No. 7 gives figures for a market town and the surrounding villages.

TABLE No. 7.
PHALTAN AND SURROUNDING AREA.

Caste	Percentage in agriculture		Percentage in hereditary occupation	
	Town	Villages	Town	Villages
Brahmin	..	..	21.4	..
Maratha	..	..	25.2	88.3
Mali	..	..	12	93.6
Sonar	..	..	10	..
Sutar	..	..	..	40
Koshti	..	..	..	100
Shimpi	..	..	..	40
Lohar	..	..	9	47.2
Kumbhar	..	..	20	..
Teli	..	..	..	50
Nhavi	..	..	..	80
Dhanagar	..	..	..	..
Mahar	..	..	16.6	35.2
Mang	..	..	..	60
Bhangi	..	..	70	37
	..	..	6	41
	..	..	12	0
	..	..	31	6

100 per cent. in service of municipality as night soil carriers.
No Bhangi in villages.

It seems from these tables that in an urban centre like Poona, hereditary occupations like agriculture had almost no scope. The Poona survey shows that Brahmins and some of the more skilled artisans like Sonar and Tvashta-Kasar were employed mostly in administrative services and professions. Maratha and Mali, the two agricultural castes were mostly employed either as labourers or in professions and service of a lower type though by that time as the author himself says (p. 81), some of the Marathas had actually risen to very high positions. The people who were engaged in their hereditary work in the largest percentages were, as in 1911, the artisan castes. Among the scavengers, almost 100 per cent. were employed in hereditary work. The Mahars were mostly employed as unskilled workers, while about a little over one-third of the total sample was in skilled manual work, lowest professions and small business, and very few in highly skilled manual work. Among the Mangs only one did hereditary work, nearly 58 per cent did unskilled work, about 12 per cent were beggars or unemployed, about 33 per cent. were doing skilled manual labour or lowest professions and small businesses. Only 2 were found doing skilled work. From a total sample of 1,267 Marathas, 159 had taken up the skilled work of weavers, brass and coppersmiths, carpenters, masons, goldsmiths, tailors etc. From the 806 Brahmin families a total of 24 had taken to work of some type of skilled artisans. Apparently, the non-hereditary work which was most frequently done by Brahmins, agricultural castes and artisan groups was that of tailors.

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The Phaltan sample shows that in the villages the agricultural castes are predominantly doing their hereditary work. The Mahars have mostly given up their hereditary work. Among the Chambhars, in the town 50 per cent. are doing the hereditary work while in the villages their place seems to be taken by Holer, a leather-working caste supposed to be very low in the hierarchy of the scheduled castes. In the town, only 25 per cent. Marathas were doing hereditary work and 12 per cent. of the Malis were doing hereditary work. This area is a rich agricultural area, and everybody who can, tries to own land and grow money crops. In the town the profession of tailoring seems to be followed by people belonging to almost all castes. It seems as if it is a new kind of profession which does not need too great a capital or too great a skill and which does not involve the losing of status for people of higher castes like Brahmins or Marathas. These statistics need to be supplemented by the observation that positions of importance in the co-operative sugar mill, in the managing committees of the high schools, in the municipality and the panchayat samiti are held by Marathas in most cases and by other castes as belonging to the dominant party among the Marathas but certainly not in a proportion higher than their total proportion in the population. Gadgil's Poona Survey was done before India became a free country, and he notes, "The Marathas and the artisans, though capable of moving further and in a few instances actually doing so, are yet in fact dominant chiefly in manual work, lowest services and professions, and a low range of incomes." As the Marathas are the majority agricultural community with small holdings, they still may belong to the lower income groups as a whole but there has arisen among them a class of people who are educated, who are in higher administrative services, in industry and who certainly hold political power. One can say in this context that the Marathas, especially those in rural areas, are still land-based, and the political power owes its strength to this very basis. In the urban centres, other castes like the Brahmins and the traders and other religious communities have some say in the leadership in society and politics, but still must give proper regard to the overall Maratha leadership. Fortunately the 1961 census¹ has figures for the scheduled castes. They are reproduced in the Table No. 8 on the next page for the four major Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra. The table shows that the Chambhar does work (shoe making) at home and also in shops. He is also in the largest percentage in manufacturing. Bhangi is still heavily employed in scavenging. Mahar is employed in lower services in offices and municipalities and as already remarked, the Mang in service is generally in municipal and city corporation service as also lower Government service.

¹ Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Maharashtra, Census of India, 1961, Vol. X, Part V-A.

TABLE No. 8.
PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES 1961.

	Percentage of women in work force	Agriculture		Agricultural Labour		Household Industries		Other Services		Scavenging		Leather work		Manufacturing	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Mahar—Urban	..	2.6	1.5	6.3	7.9	..	..	26.5	10.9	2.7	1.9	.03	.01	12.4	3.9
Rural	..	14.8	11.3	28.0	30.5	..	..	4.1	1.6	.06	.04	.01	.002	0.9	0.1
Mang—Urban	..	1.0	0.6	6.4	8.5	6.7	7.8	23.4	11.2	1.9	3.5	.04	.01	10.2	2.3
Rural	..	6.3	4.2	30.2	33.1	8.3	6.5	4.2	1.6	.05	.07	.04	.009	0.6	0.2
Chambhar—Urban	..	1.5	1.3	2.0	5.2	15.3	2.5	....	..	..	..	2.5	0.1	40.3	5.9
Rural	..	17.5	16.4	13.6	23.1	19.7	2.3	....	..	..	..	2.4	0.1	1.4	0.1
Bhangi—Urban	..	0.07	0.03	0.2	0.1	..	..	48.6	30.7	27.7	21.2	..	..	6	0.9
Rural	..	5.5	3.1	4.2	8.0	..	..	33.8	23.3	24.6	18.5	..	..	3.3	3.1

Maharashtra Census, 1961, Vols. on Scheduled Castes and Tribes

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As the statistics between 1911 and later years are not strictly comparable what is said below is based on impression. In 1911, the religious authority of the Brahmins was so far shaken that anybody could take up any profession he chose. Yet the advantage gained in education and economic position by the Brahmins, traders and some of the other religious groups, kept them in a dominant position. This picture is changing now especially because the Marathas and the Mahars are doing their utmost to make use of the new educational facilities provided by a national Government, and are forging ahead. Of Mahars, almost nobody is doing hereditary work. In this effort, they are clashing with the majority community, that is, the Marathas, in the rural areas.

They are either trying to be agriculturists in their own rights or migrating to towns and cities to find work. The Brahmin, the Kayastha, and the higher artisans have already become urban communities. Mahars also are headed in that direction. With the leadership position and power position in the hands of the Marathas, the old type of ranking, whether of the theoretical *varna* kind or the folk type ranking of *jatis* in a locality has disappeared as regards the higher touchable part of the Hindu society. In the rural areas, the untouchables still have segregated habitation areas and wells. The number of these also is lessening. It is not today the religious Brahmanical conceptions which are responsible for intolerance to untouchables. Today's tension seems to be more between the Marathas and the Mahars. The Marathas as landlords or *patils* cannot get certain hereditary services from the Mahars who in many cases repudiate that they belonged to a particular village. The *varna* concept is nearly discarded. Ranking today depends on the actual rank held by a person in the political, administrative, industrial and academic fields, and the rank may be modified to a certain extent through economic status rather than through caste. Though this is the case, the habits of thought engendered in a caste and *varna* society still hold good as is shown by certain recent studies which reveal that people belonging to different castes, especially if the caste denotes the *varna* to which it belongs, hold certain extremely conventional opinions or stereotypes about themselves and about people of other castes. The other ways in which caste and *varna* play a part in the present-day society are as follows :—

- (1) A person tries to strengthen his social or political position with the help of members of the kin-group and the caste-group.
- (2) Old caste rivalries and real and imagined grievances are aired during election campaigns of all types.
- (3) Caste identity is maintained especially by those who are assured of some preferential treatment through that identity. One can definitely say that ranking as understood in the old context with rules regulating food, drink, clothing etc., has nearly vanished and that a new ranking, that of achievement rather than ascription is replacing it.

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I mentioned above the kin group and ultimately the caste as the group supporting an individual in his endeavour to rise. An analysis of social data shows that the family structure and the marriage practices are the last bastions of the caste system. A study¹ carried out in 1955-56 of marriages which were registered² in one season in Poona and the surrounding taluka towns shows that there were in all 3.6 per cent of intercaste marriages and of these, there were almost none outside of Poona city. The number of such marriages is likely to be greater in Bombay but still it is nowhere very great. The family, therefore, with all its ramifications, still is in the majority of cases a group of people belonging to the same caste. Whatever the freedom achieved as regards choice of profession and legal equality, as long as marriage continues to be within a sub-caste, society tends to live within the narrow limits of caste groups. Outside of the urban areas, social intercourse involving hospitality is also largely confined to the extended family, that is to say, ultimately the caste. As the obverse of this picture, crime is also largely confined to familial rivalries and political rivalries within a caste. Thus, the ultimate breakdown of the groups called castes can come about only through free interchange of women between castes.

Of the four characteristics of caste, hereditary type of work is no longer binding. Nor do old caste hierarchies have great significance in the present-day setting. The two characteristics, opportunities of work and rank, are interdependent. They seem to be also the two aspects in which caste is most modified. Connection with a smaller or bigger region is disturbed through new opportunities of work and urban dispersal, but the dispersal seems to be hindered by endogamy which is not as prone to change as the other two factors. The political lever which caste gives to an individual is a new factor which seems to have strengthened caste feelings. Whether old caste frontiers become blurred and give place to the formation of new groups on economic lines cannot be predicted for the near future, though it is obvious that in rural areas caste will hold on much longer than in the urban areas.

There have been in Maharashtra some notable immigrant communities of old. They are so old that they can claim to be Maharashtrian but none do so as will be clear from the following.

The oldest such community known is called Bene Israel. As long as historical records go these people have lived on the west-coast i.e. Konkarn. They observe Saturday as their sacred day, have all of their names from the old testament and have a tradition that they came to their present habitat some two thousand years ago. They

¹ P. R. Mokashi—Some social aspects of marriages in Poona district 1955-56. Ph.D. thesis, Poona University, 1963.

² Bombay Registration of Marriage Act, 1954, which came into force from 15th January, 1955 provides for compulsory registration of each marriage celebrated in corporation, cantonment and municipal areas, and taluka and mahal headquarters.

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were a poor community until the British came. The new educational and employment opportunities of the growing Bombay city were used by this community like many others on the west coast. They entered liberal professions and achieved a position in the educational field also. This community for all practical purposes was a native Maharashtra community but this sentiment has been shaken by the creation of Israel as an independent state and many young, educated and enterprising Jews have left Maharashtra to settle into what they consider to be their ancient home-land. The number of people of religions other than Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh and Jain in Maharashtra was 90101 in 1961. Of these the Jews numbered 12,366 in Bombay.

The second community is less ancient. Their history is better known. They are the Parsis, followers of the old Zoroastrian religion who came to India to escape conversion in the 11th century from their home-land which was Iran. They settled in Gujarat and Gujarati is the mother tongue of the Parsis. They have well known writers and poets who have contributed to the literature of Gujarat. During the British period they were attracted to Bombay and at one time established themselves as entrepreneurs and great industrialists and the business community *par excellence* of Bombay. They also became trusted helpers of the British though the first Indian patriots also arose among them. Though they acknowledge India as their native land, in their mode of life they are oriented towards the West. It is the most Westernised community in India who have contributed to Western classical music. They are also the most enlightened and progressive capitalists in India. The number of Zoroastrians was 70,065 in Bombay city¹. Like all other Hindu castes the Jews and Parsis marry mostly among themselves. A few Parsis have married Western Europeans, but a marriage with an Indian used to be frowned upon. Now the prejudice seems to have become less.

Other groups who have come at some time in the past from the north belong to trading communities and are orthodox Hindu or Jain. Some of them have written literature in Marathi. Their food is local food. The women used to dress in a seven yard *sari* or *ghagra* of northern style but now many dress in the modern all-India fashion i.e., a six yard *sari*. Some have been so Marathised that they marry only among their own Maharashtra community, while others still go to Gujarat or Rajputana to seek brides and grooms.

On the southern borders of Maharashtra and in Nagpur there are groups who are from Karnatak, and Andhra. The Komati, an Andhra trading caste, has a part settled in Maharashtra. A number of weavers and dyers belong to Karnatak and still have Kannada names. Besides these groups which have settled in Maharashtra for centuries there have been recent large scale settlements since the British

¹ Census of India, 1961 Census, Religion, pp. 24, 25. No figures for Jews, Zoroastrians are given for the whole of India.

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period, and since twenty years ago when India gained independence. The city of Bombay is the home for many people from Gujarat. These belong to business communities as also to landless labourers. They are not entirely Maharashtrian but there is no doubt at all that they are Bombay-people who would feel out of their element anywhere else. Two new communities who have come and settled in Maharashtra after the creation of Pakistan and subsequent partition of India are the Sindhis and the Punjabis. The Sindhis are industrialists and professionals and as small itinerant traders have penetrated deep into Maharashtra. As they have lost their homeland they may become a Maharashtra community but whether they will feel an identity with Maharashtra is a question hard to answer. The Punjabis, both Sikh and Hindu, have a home state in the north though they are in large enough numbers to form an independent community of their own. A small number had settled in Marathwada where Guru Gobindsing has his memorial. Those people used to marry among themselves and spoke excellent Marathi. The new immigration has spread to the cities where the Punjabi Sikh has nearly captured the truck driving and motor-mechanics trade. He is also a very enterprising peasant and some are in trade, industry and professions.

Bombay recently has attracted large populations from all over India. Some come as labourers, others as professionals still others as shopkeepers. They all have an area of Bombay which they can call theirs because a large concentration lives there. These are of importance to the city of Bombay; on Maharashtra their impact is felt only in moments of crisis like elections and inter-community quarrels. Their interaction to one another and to the Marathi people forms an important problem of the life of Bombay but need not be taken up in detail here.

I have tried to trace the main features of the peasant society as it existed at the beginning of the century and to indicate the direction which it was taking in one aspect. It would be worthwhile finding out what is happening to the set as a whole which we had constructed for the peasant society. From the latest census report, we have certain figures for industrialisation and urbanisation of Maharashtra which we can compare with the whole of India and some selected areas of the world. In the 1961 Census the employment statistics give us the following figures and percentages for those employed in

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agriculture in 1901 and 1961 in Maharashtra,¹ as also for the total employed. The agricultural workers are given as percentages of the total number of workers. It will be seen that the population for the whole of Maharashtra as also for different regions, is more than doubled. But the percentage of people working in agriculture has gone down.

TABLE No. 9.

PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS² AND OF AGRICULTURISTS
IN MAHARASHTRA, BY SEX.

1901	Total Population	Percentage of workers	Percentage of workers in pasture and agriculture
Maharashtra (Except Marathwada) ..	14,011,452	Total 58.6 Male 34.7 Female 23.9	Total 91.9 Male 60.1 Female 31.8
Bombay Presidency (Marathi-district) ..	8,528,373	Total 52.9 Male 33.2 Female 19.7	Total 69.3 Male 41.8 Female 27.5
Nagpur ..	2,728,063	Total 68.5 Male 36.2 Female 32.3	Total 71.3 Male 35.3 Female 36.0
Berar ..	2,754,016	Total 66.6 Male 37.7 Female 28.9	Total 78.8 Male 41.0 Female 37.8
Marathwada ..	2,898,141	Total 41.1	Total 50.2
Maharashtra, 1961 ..	39,553,718	Total 47.8 Male 29.4 Female 18.4	Total 69.8 Male 36.1 Female 33.7
Western Maharashtra ..	24,022,603	Total 45.1 Male 28.9 Female 16.2	Total 63.4 Male 32.7 Female 30.7
Eastern Maharashtra ..	15,531,115	Total 51.9 Male 30.2 Female 21.7	Total 78.5 Male 40.8 Female 37.7

¹ In the 1961 census, a note is given (Vol. X, Part II B(i) pp. 22-23) which says that item Nos. I and II referring to agriculture and "agricultural labour" correspond to item Nos. 37, 38, 39, 40, 52, 56 in employment tables of 1901 Census. On p. 312 (1901 Census, Bombay) we find the figure for agriculturists is made up of a summation of various items including 36, "rent receivers", and 37, "rent payers". The "rent receivers" in many cases are ten times as many as "rent payers". According to 1961 note, item 36 ("rent receivers") is dropped from agriculturists for purposes of comparison. We think that this procedure is not justified. In Maharashtra, known as a Ryotwari province, that is to say a province of small landholders, to think that there are over ten times as many rent receivers as rent payers seems improbable. We have therefore, in our calculations, included item 36 too. Also included, are people who are pastoralists, and items 33, 34, 35 and 54 to 59 are omitted. They include veterinary surgeons, managers, clerks etc.

² Census of India, 1961.

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The people working in agriculture in 1901 were 71.9 per cent. of the total working population. From that it has gone down to 69.8 per cent. of the working population. The percentage of people working in agriculture in eastern Maharashtra has not gone down to the same extent as in western Maharashtra. The shift away from agriculture is rather small. On the other hand, we find that while in 1901 in the agricultural population, 56 were men and 44 women per 100 workers, in 1961 for the whole of Maharashtra, there were 52 men and 48 women per 100 workers. The same proportion for western Maharashtra works out at 51 men and 49 women. This means that though the proportion of people working in agriculture has slightly decreased, the proportion of women working in agriculture has increased considerably. For eastern Maharashtra, the proportion of people working in agriculture and the proportion of men to women has remained the same in 1961 as in 1901. Side by side with these are the proportions for total workers in Maharashtra. We find that the proportion of workers has gone down considerably for the whole of Maharashtra. This decrease of working population by a little over 10 per cent can be accounted for by two phenomena. Firstly it is due to juveniles upto the age of 14 being withdrawn from work, and secondly to the very large student population in urban areas.

Table No. 10 below shows the total population divided into urban and rural for 1961 for Maharashtra as a whole, for western Maharashtra and eastern Maharashtra. The percentages for dependent juveniles are based on the total population. The working juveniles are given as a percentage of the total juvenile population. This will show that the working population among juveniles is very small. This table shows that the percentage of employed girls among juveniles is less in urban areas than in rural areas. Though the percentage difference is small it is throughout consistent, and tallies with the table given above about men and women workers.

TABLE No. 10.

DEPENDENTS, JUVENILES (14 YEARS AND BELOW)
AND WORKING JUVENILES.

	Total Population	Dependents (percentage of total)		Juveniles (percentage of total)		Working juveniles (percentage of all juveniles)	
		M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Total Maharashtra ..	39,553,718	22.1	29.9	20.7	19.8	1.8	1.7
Western Maharashtra ..	24,022,603	23.1	31.6	20.7	19.7	1.3	1.3
Eastern Maharashtra ..	15,531,115	20.7	27.2	20.7	20.0	2.4	2.3
Urban Maharashtra ..	11,162,561	25.0	38.4	19.1	17.8	0.5	0.2
Western Maharashtra ..	8,299,709	24.8	38.3	18.6	17.3	0.4	0.2
Eastern Maharashtra ..	2,862,852	25.6	38.8	20.6	19.3	0.8	0.4
Rural Maharashtra ..	28,392,157	21.0	26.5	21.3	20.6	2.2	2.3
Western Maharashtra ..	15,722,894	22.1	28.1	21.8	21.0	1.8	1.9
Eastern Maharashtra ..	12,668,263	19.6	24.5	20.7	20.2	2.7	2.8

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Table No. 11 gives the percentage of students of 15 years and above in different populations. The number of workers has not been calculated for this age group in this table. It will be found here that for the whole of Maharashtra, the percentage of women students is very low as against the percentage of men students. In western Maharashtra, the percentage of women students is higher than in eastern Maharashtra, and in the whole of Maharashtra, the number of women students in rural areas is far lower than that found in urban areas.

TABLE No. 11.

STUDENTS OF 15 YEARS AND ABOVE.

		Maharashtra	Western Maharashtra	Eastern Maharashtra
Total population	..	39,553,718	24,022,603	15,531,115
		Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Non-juvenile students—	M	1.4	1.7	1.1
	F	0.3	0.5	0.1
Urban—	M	3.3	3.2	3.4
	F	1.1	1.3	0.7
Rural—	M	0.8	0.9	0.6
	F	0.07	0.1	0.02

Table No. 12 gives percentage of students in terms of the total dependent population.

TABLE No. 12.

		Maharashtra	Western Maharashtra	Eastern Maharashtra
Number of dependents	..	20,605,237	13,161,599	7,443,638
Students of 15 and above		Percent	Percent	Percent
	M	2.9	3.1	2.4
	F	0.7	0.9	0.3
Urban	M	5.2	5.2	5.3
	F	1.8	2.0	0.7
Rural	M	1.7	1.9	1.4
	F	0.1	0.2	0.06

The percentage of employed women in the total population in 1961 is smaller as compared to that of women employed in 1901. In 1901, most of the employment was in the rural sector, and women did not represent the same strength in work as men. In 1961, while the percentage for men decreased, it increased as regards women employed in agricultural pursuits.

TABLE No. 13.

PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS IN AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS

				Total	Male	Female
1901						
Bombay	..	..	..	69.3	41.8	27.5
Nagpur	..	..	..	71.3	35.3	36.0
Berar	..	..	..	78.8	41.0	37.8
Marathwada	..	..	..	50.2	...	...
1961						
Maharashtra	..	..	..	69.8	36.1	33.7
Western division	..	..	..	63.4	32.7	30.7
Eastern division	..	..	..	78.5	40.8	37.7

This slight increase in the percentage of women workers in agriculture is more than offset by the extremely large percentage of men working in non-agricultural pursuits when compared to the women so engaged. This fact is brought out in the following table :—

TABLE No. 14.

PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS IN NON-AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS.

				Total	Male	Female
1901						
Bombay (Western Maharashtra Districts)	..	..	..	30.7	21	9.7
Nagpur	..	..	..	28.7	17.5	11.2
Berar	..	..	..	21.2	18.5	5.7
Marathwada	..	..	..	49.8	...	...
1961						
Maharashtra	..	..	..	30.2	25.4	4.8
Western division	..	..	..	36.5	31.4	5.1
Eastern division	..	..	..	21.5	17.3	4.2

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When these facts are considered together with the percentage of population living in urban areas in Maharashtra in 1961 as against 1901, we see that (a) the percentage of women working in 1961 is slightly lower than in 1901 and (b) a large percentage of women than in 1901 working in agriculture presents indeed a picture of a society passing from peasant culture into an industrial era. The number of people living in the urban area in Maharashtra as a whole, and in different parts of Maharashtra as compared to all of India will show how urbanised Maharashtra has become. The city of Bombay with its total area (*see* 151) forms 1/700th of the total area of Maharashtra while the population of this area is more than one tenth of the whole of Maharashtra, that is, one in every ten persons lives in Bombay, and one in twenty-eight lives in cities.

We have now to account for about 35 per cent of population which did not do agriculture and which was supposed to help the agriculturist in his work. It will be remembered that part of this population, especially that belonging to certain scheduled castes was written off as agricultural labour. All those are included now in the 70 per cent engaged in or supported by agriculture. The other employment percentages are as follows :—

Table No. 15 below [Vol. X, Census of India, Part II-B (ii), p. 12] shows that except for categories 7 and 8 which include craftsmen, production workers etc., the overwhelming majority of all other types of workers, professional, technical, administrative, clerical, sales, workers in transport service, sports etc., are in urban areas. Of the craftsmen, 38.08 per cent. are found in rural areas, 61.92 per cent. in urban areas. This shows that whatever implements the farmer needs, the majority are provided by the non-rural worker. The craftsmen are no longer entirely dependent on the agriculturist.

TABLE No. 15.
Non-Agricultural Workers in Maharashtra.

	All Divisions	Professional and technical	Administrative, executive	Clerical	Sales	Farmers, fishers, hunters, etc.	Miners, quarrying	Transport	Craftsmen	Service, recreation	Not classifiable
<i>Maharashtra—</i>											
Number of workers	5,701,404	365,707	221,833	519,610	697,478	435,669	42,595	203,408	2,623,384	585,714	6,006
Percentage in each category of workers.	100	6.42	3.89	9.11	12.23	7.64	0.75	3.57	46.01	10.27	0.11
In each category, percentage of urban workers.	64.01	62.02	67.34	89.13	70.73	15.54	25.92	79.07	61.92	76.62	62.64
<i>Western Maharashtra—</i>											
Number of workers	3,969,071	250,651	160,312	422,825	481,364	232,464	18,386	155,052	1,799,955	443,521	4,541
Percentage in each category of workers.	100	6.3	4.03	10.66	11.12	5.9	0.4	3.89	45.34	11.16	0.11
In each category, percentage of urban workers.	63.41	68.1	76.8	90.3	76.8	21.1	33.7	79.1	70.5	81.3	36.4
<i>Eastern Maharashtra—</i>											
Number of workers	1,732,333	115,056	61,521	96,785	216,114	203,205	24,209	48,356	823,429	142,193	1,465
Percentage in each category of workers.	100	6.65	3.55	5.59	12.47	11.73	1.40	2.80	47.54	8.21	0.09
In each category, percentage of urban workers.	52.57	48.59	42.27	83.86	57.22	0.09	19.95	78.68	42.94	61.63	81.50

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In human societies the transformation from the agricultural society to industrial society was gradual and its greatest differentiation from the old type of agricultural society is shown fully only by one people i.e., the North Americans.

Among the fundamental needs of the people, food is still the primary need. People in United States consume more food per capita than anybody else in the world today or perhaps in ancient times, but there is a transformation in the number of people who produce food for the whole society. This will be apparent from the figures given below of the people who are engaged in procuring food in the different countries of the world today :-

TABLE No. 16.

	Agriculture, fishing, hunting etc. (as percentage of total population)
United States*	2.4
U.S.S.R.*	16.8
United Kingdom†	2.5
Northern Ireland	7.7
Japan*	17.0
India	69.5
Maharashtra‡	70.0

In this context one need mention only very briefly the point referred to at the beginning of this discussion, that such a transformation of society depends not only on technology but also on social and historical circumstances. Almost at the end of the nineteenth century, the first motor car was built in Germany and then shortly after that in the United States the motor car became quickly the most common mode of transport which was not the case in the land of the birth of the motor car. Soon after the first world war, the manufacture of machinery driven by oil power began to be used on American farms. The European countries took a longer time to use it. One of the primary conditions for the use of such machinery was large land holdings. In the United States which has a small population and very large land surface, this primary condition was fulfilled. Such machinery was used on the collectivised communist farms in Russia but the progress was not as rapid as in the United States. In the advanced European countries like England and France land was limited and owned in smaller parcels. French agriculture was in a comparatively unadvanced stage right upto 1930. English agriculture was not too advanced either. In these two countries the impulse for intensive production had no incentive inasmuch as both these countries depended largely on their colonies for production

* From Demographic Year Book, UNESCO, 1964.

† From Demographic Year Book, UNESCO, 1956.

‡ Census of India, 1961.

of food grains and raw materials¹. That a large part of the English population was drawn into manufacture away from agriculture was not due to mechanisation but to the possession of an empire and colonies which *per se* was not the product of the industrial age. But the empire building coincided with the modern industrial age and made it possible for the empires to use the raw materials of the colonies to ever greater degrees for manufacturing all kinds of goods. This in its turn led to certain deteriorations in the imperially governed countries. The hand-made goods made for example by the Indian artisan could not compete in price and quantity with the manufactured goods, so that long before proper industrialisation could start in these predominantly agricultural countries, one of its most important classes, that of the artisans, was on the way to extinction. In Maharashtra the population has doubled. The region at present is divided into an urbanised, industrialised west and a rural, agricultural east. The west employs men as industrial labour and the cities are predominantly male. The east employs more women. This division of labour is made possible by two factors. The land holdings were always small, and have been made smaller by recent legislation putting a ceiling on land holding. Agriculture is still done mainly as in olden times. Co-operation by farmers is encouraged but is not successful. Mechanised farming is practised by a few land-owners and by some State farms. Men labour is used on such farms, but even there barring ploughing nothing (for example harvesting, picking, etc.) is done mechanically so that women are employed in large numbers for such operations and for weeding, etc. What this has done to social institutions like the family we have already seen (p. 103). In the cities it has raised the problem of houseless proletariat and large-scale prostitution. With world-wars and the dwindling of empires, the European countries are transforming their agriculture though the process is slower than in the United States. In the same way, the transformation of India from an agricultural to a manufacturing country is very slow and fraught with difficulties because the initial circumstances for transformation are harder than those for the European countries and the United States.

¹ The connections of imperial countries with the Colonies are the life-lines which need to be kept open if the country is to survive. The attempts of the Germans to cut these lines and the equally desperate attempts of Churchill to keep them open in the last war illustrate this point.

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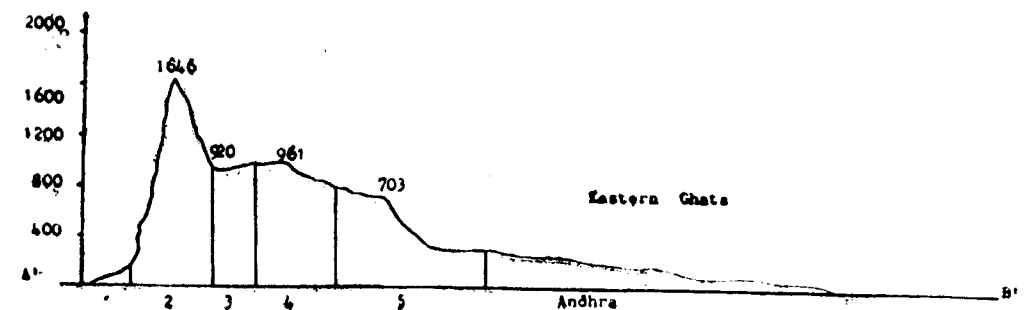
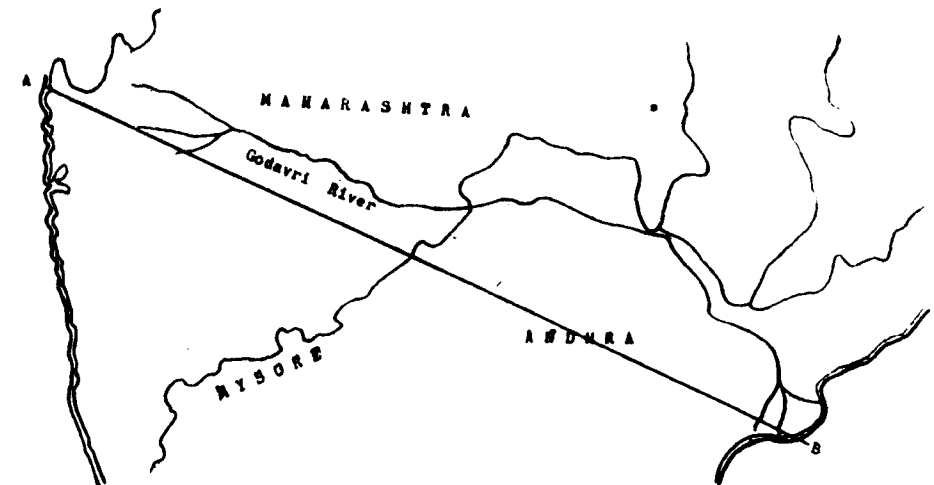
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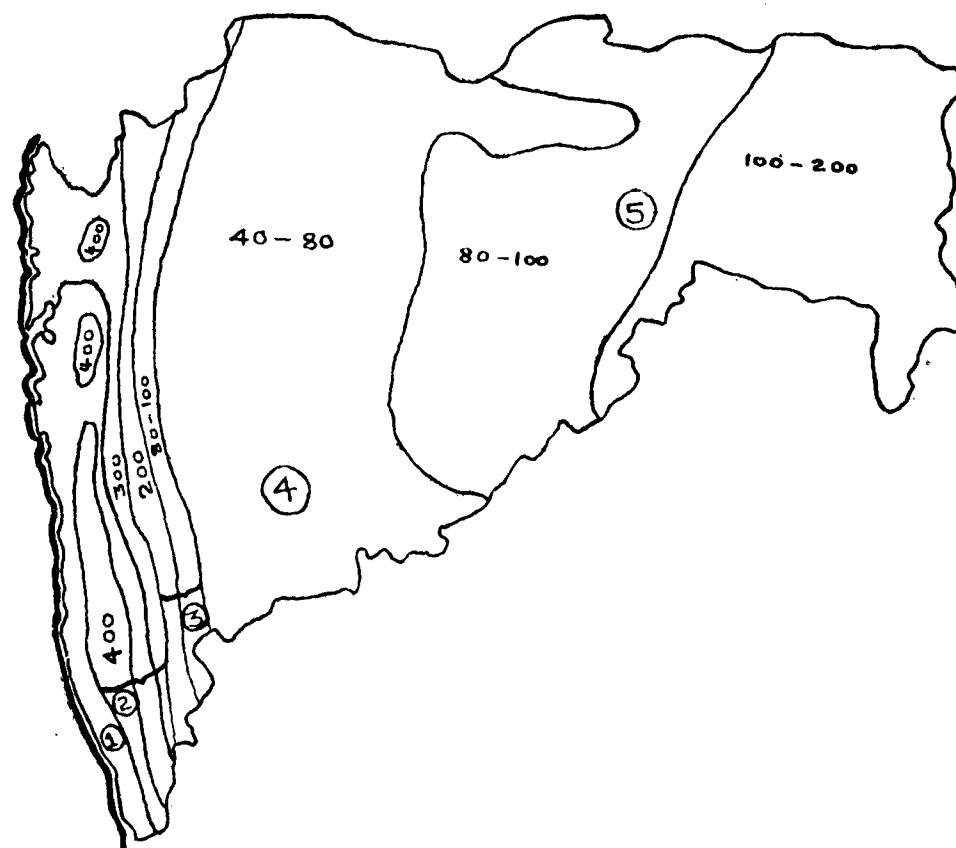
IN CHAPTER 1 THE SUB-REGIONS OF MAHARASHTRA have been described from north to south with reference to river valleys and mountain ranges. They however do not help in understanding transformation of space through human cultural needs. This can be better grasped by considering the ecological regions which partly coincide with and partly cut across the sub-regions mentioned above. The ecology of a region is a given physical and natural condition in which human beings live and which in the process of living they modify and transform.

The ecological regions are shown in two maps. The first map represents the height above and the distance from the sea of different regions. This map is drawn just southwards of the course of the river Godavari and represents a section showing an elevation from the Arabian sea-board up to the eastern border of Maharashtra, and beyond through Andhra up to the Bay of Bengal. The second map gives an idea of the extent of these regions and their relationship to the regions described in the first chapter.

Map No. 1, A and B



The five ecological regions of Maharashtra—Rainfall
Map No. 2



The first and the westernmost region represents the coastal strip i.e., Konkan which has an elevation of 0–10 metres above sea level near the coast going upto 1000 metres at the top of the hills. The second ecological region represents the mountainous region of Sahyadri and Satpuda. The Satpuda region could not be shown on the vertical elevation in the map. This second region represents mountain ranges above the coastal plain rising to a height of 1,646 metres. The third region starts from the eastern base of the Sahyadri and reaches 30 to 50 miles eastward and represents a height between 400 and 1000 metres above the sea level. The strip nearest to the mountain is called the Maval. This is also called the transition region as it represents a transition between the high mountains to the west and the fourth region towards east. The fourth region is still a high plateau up to 300 metres. This used to be called "the famine belt" of Maharashtra.

The fifth and the last region is north-eastern Maharashtra. The north-eastern part is higher than the eastern part which is a great plain, and represents the middle reaches of Godavari and which is only 300 metres high sloping eastwards until it merges into Andhra. The heights shown in the map (1-B on the previous page) are those of hills.

The map No. 2 represents the same divisions with reference to rainfall. In the first region i.e. the western coastal strip called Konkan, and comprising the districts of Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri, the annual rainfall is upto 400 cm.

In the ranges of the Sahyadri mountain the rainfall is between 200 and 300 cm. All the big eastward-flowing rivers of western Maharashtra like Godavari, Bhima, Nira, Krishna and their tributaries have their source on the eastern slopes of these mountains. In the Satpuda ranges in the north there is upto 100 cm. of rain. Further eastwards the rainfall increases slightly. The main north-south Sahyadri range in this region forms the boundary between the districts of the plateau and the western coastal plain. The Satpuda ranges form the northern boundary of Maharashtra.

The Third region, as we have seen, is the beginning of the Deccan plateau which is at its highest in this region. The rainfall is between 100 and 200 cm. Most of the eastward flowing rivers have been dammed in this region. This region has also a number of wells with perennial water supply. The climate is very salubrious. This region comprises the western parts of the districts of Nasik, Poona, Satara, Kolhapur, Sangli and the district of Buldhana in the north. The region in the Tapi basin between the Satpudas and the eastern spurs of Sahyadri is low in height and very hot in summer and cold in winter but fertile. This region is made up of Dhulia and Jalgaon Districts of Khandesh.

The boundaries between the third, fourth and the fifth region are not well marked like those between the first, second and the third region. The fourth region represents scanty rainfall upto 60 cm. This is arid with very fertile black soil, hot in summer and cold in winter. This region represents mostly the districts of Ahmednagar and Sholapur and eastern parts of Nasik, Poona, Satara, Kolhapur and Sangli.

The fifth region is rather a large region where the Deccan plateau has the height of about 300 metres going upto 350 metres. It receives rainfall from both the eastern and western monsoons and it is upto 200 cm. This is the Vardha-Vainganga basin and the middle Godavari basin and comprises the districts of Amravati, Nagpur, Bhandara, Akola, Yeotmal, Chanda, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Nanded, Bid and Osmanabad.

The difference in rainfall and the height above the sea level lead to great differences as regards food, dress, houses and village organization in these regions; also these regions have lent themselves to different kinds of exploitation through ages as we shall see.

Konkan, the first region, is bounded on the west by the Arabian Sea and on the east by the Sahyadri ranges. The north-south mountain range of Sahyadri sends out many western arms right up to the sea. These and the torrential rivers which flow into the sea have broken up the coastal plain. This plain receives the first impact

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of the monsoon rains in Maharashtra. The rainy season starts from the beginning of June and lasts till the end of September. The rivers are raging torrents in these four months and dry during the summer. In spite of 400 cm. of rainfall there is water scarcity in many villages.

The north-south plain is divided again into two sub-regions. The western part adjoins the sea and is called *khalati* in Marathi, meaning the low-lying plains. The western portion adjoining the mountain is called *valati* (the upper portion). The *khalati* or western plain receives the breeze direct from the ocean and is supposed to be more pleasant to live in than *valati* which is more wooded and hotter. The main crop is rice grown in inundated fields mainly during the monsoon months. A very little rice is grown in summer in irrigated fields.

Besides rice on hill slopes are grown *vari* (coix barbata) and *nachani* (eleusine corocana) and (ragi). In winter bitter beans called *pavta* (phaseolus) and *val* (dolichos spicatus) are grown in some areas, *val* specially in Thana district and *pavta* almost everywhere in small patches. Besides these, roots called *kangar* (a yam, dioscorea sculeata), *ghor-kand* and *kasalu* (a large variety of calladium) are also grown. *Alu*, *adu* (calladium) is also grown, both the leaves as well as roots being eaten. Apart from these annual crops, the most valuable crops are different types of palms and fruit trees like coconut and arecanut, mango, jack-fruit, the *Kokam* (mangosteen or garcinia purpurea) and *undi* (oil-nut tree, calophyllum inophyllum)—a bitter nut, and betel leaf.

As the year is divided mainly by the monsoon rains, seasons of sowing and harvest change in different regions. In Konkan land is made ready for sowing by the end of April and the rice is planted in small beds to be replanted in wider areas after the first heavy showers. April and May the hottest months are months in which the mango and the jack-fruit ripen. In these months when the last year's rice-supply is nearly finished these two fruits become almost the staple food of the poorer people.

The dress of the peasantry differs from that of the other regions. Women's saris are tucked high, generally well above the knee especially when working in the slush of the inundated rice fields. Men also are dressed more lightly. The ubiquitous turban of the other regions is absent. Men wear a small cap. The customary food was rice, yam, bitter beans and common fruit like mango. Almost no other grain was eaten but now as rice has to be shared with other regions, people have learnt to eat millet and wheat. The rice cultivation is not dependent on cattle, and pastoral pursuits are not well developed. The quality of the cattle is also poor. The cattle is generally kept in a separate shed in the yard.

The economy can be described as home-stead economy. The more well-to-do landowners employed servants who lived either on the farm or in a shed near the house. These servants were neither slaves

nor tenants. They served the landlord over generations because they were settled on the estate and the whole family was employed and because they owed some money to the land-owner. The main diet of the land-owner and his servants was the same in the case of non-Brahmins, namely rice, bitter beans, sometimes fish. The Brahmins did not eat fish but generally had some cows for milk. Oil for cooking was made from the kernels of mangosteen fruit, bitter oil was pressed at home from the nuts of the oil-nut tree. Whatever little butter was needed was made at home. Milk and milk-produce were neither bought nor sold. The houses were thatched by palm leaves, besoms were made from palm-leaf midribs. The bitter oil made at home was so precious that a big house had only one or two lamps and even these were extinguished before nine in the evening. There was hardly any wheeled transport. Things were carried generally on the head. Each house was built in its own yard. At the back the yard stretched into a garden with palms or coconut, areca nut, different kinds of yams and fruit trees already mentioned. The rice-fields were tiny bunded squares or rectangles filled with water. Near the hills—hills are generally near a village—rice terraces were carved on the hill slopes. All this labour and cultivation was done by human hands. Bullocks and male buffaloes were sometimes used. The household with its men, women and children and servants was busy with all kinds of work needed for the house and the field and procuring and processing of varied produce like cereal, fruit, nut, yams, etc. This work kept them independent of others. Few things were bought in the market and only a few artisans were needed. These artisans sold their wares or provided service (e.g. barber) from house to house and were paid in kind—sometimes in money.

The village is made up especially in the strip nearest to the sea (called *khalati*) of a long street with houses on both sides, each house in its own yard. While the boundaries of the village on the side of the sea (the west) and on the side away from the sea (the east) are well defined, those on the north and the south tend to become indistinct. One enters from one village into another sometimes without being aware of the transition, though a river or a small water course may mark the boundary. The general shape of the village, and the fact that the main village street leads directly from one village to another tends to identify the systems of external and internal communications. The main street in the village is the main internal communication artery within the village, and because it joins in the north and the south the next villages, it also becomes the main artery for external communication. The long drawn out village loses its individuality in being imperceptibly joined by one street to the other village.

The individuality or *gestalt* lost by the village is however gained by the houses. Each house is a distinct unit separated from all others. The houses always have sloping roofs thatched or tiled and the roof protrudes a few feet over the walls

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to protect them from the heavy rain. The village has scattered areas apart from the street where a few houses of one kin group of people or caste stand. Thus the inhabitants are not near enough for easy or frequent communication.

Rice is harvested by the end of October, but during the monsoon, barring the main street, the only communication to the separate house clusters is over the zigzag narrow earth bunds round each rice-field. This also reduces communication to a minimum during the rainy season. One does not find in Konkan the tightly knit village of the plateau nor the full-fledged system of dependent hereditary village servants called *Balutdari*. This system is present in its cruder form. Also lacking is the village chief called Patil; instead the chief man is a Khot, many times a Brahmin, who is a revenue agent for the government and does not have the prestige of the Patil.

This picture has changed in recent times. Since the growth of Bombay as an industrial city Konkan labour was attracted to the city. Men migrated to the city and sent money home to improve the home farm. The new laws made the tenants (wherever such were present) virtual owners of the land they tilled. Farm servants preferred work in Bombay and bought a little land out of their savings. Fruits which were cultivated for home consumption are now grown as commercial crops for export, especially a variety of mango and cashew-nuts. Some sea food is also tinned and exported. Very recently some iron ore is also being mined.

Communications however still remain far from satisfactory. There is no straight and direct road along the coast to Bombay, all the routes are over the hills to the cities on the plateau and then to Bombay. A road is planned from Bombay to Goa (south of the Konkan, described above) but this also is not along the coast. There is no railway. The coastal shipping is inconvenient because barring Bombay in the north there is no convenient harbour. All ships stop a few hundred metres away from the shore and one has to transfer into smaller craft and then sometimes wade through water to reach the coast.

Barring the exploitation of garden produce (fruit and nut), the agriculture has not advanced either, except for cultivating here and there better varieties of rice. Konkan for lack of water still remains a one-crop land and has not had the advantage of any type of irrigation or the conservation of water which runs in torrents to the Arabian sea during the monsoon. Fishing is an important work of a large number of people but it could not be improved because of the bad communications. Fresh fish cannot be taken to the Bombay market, and is either locally consumed or large quantity of it is dried and sent over the mountains to the eastern districts.

The coastal strip, with its homestead economy also shelters some primitive tribes in its forested region near to the mountain ranges. This part called *valati* has a slightly different village pattern because

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the undulating land and many hillocks do not allow the straight ribbon-like roads of the coastal part. The housing is partly clustered and partly scattered over a wider area.

The transformation of land in this strip is due to the agri-horticultural activities. The tiny rice plots reaching from the valley bottom upwards over the hill slopes, the many gardens, the houses shaded with their own trees make a very pleasant picture. This labour was however done long before the British came and continued right into the British time*. The only new transformation is the infant mining industry which is adding wealth and ugliness to the area where it is situated.

The second ecological region is formed by the mountain ranges. The mountains are all of volcanic origin and are formed in layers or steps and hence geologically called trappe. They are all flat-topped. At each step there are primitives, semi-primitives and peasants living and getting a meagre subsistence by planting a little rice, and elusin. All these people gather jungle produce like firewood, honey, gum, some nuts and fruit and grass and bring it to the plains' markets for sale. Among these people are Warli, Thakur, Koli, Bhil and Kunbi-cum-Maratha farmers and some shepherds who keep cattle (Mhaske Dhangar). Those like Warlis who live in the low lands are excellent rice growers. The Bhil and Koli have been known for leading gangs of robbers to loot crops from the low land fields.

This region is the great divide between the coastal and the inland region. Rivers which take rise at 1000 to 1600 metre height on the western side reach the sea within sixty miles. They are turbulent streams with great erosive force. On the other hand the rivers which take their rise on the eastern slope have a little over half the fall to the high plateau and then cross the continent to meet the Bay of Bengal. From the top of the mountains the eastern valleys are filled with thousands of years of alluvium while on the western side the aspect of black rock cut in deep, thousand feet gorges presents a beautiful and awe-inspiring spectacle.

Human hands have wrought in a spectacular way in this rugged region. The first are the cave temples which the Buddhists began to build in Maharashtra about the 2nd century B. C. Their example was followed by the Jains and Hindus. The last and one of the most famous of these cave temples was built under the patronage of the Rashtrakuta king Krishna of Maharashtra in 750 to 850 A.D. Thus these caves were being carved for nearly a thousand years. Perhaps they were not built later because the Muslim incursions had reached Maharashtra by the thirteenth century and from then onwards Hindu

*D. K. Karve : "Aatmavritta Va Charitra". Chapter II—p. 10, published by "Hingane Sri Shikshan Sanstha, Poona", April 1958.

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Kings had not the peace and leisure needed for such activities*. Maharashtra at one time must have been greatly influenced by Buddhism though no trace of it can be found in historical inscriptions of kings at the time the caves were being built. Of all the caves in India Maharashtra possesses about three fourths.

These caves take advantage of the close-grained trap-rock of the Sahyadri ranges. They are generally situated a quarter or a half way up a mountain side and are easily reachable. They overlook a river valley, a perennial brook or a waterfall. They are near some arterial road. The Kondana (Ulhas valley) and Karla (Indrayani valley) caves are on the way up from the coastal plain to the high plateau. The Ajanta caves lead from central India *via* Khandesh to the Godavari plain where the ancient capital of Maharashtra was situated. There was always room near the caves for caravans and water for man and beast. The monks lived there all year round and the caves were endowed by a grateful peasantry and merchant itinerants. The great routes which passed at the foot of these caves must have been discovered and traversed by people as far back as the late stone age because stone implements, especially microliths—an industry of the last phases of the stone age—are found in great numbers near many caves e.g. Kanheri and Ellora. Though many of the older trade routes have now changed, some still are marked by caves or remnants of caves. The caves however lost all meaning for the people either as a welcome shelter on travel or as a place of worship since the 12th century. Some caves became filled with centuries of dried earth, others were mutilated by the Muslims. The English archaeologist, Fergusson rediscovered some and described their beauty so that they have now become a tourist attraction both for tourists from abroad and from all parts of India. The cave temples do not however touch people's life because there are no social activities or linguistic expressions connected with them.

The other spectacular use to which the mountains have been put are the many forts built on its main range or on its east-west spurs. There is hardly a town on the coast or on the western edge of the plateau from which one does not see a fort. The older forts like Mandangad, Ankai, and Chankai, were built before the 11th century, and the latest, Rajgad and Raigad, were built by Shivaji. Unlike the western European forts, these were never built as palaces for chiefs or kings. They were more in the nature of military strongholds overlooking certain regions and certain main communication arteries. Sometimes kings with their families lived in some forts and Shivaji built Raigad with a view to live there, and hold his

*The building of temples in stone was being mastered by the 11th century. 746-47 A.D. temple of Virupaksha at Pattadakal in Karnataka was built before the Kailas cave mentioned above. It may be argued that building in stone put the cave carving in the back-ground. But this is one of the many causes. Temples and caves were being created simultaneously. The Muslim invasions coinciding at about the same time put an end to cave building.

court there also. Maharashtra has 235 hill forts. Their distribution districtwise is as follows :

*Forts in Maharashtra*¹.

(I) Coastal Districts :

(1) Thana	..	..	40	
(2) Ratnagiri	..	..	40	
(3) Kolaba	..	..	31	
			<u>111</u>	<u>111</u>

(II) Western Hilly District :

(4) Nasik	..	..	37	
(5) Poona	..	..	13	
(6) Satara	..	..	27	
			<u>77</u>	<u>77</u>

(III) South Maharashtra :

(7) Kolhapur	..	..	13	
and				
(8) Sawantwadi	..	..	7	
(9) Sangli	..	..	7	
			<u>27</u>	<u>27</u>

(IV) Remaining Districts :

(10) Nagar	..	..	10	
(11) Sholapur	..	..	4	
(12) Osmanabad	..	..	1	
(13) Aurangabad	..	..	3	
(14) Nagpur	..	..	2	
			<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>

Total .. 235

¹ This list is prepared from the following three sources—

(1) "*Shivaji Souvenir*" : Publisher K. B. Dhavale. Bombay Tercentenary Celebrations Volume : Article by Shri D. V. Kale, "*Maharashtratil Kille*". Shri Kale has given a list of the forts which existed in the Maratha period. Of the 496 forts mentioned in his article, those which are in Maharashtra have been included in our list.

(2) "*The Deccan Forts*" : By J. N. Kamalapur. Published by : Popular Book Depot, Bombay-7, April 1961. Shri Kamalapur has given the list of 117 forts.

(3) "*Maharashtra Deshatil Kille*" Published by C. G. Gogate, Poona, 1907. Shri Gogate has given a districtwise table of the forts in Maharashtra in the two vols. of his book.

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This will show that the Konkan districts have the largest number of forts. Next to Konkan are the hilly districts of the west i.e. Satara, Poona and Nasik. The forts were used most effectively during Shivaji's reign in his long fight against Aurangzeb. They lent themselves excellently for the guerilla warfare and hit-and-run tactics which the Marathas used for twenty-five years against the better trained better-fed and better-equipped Moghal armies. After Shahu Chhatrapati became the King, no great battles were fought within Maharashtra so that the hill forts were not used but they had the usual quota of fighting men. The commander of the fort was generally a Maratha. There was also a *gadkari* (head of the civil administration of the fort and for tax-collection from the surrounding villages) who was generally a Kayastha and a Brahmin who was the Temple priest, letter-writer etc. Sometimes, people of some other caste held these posts.

Half way up or a little higher on these forts, there is generally a natural geological terrace (due to trap formation of rocks) which reaches almost round the fort. On this terrace, at certain distances, there are a few huts. The inhabitants belong to the Koli caste. These villages are called '*meta*' and form a kind of first-line defence of the fort. The word '*met*' is used as a suffix for villages which were on the way to a fort and served as resting places for the soldiers and the beasts; for example met-Gotad and met-Tale on the way to Pratapgad fort.

Though this particular type of organisation of space belongs to an era which has passed away, it still has a place in Maharashtra's social life. Many of the hill forts are connected with the name of Shivaji and with some famous battles fought in his times. There is also a particular type of narrative songs called *powadas* connected with some of these forts. These *powadas* are still sung in Maharashtra and the stories are narrated or can be read in books today. There is hardly a school child in western Maharashtra who has not climbed a hill fort as a matter of course. Perhaps the custom of building miniature forts at the time of the Divali festival which is common in Maharashtra was part of the anti-British nationalism which was thus given a context which people could immediately understand. This shows that the forts which represent spatial organisation of a bygone time have still a great hold on the public imagination and to that extent are a living tradition.

The latest use to which these flat mountain tops have been put is to make summer resorts of them. There are not even half a dozen of them now but as the cities grow, a demand for them might grow also. They were a creation of the British. Only the government offices with their higher personnel, the Chiefs and Rajas and the richest merchants had houses there. Since Independence the government no longer uses these places as summer capitals and has made extensive holiday camps where a room can be rented by even a person of ordinary means and where food is provided at a very reasonable price. Thousands of people now visit these places to

which easy access is given through State-run buses. Matheran, about 50 kilometres from Bombay, was not a government resort but was and is still much visited by people from Bombay. Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani are in the Satara district. Mahabaleshwar was the summer capital of the then Bombay government. The old government house with its extensive grounds has now become a government-run holiday camp. Chikhaldara is in northern Maharashtra, on the eastern side of the Satpuda-Vindhyan ranges. The famous fort of Gawilgad (Gwalgad) is also situated on the same hill. It used to be one of the two hill resorts of the C. P. and Berar government before it became part of Maharashtra State. The other hill station was Panchmadhi now in Madhya Pradesh. The latest of these stations is a holiday camp established near Bhandardara in the Nasik district. It is not as high as others and overlooks a new dam.

One cannot say that the possibilities of exploitation of this region have been even properly understood. To take but one example, it is denuded of its once standing forest which in its turn has lowered the water holding capacity of the soil and in many places has led to the washing away of soil so that in spite of the torrents of water which pour down these ranges, the rivers become dry soon after the monsoon is over and there is scarcity of drinking water in many of the upland villages.

The next ecological region begins at the western limit of the mountain region and extends eastwards for 80 kilometres in a narrow strip from north to south. This is the beginning of the Deccan Plateau. In this region the plateau is between 600-800 metres above the sea level. The rainfall is over 100 inches in the west and decreases rapidly to about 20 inches on the eastern edge. The western part called Mawal grows rice, in the middle is grown *bajri* (finger millet) and in the eastern part mostly *jowar*. The upland rice growers are different from the coastal rice growers inasmuch as they have no garden cultivation of palms, roots and fruit.

In the middle region some fruit and vegetable are grown strictly for the market and not for home consumption. The fruit and vegetables are also different from those on the coast. These market gardeners mostly belong to the Mali caste and spread from Nasik to Kolhapur. Both husband and wife work on the farm which is called *mala* and either the one or the other goes to the nearest markets to sell vegetable, fruit and roots (like potatoes in modern times), onions, garlic etc. The fruit grown is grapes, all kinds of citrus fruit, figs, papaya, banana, guava and mango. The climate of this upland is very salubrious and the scenery with broken mountain chains is pleasant. The houses have sloping roofs in Mawal but as one goes eastwards one begins to meet stone or mud houses with flat roofs.

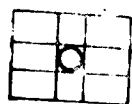
This region being a part of the Deccan plateau shares the social and village organisation of the rest of the plateau, i.e. the ecological regions 4 and 5. The villages are tight clusters of houses with no gardens, nor individual walled or fenced enclosures. In the village

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is perhaps a single tree or a few trees under which people gather for a smoke and a chat in the evening. In the absence of a tree the meetings may take place in front of a temple or a *Chavadi* (the official room of the head of the village—see below). Outside the village are fields owned by the villagers. In the fields may be here and there small clusters of temporary dwellings called *vadi* or *vasti*. The village is thus a tight nucleus occupying a relatively small area. Half a kilometre away may be other smaller, less tight units. Beyond all these is situated another village with its *vadis* and fields.

Thus the plateau village is distinguished as a mass of houses against the fields, has sharply defined boundaries on all sides and has an individuality, a *gestalt*. As against this the houses are so tightly packed that they lose their individuality. An outstanding structure might be a temple, or the big house (called *wada*) of the Patil or a rich landlord. The structural unit of the house is a rectangular block of four walls. The smallest house may be just one block and the bigger houses may be more than one block. Sometimes the blocks, which are rooms, are so placed that they make a hollow square with a sun-court in the middle. That is the *wada* design. Some time one or more rooms have no inner walls so that there may be one or two rooms which can be closed and private while the rest of the house is a space with or without divisions for different purposes like a kitchen, a space for gods, a space for



eating etc. One side of such a house may be just a wall with the entrance door. This design is very widespread and is found from Spain *Via* the Mediterranean into India.

In a tightly packed village or a town such a house offers a haven of peace and privacy. The old *wadas* had very small and very high windows, really holes in the walls. The whole house was therefore directed to the sun-court in the middle and lived in a world of its own. In this family-world however, there was no privacy for the individual. This type of house is found everywhere on the plateau and may merge into a small walled fortress. Four miles from

¹ The Marathi names for some of the rooms are as follows :

Osari or *padvi*—veranda open on three sides, or partially closed, may be a back veranda.

Bairhak—where men-folk sit.

Chowk—the sun-court at the centre.

Majghar—middle room (*maj* from Sanskrit *madhya* middle). It has sometimes no windows and is dark. It is occasionally used as a dining room but serves more as a room for married women to sit in the afternoon, unobserved by men-folk.

Kothi—store room where grains and eatables are stored.

Deoghar—a small room where gods are kept.

Svayampak ghar—kitchen.

Talehar—cellar.

Madi—upper storey.

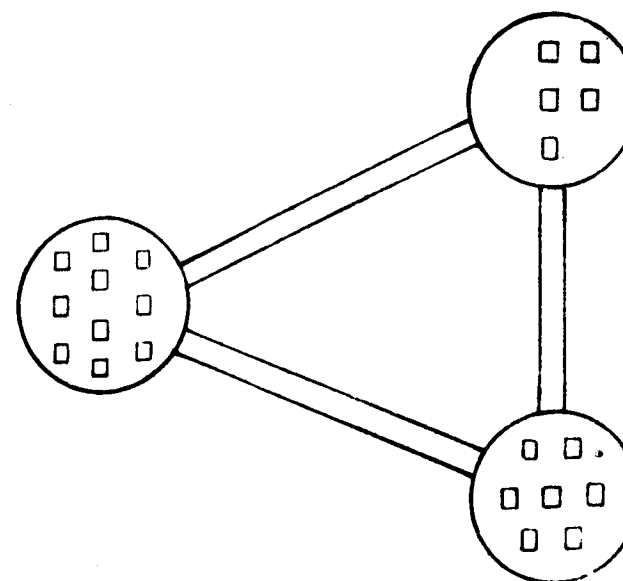
Malwad—flat roof, mostly stamped earth.

Gacchi—flat roof, generally in lime or concrete. In former times there used to be a room set apart for women in childbirth. This was a very dark, small room. If there was no such woman, it would be used as a general store-room.

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Phaltan in the Satara district in a village called Vathar of Nimbalkar one sees over half a dozen of such *wadas* built in black stone. They belong to different families of Nimbalkar.

In the plateau villages there are two distinct communication systems. An internal system made up of many winding lanes connected sometimes to a broader alley and an outward system which connects one village to another. The second system is made up of footpaths or roads which may not have a house on it for some distance¹. The schematised picture would be somewhat like the one given below.



On the plateau again the mode of cultivation is different from that of the coast. Barring the rice-fields of Mawal (western portion of region 3), the individual fields are very large and are ploughed with the help of bullocks. The sowing is broad-cast, and there is no transplanting of bunches of seedlings as in the case of rice. Almost every farmer except the poorest has cattle and takes care of them and has great pride in them. The greatest agricultural festival is *bendur* or *pola* when the cattle is decorated and taken in procession. There are certain conventions about precedence etc. in the procession which are jealously guarded by the various families of the village. The cattle is kept on the farm in a shed (*gotha*) but many times share the house-space with humans so that a corner of the sun court, or one side of the hollow square belongs to the cattle. In parts where the jungle is thick and infested with leopards and where the houses are small, one whole part is occupied by the cattle

¹ I. Karve, *The Indian Village*, Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute, Poona 1957.

Y. S. Mehendale—*Wadinames of the Ratnagiri district*, pp. 404-421, Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute, Vol. VIII, 1947.

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so that they are within doors at night. This is the case in parts of Satara and Poona districts and in the Satpuda hills where Bhils live with their cattle.

Within a village there are areas for the lowest castes separated from the other area in which live all other castes. The area reserved for the lowest castes is again divided into as many sub-areas as there are separate castes. Of the other castes the shepherds generally live in *wadis* of their own. Sometimes the milkmen and weavers and potters also live a little away. All these castes need some open space for doing their hereditary work.

Together with this housing pattern one finds the full fledged classical village organisation well developed in the regions 3, 4 and 5 (barring northern parts of 5, see below). This is the *bara-baluta* organisation of village. In this context it may be worth noting that the suffix '*ghar*' (a house or home) is found oftenest on the west coast which has a homestead economy, while the suffix *gaon* (Sanskrit, *grama*, meaning a heap, a collection) is found on the plateau.

Baluta is the payment given in cereal or money or a little land to people of artisan castes and to those who render certain necessary services. Those who get *baluta* are called *balutedar*. In the Nagpur area these people are called *aykar*. Villages do not necessarily have all the twelve (*bara*) types of such people. There may be less or more depending on the size of the village. The *balutedar* artisans are : carpenter, ironsmith, goldsmith, potter, etc. The service people are the barber, the washerman, the priest at the local temple who is also the village priest or the non-Brahmin priest of the Shiva temple (Gurav or Jangam), Mang who makes ropes and Mahar who has dozens of duties to perform. The last two were untouchables. There were ranks among them, depending on the importance and indispensability of their craft or service. They used to be divided into first row *balutdar*, second row *balutdar* and third row *balutdar*. The Mahar was always in the first row¹. The more important *balutdar* owned some agricultural land given to them by the village. The biggest such land holder was the 'Patil', the hereditary chief or headman of the village. Such land is called *vatan* and the holder of such a *vatan* is a *vatandar*. From the Patil to the Mahar they are all *vatandars*. The Patilship is generally the privilege of Maratha families. Generally in a village the majority of the houses belong to the clan of the Patil. The other Maratha houses can be shown to be later arrivals and affinal connections of the Patil family. This is true of the other *vatandars* too. Some anthropologists have equalled the *balutdari* system with the equally well-known *jajmani* system of the north. It differs, however, from the northern Indian system inasmuch as the *balutdar*, however humble he may be, was not bound to any of the village family whom he called *jajman*. The *balutdar* was always a village servant and had to perform certain duties for

¹ Gaon-gada by T. N. Atre, p. 30, Foot Note.

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the whole of the agricultural population and for a few other people. In a recent survey, Karve and Damle have noted an example¹ where the Mahars had refused to render certain services to a family because that family had not paid the requisite grain for two successive years. The village Patil had to stand guarantee before the required service was rendered. To most villages are attached smaller areas often called *wadi* or *vasti*. The *wadi*, and *vasti* are only a cluster of houses belonging to a family or two with their servants who come to live near their fields during harvest time. They never have the full organisation of *balutdars*, the Patil and the small revenue office or *chavadli*. These scattered hutments can blossom into big habitation areas and claim recognition of a "villageship" or *gaonthan*. If the *vadi* or *vasti* belongs to castes like Dhangar (shepherd) or Koli (fisher folk or tribal folk) or Bhoi (fisherman) who are independent of the village to a certain extent, there is much rivalry and bad blood between a *vadi* and the village to which it is supposed to belong. When a *vadi* becomes big some families of Mahars from the original village lay a claim of settlement there also². Sometimes on the death of a *balutdar* artisan his sons divide up the work of the village among themselves and a situation very much like the *jajmani* system comes about. In the village the Patil is the first citizen and the occasions on which he is to be shown respect are many and if that is not done, it leads the village into many feuds. The Patil *vatan* is divided generally between two branches of a family; the one holding the civil and revenue office is called the *mulki* (or Civil) Patil; and the one who does the police duty is called the *police* Patil. There is much tension between the police and the civil Patils for certain formal recognition. When there is a marriage in the village the Patil must receive the first invitation and the first offering of the betel nut. On the occasion of Dasara the Patil must lead the village. These are the occasions when feuds arise and generally the feuds are carried from generation to generation between the two Patil families or between the Maratha and the Brahmin family who consider themselves to be of equal importance. The whole village including all the castes has to range itself on one side or the other. The system of hereditary *vatandari* led to coercion on the one side and indifferent artisanship on the other. This system has been abolished³ in Maharashtra. Of the many *vatandars*⁴, the most

¹ Irawati Karve and Y. B. Damle, "Group Relations in Village Community," p. 26 Deccan College Monograph Series No. 24, Poona, 1963.

² T. N. Watunekar—"Social organisation, migration and change in a village community" pp. 12 and 13, Deccan College Dissertation Series No. 28.

³ (I) The Bombay Paragana and Kulkarni Watan Abolition Act, 1950.
(II) The Bombay Paragana and Kulkarni Watan (Abolition) (Amendment) Act, (1955), 9th December 1955.

Bom. LX of 1950 (Bombay Code/Vol. IV Govt. of Bombay, 1955).
(III) The Maharashtra Revenue Patels (Abolition of Office) Act, 1952 XXXV [7025].

⁴ T. N. Atre—*Gaon-Gada*, 3rd Edition 1959, Published by H. V. Mote, Bombay.

Chapter II—*Vatan-Vritti*, pp. 14-28 and
Chapter IV—*Vatan-Vetan*, pp. 47-61.

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important were Patil, Kulkarni (the village accountant) and Mahar (the servant of the whole of the village). The Mahar *vatan* was the last to be abolished.

We have made mention of the feuds within a village. There is another aspect of the peasant society which leads sometimes to crimes. In a village the economy is based on two major facts. On the one hand is the peasant who cultivates the land and produces food. On the other hand are the people who serve the needs of the food producer and who get paid in kind. Recent studies have shown that it is the peasant population which is the main giver of the grain shares to the *balutdars*: the carpenter, the ironsmith, the barber, the Mahar, the Kulkarni—accountant etc., who belong to the artisan and the service castes. The *balutdars* get land and grain for their services. Apart from these people who used to be natives of the village, there were a host of others who visited a village occasionally for ritual purposes or purposes of entertainment. They are as follows: (1) Haridas are Brahmins who tell stories and legends of Gods and heroes (accompanied by a string instrument and drums); Bharadi Worshippers (non-Brahmin worshippers of Shiv and the Mother Goddess); Jyotishi or Joshi—Brahmin or non-Brahmin, who forecast events for the next year like amount of rain and also find the auspicious days for marriage, harvesting etc.; Gondhali—ritual singers of Devi and Khandoba and a host of other performers, singers and worshippers of minor Gods, go from village to village asking for alms and doing propitiatory ceremonies required by the villagers. These are paid in kind. Besides these there are a number of people who are supposed to be entertainers of one sort or the other. (2) These are Makadwale (people who travel with performing monkeys), Darveshi (people who lead performing bears), Kolhati and Dombari (acrobats and dancers on tight ropes), and Tamasgir (players of folk drama called Tamasha). These people also start on their itinerary after the rainy season and go through certain villages to which they have gone from year to year. (3) The other people who also are on the march during this period are Pardhi (traditional hunters) and Vaidi (a low caste of medicine givers), Mang-Garudi and others who also have their traditional territory of exploitation. All these people have a legitimate business by which they get their subsistence which is grain, paid to them by the villagers for ritual service, entertainment or medicine. In most cases the subsistence earned is very meagre and not enough to provide sufficient food. Of the three types of entertainers and itinerants mentioned above the third have very little legitimate business. They, and others also to a lesser extent, cheat the farmer or rob and steal the standing harvest. The number of such thefts increases during and after the Diwali festival i.e., during the harvest season. In a society which was mainly immobile the main entertainment was provided by itinerant groups. Many of these groups like the Pardhis might be the remnants of primitive tribes who have refused to settle down and to become part of the peasant community. Today they represent the main anti-social element with which the peasant

is plagued. They are in a constant conflict with the peasant community. The Ramoshi, the Mang and sometimes the Mahar also join in stealing standing harvest. This situation is well described by Mr. Atre in his famous book cited above. We may note here some of the changes which have occurred in the village as described by this author.

Recently certain studies carried out by anthropologists and sociologists have shown that the classical village is changing. Dr. Ambedkar compared the village to a stagnant pool where all culture decayed. The analogy of the village to a pond of stagnant water seems to be very just. Most of the inhabitants had lived in the same place for generations. The feuds, kinships and friendships all had gone on for generations. The skills also were hereditary. There was certainty of getting a minimum amount of food stuffs for everybody in the village. This security at the lowest level of subsistence took away all initiative and individuality. The vaunted independence was an independence at the lowest level of material and cultural life. Fortunately new forces have worked to mobilize this static mass and bring about some changes. These changes presuppose a new orientation and a different organisation of space. The most important factor to which the change was due was the rise of the cities and the phenomenal population growth leading to starvation. As Prof. Sovani¹ has pointed out that the migration to the cities was not so much due to a spirit of adventure and an attraction of cities but it was a push into the city through desperation arising out of starvation in the rural areas. Apart from this push into the industrial cities like Bombay and Sholapur, new centres have arisen in the originally rural areas due to small industries which have been positively attracting the rural unemployed. Such are the small towns and cities like Kolhapur, Sangli, Phaltan, Walchandnagar, Jalgaon, Wardha, etc. These townships have small industries based on rural produce. Other industries making small machines or glass-ware² and other objects, were started in rural areas because land and labour were cheap. Kolhapur has many small machine shops and repair shops. These industries employ local labour and these towns expand to attract the artisan groups from the surrounding rural area. The author has demonstrated by taking a matching sample in the population of a small town and the surrounding rural area that the town has far more artisans than the villages, which together have the same population³. Some castes like Brahmin and Kayastha have vanished from the village. It is seen that the villagers come to the central market town for repairing their ploughs, for buying ready-made goods and clothes, and even to get haircuts and shoes. The children who wish to continue beyond primary school come to the

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¹ Prof. N. V. Sovani's article in the Symposium at "Indian Economic Association".
Article Title—"Trend of Urbanization in India", pp. 107-114.

² Kirloskar Iron Works at Kirloskarwadi and Ogale Glass Works at Ogalewadi both in Satara district.

³ I. Karve and J. S. Ranadive, "The social dynamics of a growing town and its surrounding area", 1965, Deccan College Research Institute, Poona.

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middle school and the high school situated in the market town. The government dispensary is also situated in the town. There are temples which have *Hari-Katha* and discourses on religion, a cinema theatre and generally political rallies are held in the market town. So we find that the nature of the village is changing rapidly from a multifunctional, multicaste community to a rather one sided specialised community of farmers who, owing to good roads and buses are connected to larger multifunctional and multicaste centres which are the market towns¹. The importance of market towns has been enhanced through government action in recent years because it has established market yards at these townships and built ratproof godowns where farmers from surrounding areas can store their harvest. Every market day, public auctions are held in the farmers' presence for grain and other commodities. If they consider the rate good they can sell their produce. The market town therefore has become the population centre of an area which serves the needs of the farmers for 6 to 10 miles around depending on the topography and fertility of the area. The following table shows the kind of a market town and the people it contains as against the surrounding area. It will be seen easily that the market town has a greater variety of occupations than does the rural area.

TABLE No. 1.

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES ACCORDING TO CASTE AND RELIGION.

Caste and Religion	Phaltan Town	Surrounding area or villages
1. Brahmin	.. 98	10
2. C. K. P.	.. 3	1
3. Maratha	.. 170	252
4. Wani	.. 4	1
5. Mali	.. 25	160
6. Sonar	.. 10	4
7. Sutar	.. 12	3
8. Shimpi	.. 22	1
9. Koshti	.. 20	1
10. Ramoshi	.. 22	39
11. Kumbhar	.. 10	1
12. Teli	.. 10	..
13. Bhoi	.. 6	2
14. Dhangar	.. 20	80
15. Khatik	.. 1	..
16. Rajput	.. 2	8
17. Bhatake	.. 17	6

¹ Karve and Ranadive, "The social dynamics of a growing town and its surrounding area", 1965, Deccan College Research Institute, Poona.

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Caste and Religion	Phaltan Town	Surrounding area or villages
18. Burud	.. 3	..
19. Nhavi	.. 10	9
20. Wadar	.. 19	2
21. Chambhar	.. 6	17
22. Mahar	.. 10	11
23. Holar	.. 2	5
24. Mang	.. 12	14
25. Bhangi	.. 3	..
26. Dhobi	.. 3	..
27. Tambat	.. 1	..
28. Dhor	.. 3	..
29. Lonar	.. 1	..
30. Mahar Buddhist	.. 54	60
31. Christian	.. 1	..
32. Muslim	.. 48	18
33. Jain	.. 45	4
34. Lingayat	.. 20	1
35. Lohar	.. 10	..
36. Kasar	.. 1	8
37. Sindhi	.. 1	..
38. Naidu	.. ..	1

This is the process which has taken place in all the ecological regions but has affected some regions more than others.

One of the causes for this change has also effected spectacular transformation of space in this ecological region. The west of this area (region 3) is the hilly catchment area of all the rivers flowing eastwards. A few dams had been built here since 1879. But since Independence many more dams have been built and all along the western edge of this region one sees magnificent man-made lakes which have transformed the whole scenery.

While the dams have changed the scenery of the third region, they have changed the whole economy of the fourth region which is a narrow north-south strip and which used to be called the famine belt of Maharashtra. From the dams, on the rivers Pravara, Bhima, Nira, Mula-Mutha, irrigation canals flow into this region. The soil is partly rich black regur soil, partly medium and partly a stony waste. The canal waters reach the low-lying parts but have not been able to affect the high stony wastes which are still the strongholds of Dhangar, the shepherds. In the other soils all kinds of grain grows but the farmers are turning rapidly to money crops

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like sugar-cane, cotton, grapes, onions, chillis. Most of the sugar mills of Maharashtra are situated in this erstwhile famine belt and people name it the sugar-belt and have forgotten the old name. A new industry—sugar-making—has grown up here; perhaps other industries like cotton ginning, fruit canning and starch factories might grow here soon. This area is also growing hybrid maize and on that is placed the hope of starch factories. This is an important region to study and watch because unlike Bombay the industry is in the hands of the local capitalist farmer and employs population from the neighbourhood as a recent survey shows¹. This is, therefore, not like Poona and Nasik, a secondary dependent centre of the Bombay industries. The transformation it brings about in the surrounding rural India would be worth studying.

The rather wide region lying to the east of this is the final or the fifth ecological region. Geographically and geologically however it would be proper to divide this region into two: 5-A the northern region which again divides into two: 5-A1 and 5-A2 sub-regions and the southern region 5-B.

The northern sub-region 5-A1 comprises the narrow, low, fertile valley of Purna and is called Berar. It is hot in summer and cold in winter. It receives good rainfall from both western and eastern monsoons, has black regur soil, grows wheat and jowar, but the money crop is cotton. This is divided by low hills from the 5-A2 region which forms the valleys of the Vardha and Vainganga which meet Godavari farther eastwards in Andhra. 5-A2 is, therefore, part of the Godavari drainage system. This is the Nagpur sub-region. The trap area ends here. The region is undulating and the eastern part is famous for its man-made lakes. It has also minerals like manganese, coal, iron etc., some of which are being mined. This area grows wheat, rice and cotton. It is covered with jungles in the east, where live jungle tribes, the biggest of which is Gond. The houses in this area are not flat roofed.

To the south of this area, divided by an east-west spur of the Sahyadri from this region lies the ecological region 5-B. It is formed of what was formerly the Marathi provinces of the Nizam's state and is called Marathwada. It is on the middle reaches of the river Godavari and is a rich farming land which generally gets enough rain as it receives showers both from the western and the eastern monsoon. It is a flat low plain but not as low as the fault valley of Tapi and Purna in the north. It is very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. Its money crop is cotton. It remained outside of Maharashtra politically for centuries and was rather a neglected area. The proportion of agriculturists is the largest. There are few industries. It is clamouring for industries as well as irrigation. This land represents the heart of old Maharashtra. The ancient capital Pratishthana, now a small village called Paithan is situated on the banks of the Godavari. The Satavahana Kings and

¹ I. Karve and J. S. Ranadive. *The Social Dynamics of a growing town and its surrounding area*, p. 37, Table.

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later the Yadavas ruled from this land. It still has some of the later dwelling-houses called *wadas*. These belonged to well known families of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is unexplored land but a careful study, search and excavations are bound to reveal older temples, *wadas*, and inscriptions, even perhaps buried cities. Between western Maharashtra (old Bombay Presidency) and this region is the river Godavari. In the north it is connected with the Jalgaon district of Khandesh by a mountain pass which leads from the famous Ajanta caves. From Parbhani district a road leads into Berar. There are the famous caves of Ajanta and Ellora; it also has the place (Ambejogai) where the first Marathi poet lived and wrote. But no transformations of land have taken place since the 12th century. A new dam on the Godavari which is being planned may give the intended impetus to its activities.

The whole of Maharashtra in all its ecological regions is a thirsty land. The only sources of potable water are wells of which there are only a few, sometimes only one, in each village. Rivers and streams have water only for a few months of the year and that also is used. Putting up of dams has the secondary effect of giving a trickle of water to the river almost all the year round. In the villages the higher castes used not to allow the untouchables to fill water at the same well as other castes. Though this is against the law, this practice still continues in a few places even now. It was revealed in a recent survey that most people, barring the poorest untouchables, use metal pots made of brass or copper to carry water home. The most frequent sight of the Maharashtra rural area is of women carrying two or three water pots on their heads. In north India the village well is surrounded by the broken potsherds perhaps of centuries. That is never the case in Maharashtra, where water is not carried in earthen pots. In this trait Maharashtra shows its affinity to the south. Archaeological excavations show however that in pre-historic and, early historic times Maharashtra also used earthen pottery¹.

The organisation of space considered upto now had primarily an environmental-geographical-geological background with a given altitude and a given rainfall. The geological formation decided the nature of the rocks. We saw, how each of these factors provided a particular scenery and a particular use of the land. Especially notable were the facts that mining, which has started in recent times, could be done only where the trap ends i.e., the coastal strip in the west and the Vardha-Vainganga basin in the north-east. The Buddhist and other cave temples and the hill forts were situated on the slopes and the tops of the mountain chain. The hilly region at the foot of the mountains lent itself to dam building which in its turn provided electricity to the growing industry in Bombay, Poona, etc., and gave water through irrigation to the thirsty but rich land of the so called famine belt.

¹ Dr. H. D. Sankalia in a personal communication further confirms this by pointing out that as against Gujarat and Rajputana, Maharashtra shows fewer clay artifacts and figurines.

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The divisions of and use of land which we are now going to consider are due to the administrative needs of the revenue department. After mentioning these we shall make an attempt to find out how much land is used for cultivation and how much is used by towns and cities in order to find out how the face of the land is changing and whether there is any beginning of an industrial phase. Some of the divisions of land for revenue collection and police administration are based on natural demarcation but generally the predominant consideration is that of the size of population and the area occupied by it.

The smallest such unit is the village with (in older times) its hereditary Patil and Kulkarni. The Kulkarni was the accountant who kept land records and records of dues from the farmers. The office of Patil was twofold. The *mulki* Patil was a revenue official while the police Patil was a police official who had to take cognizance of all crime and report it to the Taluka headquarters. The village was a civil and revenue unit during certainly the Muslim period and very probably centuries before that. It used to have a council called *gram-panchayat* which diminished steadily in importance during the British Period. It was revived again after independence in a slightly modified form. To-day a *panchayat* is constituted for two or three villages together and people take great interest in its elections. It has become to-day the smallest field to establish leadership in and get the first lessons in politics and administration.

A number of villages are subsumed under a unit called a Taluka the headquarters for which are in a town called Taluka town. The presiding revenue officer as also the judicial officer is Mamlatdar. There is a revenue office, a court and a lock-up or a small prison in this town. The District is now divided into blocks and a new officer for agricultural and community development is added to the old quota. This is the Block Development Officer (B. D. O. for short). A number of Talukas make a Zilla or a district. The revenue and judicial officer is the Collector. There is also an independent court called the district court, to try the non-revenue cases.

A Zilla has bigger offices and bigger courts, a prison and a police officer called the District Superintendent of Police. Many Zillas together made an Ilakha or a province or a presidency whose presiding officer used to be the Governor or Lieutenant Governor. At present it is the State with its Governor, legislative assembly, Chief and other ministers.

The words Taluka, Zilla and Ilakha are Persian and they were never applied uniformly to similar divisions. In Berar and Marathwada a Taluk used to be a division equivalent to the Zilla in the Bombay Presidency and the presiding officer used to be called Talukdar. The unit smaller than Taluk in such cases used to be Tahsil and the officer used to be called the Tahsildar. In the same way the word Ilakha was used for the whole of the Bombay Presidency but

sometimes an Indian Raja would give the name to a tiny part of his tiny territory (e.g., Ilakha Kundal of the old Aundh State in Maharashtra).

Many Ilakhas or provinces together formed the Indian empire of the British. The Ilakha or province sometimes represented a linguistically homogenous area like the old U. P. (United Provinces of Oudh and Agra). There were however many provinces like the old Bombay presidency which were put together from the western Indian conquests of the British, and comprised portions of four linguistic regions. The northern most was Sind, comprising mostly of the middle and the lower Indus valley where Sindhi was the language spoken. To the south of Sind was Gujarat and Kathiawar, comprising the valleys of Mahi and Sabarmati and the lower basin of the Narmada. The language spoken in this area was Gujarati. South of Gujarat was a portion made up of a long strip of the coast, and a long strip of the uplands adjoining the coast, called Konkan and Desh respectively. The Desh portion was made up of the upper reaches of the rivers Godavari, Bhima and Krishna. The language spoken in this area was Marathi. South of this was a small portion, again made up of the coast and the upland portion, adjoining it. The languages spoken in this area were Marathi and Kannada and Konkani. Parts of this portion were called in British times the Southern Maratha country, and parts were called north Karnatak. The part in which Marathi was spoken forms today the western part of the State of Maharashtra. The part called Sind is today south-western Pakistan. Gujarat and Kathiawar (now called Saurashtra) together form the new State of Gujarat. Parts of the southern portion called Southern Maratha country have become part of Maharashtra. The eastern portion of this region has become northern Mysore. At present, a dispute is going on between Mysore and Maharashtra about the part which was called by the British the Southern Maratha country. In the same way, the north-eastern part history. Till 1853 the part called Berar comprising the Purna of Maharashtra called Berar and Nagpur, had a very checkered valley was in the possession of the ruler of the native state of Hyderabad. The part called Nagpur, the valley of Vardha and Vainganga, was the south-eastern portion of a province called the Central Provinces. In 1853, Berar was ceded by the Nizam of Hyderabad to the British Government in perpetuity. Subsequently it became, together with Nagpur, the southern portion of Central Provinces and Berar. It remained so until 1957, when Berar and Nagpur were joined to the new bilingual state called Bombay. The south-eastern portion comprising the middle Godavari basin called Marathwada was also part of the territory of Hyderabad. It was included in the bilingual State of Bombay and in 1960 became part of the new state called Maharashtra. Evidence shows that the Marathi speaking area was a linguistic and cultural unity, but was never a political entity before 1960. In this new state, there are 26 districts or Zillas and about 10 to 11 times as many Talukas or Blocks. In the hierarchy of cities and villages, Bombay, the capital

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city stands first in industry, extent and population. Next to it is the city of Nagpur, which was formerly the capital of the province of C. P. and Berar. Other cities like Poona and Sholapur come next. Next to these cities come the headquarters of the Zilla. The headquarters of the Talukas are bigger or smaller townships, and below them as we have seen are the villages.

This type of land division for revenue or judicial purposes is found throughout the Maratha period, and during the period from 1300 to 1600 when Maharashtra was ruled by Muslim Sultans. It predates the coming of the Muslims as inscriptions and literature shows. Most parts were known as Kingdoms ruled by different dynasties; some parts were known by other names which appear like divisions within a Kingdom. Vidarbha written in singular and plural applied to land possibly comprising the Purna valley, and the upper Vardha and Vainganga valley. It was long governed by the dynasty of Bhima or Bhishmaka and later by some dynasty which was defeated and whose princes came to Magadha for shelter. Then it was governed for a long time by Vakatakas who split into two branches. Then parts of it passed into the hands of Yadavas during the 12th century and parts of it seem to have been under Gond Rajas. In the 18th century the Nagpur basin went into Maratha hands and Vidarbha or Berar became part of the Nizam's possession.

Inscriptions show that some parts were known by the same names as they are today since the 8th Century. We have the words *Punaka-Vishaya* (*Punaka* territory). It comprised apparently parts of modern Poona district. In the same way the name *Mammala-Vishaya* (*Mammala* territory) is given to parts which are called Mawal today. What the exact extent of these divisions was is being studied by historians¹. As already indicated these divisions had their officers also. Some modern family names are obviously of such officers. They were known in the British, Maratha and Muslim periods. Such names are *Deshpande*, *Deshmukh*, *Patil*, *Kulkarni*, *Prabhu*, *Desai* etc. Besides revenue offices, some of these had the duty to provide fighting men (foot soldiers) and cavalry to the king. *Samant* or *Sawant*, a family name, may also indicate a subordinate chieftain. *Dalavi* may mean the head of an army in possession of some land. All these posts were hereditary. The land which almost everyone of these officers held, and the other rights which went with the office were indicated by the name of *vatan* and the system of this type of governing is, as we have seen, called *vatan-dari* system. In this context it would be worthwhile to find out whether the families who held or possessed land were made into *vatan-dar* servants or whether

¹ (A) Dr. M. G. Panse : Article in "*Maharashtra Jeevan*", Vol. I, Part : "*Aitihasik Parampara—Maharashtra : Maharashtra Pradeshvisti*" Publisher : Joshi, Lokhande, 1960.

(B) "*Yadavakalin Maharashtra*". Publisher : Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya, 1963, Chapter II. "*Rajaymsha Ani Rajyavyavastha*", pp. 50-53.

(C) Dr. V. V. Mirashi : "*Samshodhana Muktaavali*", Sar 3, Vidarbha Samshodhan Mandal Publication, "*Prachin Vidarbha*", p. 62.

some one man was given a post and held land as payment for the post which became a hereditary post (there are records for both types of occurrences). *Vatan* is a persian word. It is possible that the Muslim rulers took over an already existing system of hereditary land ownership and fitted it into their conceptions of Government¹. Whatever the origin of the system may be, we find it well-established in the Deccan in the 16th century. This system had repercussions not only on the structure of the various land divisions but also on the caste-system and the political system. The petty Rajas, Deshmukhs etc., had sway over large territories in which they owned some part of the land and had hereditary rights over the other parts. The Patil was the largest landowner in the village and had certain other rights in the village. Generally the Patil and Deshmukh's *vatan*s were in the hands of families belonging to the Maratha caste. Heads of many clans of the first social rank enjoyed the hereditary title Raja. The *Vatan* of the Patil was thought to be even more important than being a Raja or a chief. Shivaji, even when he was a king of the Maratha country, was very careful in keeping the title to his *Vatan* in Poona district². Much later after the Shinde family became Rajas of Gwalior, the founder Mahadji kept his title of *Patil* or *Patil-buwa*. The title Patil established the nobility and the land base of a family. The social history of the Marathas is intimately connected with the rivalries and alliances of the various clans of Patil claiming equality or superiority of rank.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to summarize the agricultural situation in Maharashtra. Since 1961 steady progress has been made and the government and people are looking forward to an era of self sufficiency of food.

There are some difficulties in presenting data inasmuch as categories and figures used in the 1961 census for Maharashtra and those used in the Handbook of Basic Statistics of Maharashtra are slightly different. In the census figures the whole Maharashtra area is divided into urban and rural areas. In the table on p. 20 of the Handbook of Basic Statistics of Maharashtra on the other hand there is an item called "Land put to Non-agricultural Uses", which I think would be an equivalent to the "urban" area above. Not only do the items differ in name but also in figures. Even the total

¹ I. Karve, "*Kinship Organization in India* :". 3rd Ed. Bombay 1968, Asia Publishing House.

² Rajwade, *Khand* 8. Article 21.

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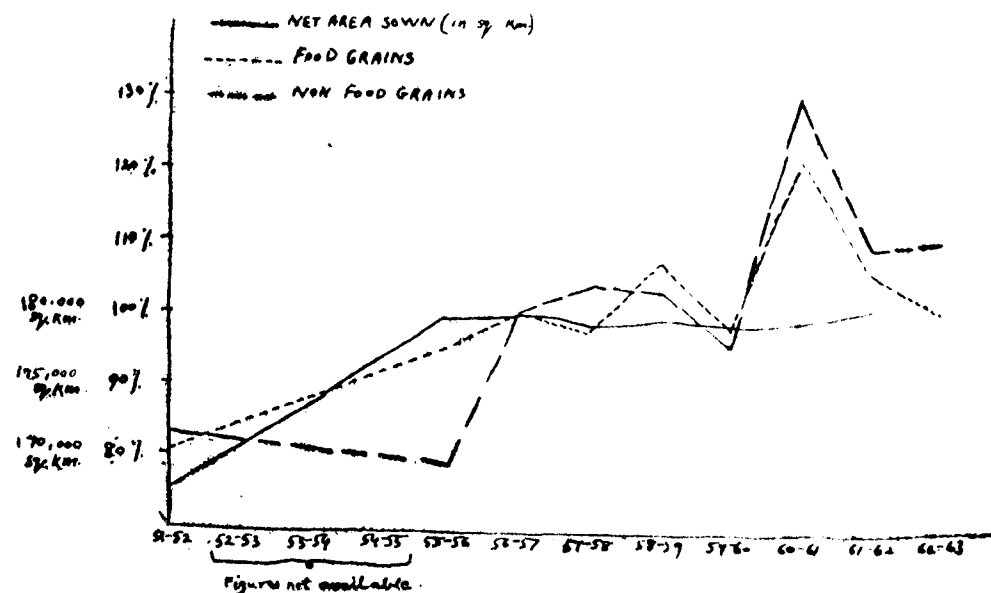
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geographical area differs in the two sources. The differences are slight and as the table in the Maharashtra Handbook is more detailed, I have used that.

For 1961-62 we have the following table. For our purposes, some items have been combined.

	In. Sq. Kilometres	
Total geographical area	.. 3,07,600	100 per cent.
Gross cropped area	.. 1,90,940	62 per cent.
Forests	.. 54,180	17.6 per cent.
Fallows and Culturable waste	.. 32,010	10.4 per cent.
Barren lands	.. 17,880	5.8 per cent.
Pastures	.. 14,210	4.6 per cent.
Non-agricultural land	.. 7,040	2.3 per cent.
Orchards, etc.	.. 1,750	0.6 per cent.
Total	.. 103.3 per cent.*	

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Some of these items we would like to compare with former figures. Figures from 1951-52 to 1961-62 are given in the Maharashtra Handbook (p. 106). As it is an interesting table, it is given below in percentages for easy comparison.

*The percentages here add up to more than 100 per cent because of the discrepancy in the figures for land utilisation given in the Maharashtra Handbook, where the area of land under different uses adds up to more than the total geographical area.

TABLE No. 2.

	Total geographical Area	Gross Cropped Area (as percentage of total)
1951-52	.. 3,07,480 sq. km.	52.88
1955-56	.. 3,07,980 sq. km.	60.57
1956-57	.. 3,09,480 sq. km.	60.65
1957-58	.. 3,09,520 sq. km.	60.08
1958-59	.. 3,09,520 sq. km.	60.63
1959-60	.. 3,07,420 sq. km.	61.11
1960-61	.. 3,07,580 sq. km.	61.19
1961-62	.. 3,07,600 sq. km.	62.07

As against 1951, the net area sown has increased. But the increase in the net area or in produce does not show a continuous increase during these ten years. Curiously enough the total geographical area has also increased slightly. This however may be due either to differences in measurements or due to changes in boundaries after the formation of the State. Agricultural produce has also increased as against 1951, but the increase in foodgrains and non-foodgrains as also the area sown do not show a steady increase from year to year as will be seen from the graph.

We have unfortunately no comparable figures for our base line 1901. In those days the present territory in Maharashtra State was divided between Central Provinces, Bombay (including Sind), and Nizam's Dominions. Within this area again there was a division between the British-held parts and the widely scattered bits ruled by the native chiefs.

Another measure to gauge the volume and rate of change would be to consider the growth of urban population.

First, as regards land occupied by cities, as noted above, the 1961 census has given the following figures for the areas occupied by some bigger cities and the population density per square mile of these cities.

TABLE No. 3.

AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY-1961.

	Area (Sq. miles.)	Density of population per square mile
Bombay	.. 169.00	24,568
Poona	.. 50.30	11,880
Nagpur	.. 84.00	7,663
Kolhapur	.. 24.81	7,567
Sangli	.. 11.00	6,700
Akola	.. 6.3	3,604
Vardha	.. 3.00	—
Sholapur	.. 8.63	39,177

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TABLE No. 4.

AREA AND POPULATION, 1951 AND 1961.

			Area in Square miles	Population 1951 Census	Population 1961 Census	Population per square mile
Aurangabad	..	..	15.78	57,949	87,579	5,550
(a) Urban area	..	..				
(b) Cantonment area	..	..	3.74	8,687	10,122	2,706
(10) Nanded	..	..	3.73	65,024	81,087	21,739

As regards 1901, the situation was as follows :¹

TABLE No. 5.

AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY—1901.

			Area (Sq. miles.)	Density of population per square mile
Bombay	..	..	22.41	36,224
Poona	..	..	2.5	61,328
Nagpur	..	..	10.00	12,773
Kolhapur*	..	..		
Sangli*	..	..		
Akola	..	..	1674 acres	17 per acre
Sholapur	..	..	2.9	2,596
Wardha*	..	..		

We find here by comparing the two tables that (1) the areas of the towns were very different to start with and the extent was not related to population in any way. This has continued up to 1961. The reason for this cannot be determined. Possibly, geographical and historical factors may have contributed to this. For example, Bombay is an island with a long axis in a north-south direction. In 1901 it comprised a few wards from Fort to the Girgaum area. Since then it has expanded northwards along the coast as also on the eastern side. The former islands have been partly filled up and partly bridged. The Corporation area given above is made up by all the smaller townships northwards of Thana creek and southwards of Bassein creek. It has reached its highest expansion unless, as some future plans indicate, it is going to expand into a twin city around what is today the Bombay harbour. The future expansion would be an active organisation of space to join parts which are separated today by a big body of water. In such a case with the possibility of greater expansion beyond the island, the density per square mile might go down. The most thinly

¹ Information supplied by Gazetteers Department of Government of Maharashtra.

*Not available.

populated of the cities with large areas are Nagpur and Kolhapur. Nagpur has an immense area. It is also a city which in some respects can be compared with cities like Delhi in the sense that it has many empty or thinly populated areas within the city limits. These groups of habitation areas which are today separated by empty spaces may be filled later on but it cannot reach the density of population of other more closely packed areas. The most densely packed city in Maharashtra seems to be Sholapur. It is situated in a vast plain and there doesn't seem to be any reason why it cannot expand. It has the smallest square mile area and the largest density of population, not excepting Bombay. It is mostly a textile manufacturing town. Perhaps the reason for its not expanding may lie in two or three factors like water scarcity, fertile black soil but scanty rainfall. Bombay was the capital city of a big province and always had foreign entrepreneurs. It also had a population which lived away in suburban surroundings. Nagpur was also the capital of a big province with its whole administrative complex. Poona was a part capital and had in addition to the big residences of olden times, new bungalows built by almost all important Deccan Chiefs. Kolhapur was the capital city of a Raja. In contrast to all this, Sholapur had its mills because of its cotton-growing black soil and so it never had a governmental or business complex or a class wanting to live away in suburbs. Here again the organization of space has been dictated partly by geographical and partly by social-historical factors.

If we compare the areas occupied by these cities in 1901 against the areas given in the 1961 Census we find an enormous growth. Added to these, there has been a growth of smaller towns into larger towns. It is a rough guess of the author that while the land under urban area might have accounted for 0.50 per cent. in 1901, it is slightly above 2.25 per cent. in 1961. The urban growth is however not uniform all over Maharashtra as will be clear from what follows.

Organization of space is an aspect of social structure. The quantity and the quality of the organisation are measures of population pressure and social activities. Population with its great social consequences may be taken first. As regards population figures, it does not appear that India had a big population before the British came. There are no statistics or even guesses, but literary references and memory of older generations tell of forested tracts through which people had to travel when going from one town to another which leads to an inference that the pressure on land was not too great. There were constant battles between neighbouring kingdoms, like all other similar regions of the world. Literary references, folk songs and again the memories of older generations refer to famines and epidemics which wiped away whole families or whole villages. The birth rate was high. So was infant mortality. The average life expectancy in India was, in 1901, 23. Formerly in Maharashtra, people lived in constant fear of robbery, dacoity, and organized criminal groups like Pendharis. All these things combined to keep land utilization at a not very high level. Phenomenal things

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happened after the establishment of the British regime. The sub-continent was given a century of complete internal peace, a thing without parallel in the history of the world. Side by side with ancient roads, new and quicker forms of communication like railways were developed to bring distant parts of the whole continent together.

A central government could plan famine relief by giving work to people as also by procuring food from areas where food was available. These areas extended beyond the natural limits of India to Burma and Ceylon. These procurement areas also led to a certain neglect of agriculture at home. Modern knowledge especially of control of epidemics reduced deaths due to cholera, plague and other epidemics. Most of India has a climate in which people can live with very little clothing and also with little shelter. The combination of all these features resulted in a phenomenal growth of population and since 1931, there is an acceleration in the rate of growth. In Maharashtra, the population has doubled from 19,391,643 in 1901 to 39,553,718 in 1961. To feed this population, it would be necessary to bring about (a) a doubling of the land cultivated or (b) an increase in the cultivated area *plus* an intensification in cultivation. One would also expect that the number of habitation areas as represented by villages, towns and cities would increase or, while the number remains nearly the same, each area would become bigger. That is to say, in the organization of space, the proportion of area sown, habitation areas, areas lying fallow or under jungle, would change and each area might show a different quantitative and qualitative organization.

The number of towns in Maharashtra was 219 in 1901, 383 in 1951 and 266 in 1961. There appears to be a decrease since 1951. This is due mostly to two facts: (1) the 1961 Census has adopted a different criterion for the definition of a township and has declassified 128 towns (pp. 35-37). A careful reading shows that of these towns only two have decreased slightly in population, that is to say that those townships have not vanished but are flourishing. Towns for the present author mean a population aggregate and it does not matter if it has no municipality. For census purposes only the existence of a municipality makes a town, even when the population is small (p. 35). (2) A number of small townships have been merged into the municipal limits of the bigger cities.

If we add up 266 towns *plus* 128 declassified towns *plus* 12 merged in greater cities, we have 406 towns which is 23 more than in 1951, and which shows that from 1901 to 1961 there has been a steady increase in the number of townships. The only new name among the towns seems to be Gandhinagar in Kolhapur district. The census report further points out that while the increase in population in towns as compared to 1901 is 21 per cent., the increase in the total urban population is 247 per cent. This means that the increase is mostly due to the phenomenal increase of the bigger cities. This answers one part of the question we had posed above.

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No entirely new towns or cities have arisen in Maharashtra barring perhaps a few like Gandhinagar here and there. Entirely new names like, for example, Shivajinagar appear but they are new in name only. The area was already in occupation and had an old name. In the same way there has been an increase in the number of villages in Maharashtra and this increase is mostly due to forest settlements. Perhaps these new settlements have new names but apparently no entirely new village seems to have been founded during the twentieth century. Entirely new areas coming under occupation would be then only these jungle areas. This also answers the second question, namely, each habitation area has increased while retaining the same name. This has been achieved either by incorporating nearby villages or by crowding in order to accommodate the increasing density of population. The growth of the bigger cities shows that western Maharashtra districts containing the cities of Bombay, Poona, and Sholapur show a phenomenal growth of cities. The 23 newly enumerated towns are almost all situated in western Maharashtra. Maharashtra as a whole has the highest percentage of urban population in India viz. 28.22.

TABLE No. 6.

URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF MAHARASHTRA
(IN PERCENTAGES).

		Urban	Rural
Western	23.5	76.5	
Maharashtra, 1901*			
Western	38.4	61.6	
Maharashtra 1961**			
Eastern	18	82	
Maharashtra 1961†			
All Maharashtra 1961	28.22	71.78	
All India 1961 ..	18.97	82.03	

The above table enables us to arrive at the following conclusions :—

(1) Western Maharashtra in 1901 was more urbanised than all India in 1961. (2) Western Maharashtra in 1961 represents with 38.4 per cent. urban population perhaps the most urbanised area in India. This area is made up of thirteen districts including Bombay. (3) The rest of Maharashtra has 18 per cent. urban population which comes very near to the average for India.

* Based on Census of India, 1901, Vol. IX-B, Part III, Table III. Urban population includes residents of all settlements of 5,000 persons and over. See Table II.

** Based on Census of India, 1961, Volume X, Part II-A, p. 46.

† Comparative figures for 1901 cannot be given as this region was included in different provinces and native states.

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TABLE No. 7.

URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF WESTERN MAHARASHTRA
IN 1901 AND 1961.

			Urban	Rural	Total
1901	Bombay	..	776,006	....	776,006
	Thana	..	105,451	705,982	811,433
	Kolaba	..	52,114	533,452	605,566
	Ratnagiri	..	93,319	1,074,608	1,167,927
	Central Division*	..	1,159,698	4,784,749	5,944,447
			2,186,588	7,118,791	9,305,379
1961	Bombay Division†	..	6,337,700 46.6%	7,324,621 53.4%	13,662,321 100%
	Poona Division	..	2,891,565	7,468,717	10,360,282
	Total	..	9,229,265 38.4%	14,793,338 61.6%	24,022,603 100%

This phenomenal urbanisation is due primarily to two or three factors, some technological, some social-historical. Bombay, as has been pointed out, was a creation of the British and became the capital city of a British Indian province of that name. This city attracted to it people who distinguished themselves in trade and commerce and manufacture. They were the Parsis, Gujarati trading communities including Bohras and Khojas, as also Marwaris and lastly the Sindhis, none of whom are native to Maharashtra. Besides these communities there were also people from Maharashtra who were attracted to Bombay. These were first the agricultural and lower castes from Konkan who became the backbone of the Bombay labour force. There were Brahmin castes like Saraswat, Chitpavan, and Karhada, and Goa Christians, who were there together with Prabhus, Daivadnya Sonar and Tvashta Kasar who became the middle class engaged primarily in lower administrative jobs and who became later on also small entrepreneurs. Bombay always had, from the very first Jewish and English businessmen and factory owners. It was thus from the very first a cosmopolitan society not rooted in a historical or a cultural past. This had its social consequences which helped the growth of Bombay as a political and commercial capital. We have already said how it has become

*Central Division of Bombay, 1901, included the districts of Ahmednagar, Khandesh, Nasik, Poona, Satara and Sholapur.

† In 1961, Bombay Division included Greater Bombay, Thana, Kolaba, Ratnagiri, Nasik, Dhulia and Jalgaon districts while Poona Division included Ahmednagar, Poona, Satara, Sangli, Sholapur and Kolhapur districts.

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a cultural centre with a Maharashtrian culture which is broader based than it was ever before.

Bombay was connected from the very first by rail and road with Poona on the one hand and Nasik on the other. To start with, this traffic connection was primarily a part of the strategic railways connecting capital cities to capital cities and capital cities to cantonments. The railway to Poona was primarily to Kirkee and Poona cantonments, and the railway to Nasik was really for Deolali cantonment. These railways, though primarily of military and political importance, soon became a necessary factor in the urbanisation of western Maharashtra. The growth of new enterprise along these railway lines is an overflow of the industrial activity of Bombay rather than an independent growth in Poona and Nasik districts. The third factor which helped the industrial growth is generation of hydro-electric power through building of dams along the eastern side of the Sahyadri range. Some of the dams were built for irrigation purposes also. The former made power available to the Bombay industry, the latter created a new industrial belt from Ahmednagar district to Kolhapur, called popularly the sugar belt. All these three factors were absent from the rest of Maharashtra where the population is largely rural¹.

We can say that more land has been used for buildings (habitations and factories, workshops, etc), than in 1901, and, owing to irrigation the land under cultivation has increased. But the cultivation also is primarily for industrial exploitation. But at least upto 1961 industry has not encroached or diminished land available for agriculture. The statistics for agriculture shows more land being cultivated. If some land was lost by the expansion of industrial towns or building dams, new land which must have been lying fallow was gained through irrigation.

The use of land for cultivation has not diminished as regards gross acreage. The land under cities has increased but the bigger cities and the industrial belt are restricted to small areas which do not deserve the name of an industrial belt, but the picture as presented by the landscape has certainly changed in those restricted areas. Factory chimneys and workshop chimneys give out so much smoke that the atmosphere in cities like Poona, Sholapur and Nagpur is considerably polluted. Some steps are being taken to keep the air above Bombay clean but nobody has paid any attention to the other cities. Bombay is spectacular in its situation, in its hills and sea-frontage and in its indescribably horrible water logged slums. These slums have risen in all cities. The municipal corporations cannot effectively clear the slums for lack of money and proper planning and secondarily because slums have become a political necessity in the present day politics, where every candidate vies for the votes of the slum dwellers.

¹ The skew urbanisation is brought out very well in the Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, Vol-II, No. 30 July 29-1967, pp. 1322-23.

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LIKE OTHER SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THE FAMILY organisation in Maharashtra is made up of both northern and southern features. This is reflected very well in the customs of marriage and inheritance, in the kinship terminology used and also in the wide variety of practices in sub-regions and castes.

In Maharashtra people of the Brahmin caste have *gotra*, some Brahmin castes also have a family name called *adnav* or *kulnav*. The *gotra* system is the chief system as regards exogamy. *Gotra* is supposed to be a word which is either the name of a legendary (historical) Brahmin seer or a word which means the "descendants of such a Brahmin". People having the same *gotra* may have different family names. A few decades ago each Brahmin knew his *gotra* which had to be uttered each day at the time of the *sandhya* ritual. During the British times the *gotras* and the family names coming under each *gotra* came to be written down in the Hindu almanacs called *panchanga*. In these are given the *gotras* etc., of most Brahmin castes. In each area the almanacs give these lists for the Brahmin groups in those areas¹. A number of family names are indicative of the town to which a family belongs, or to the profession or trade followed by the family. Pune-kar, Nevas-kar are names from townships Poona, Nevasa etc., Joshi are astrologers, Deshpande, Kulkarni etc., were revenue officers. People with the same family names can have different *gotra* and people with the same *gotra* can have different family names. In Maharashtra another caste which has *gotras* is Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu. It is possible that in the case of the Kayasthas the assumption of *gotras* was at a late historical date,² in its attempt to assume Kshatriyahood.

¹ For example in western Maharashtra we have a *gotra-avali* (an enumeration of *Gotra*) for Deshastha Rigvedi, Chitpavan, Karhada Brahmins etc.

² The Kayastha caste is known by this name since almost the 5th century of the Christian era. It is shown in the drama *Mudra Rakshasa* that the occupation of this caste even then was that of a writer. This was always a literate caste. Many of the inscriptions were written by people of this caste. The mediaeval kings of Bengal (Sen and Pal) were of this caste. In the Moghal times these people were employed in the revenue and accounts departments — that was their chief work all over India. They are also known as Karana. In Maharashtra they were accountants, revenue officers and stewards. Their family names Gadakari (belonging to a fort), Chitnis (accountant, of a particular rank), Deshpande (those who keep revenue accounts for a whole division) etc., come from the ranks they held. The word "Prabhu" which is found in their caste name in Maharashtra indicates that as revenue officers they had certain rights and some kind of mastery over some region. The word occurs among other castes as part of caste or family names and has the same meaning. Prabhune among Deshastha Brahmins, Prabhu-desai or Prabhu among Saraswat Brahmins, and Prabhu among Pathares

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The *gotras* however do not seem to be as important among them as among Brahmins.

Among the Marathas, the farming and the ruling caste of the Maharashtra plateau, there are *adnav* or *kulnav* together with a symbol called *devak*. The *devak* is a material object: a tree, a bird, a flower, an artefact. Those who have the same *devak* cannot marry. A list of such *devaks* and the family names associated with them is given by older Anthropologists (Enthoven: *Castes and Tribes*) and also in an account of the Marathas written in Marathi. Among other castes too like the Tirole Kunbi, Dhangar, Sutar, Mahar, Mang, there is the system of *devak* and the rule that those belonging to the same *devak* may not marry. People of Maharashtra are divided into groups called castes which are endogamous. There are over a dozen endogamous groups among castes like Brahmins, peasants, shepherds, potters etc. On the other hand some other castes like Lohars (ironsmiths), Sutars (carpenters), Mahars etc., may have fewer endogamous groups among them. (In older literature all the groups bearing the same general name were called castes while the endogamous groups of that name were called sub-castes. I have already indicated why this nomenclature has been given up.) In this respect Maharashtra follows the pattern found all over India, in all linguistic regions.

Each endogamous caste is divided into exogamous sub-groups which is also the case all over India but the principles of exogamy differ. The Brahmin *gotra* system seems to be common in the north as well as in Maharashtra but barring *gotra* the other taboos on marriage found in the north based on blood relationship, etc., seem to be absent in the Dravidian south and also in Maharashtra. Local exogamy which was prevalent in the north also seems to be absent both in the south and in Maharashtra. The exogamic unit instead has become the *devak*-group. Also there is no taboo on cross-cousin marriage as in the north but cross-cousin marriages do not seem to have the prevalence which they have in the south. There is no village exogamy except in certain cases where only people of one family-name live in one village. In these cases there is naturally a village exogamy but this is due to the *devak* and the family exogamy rather than to locality being a consideration for exogamy.

The caste endogamy is broken sometimes, especially in urban areas. Studies made within the last ten years show this more frequently, but there have been marriages across the caste even during the last hundred years. All the examples were very well known because the people involved in it were educated people and

(a caste in Bombay). Kayastha is one of the most progressive and socially and politically important caste in the whole of North India, U. P., Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. It has tried to gain recognition for itself as a Kshatriya caste even before the British times and in these attempts has found much opposition from the Brahmins. In Maharashtra as elsewhere it is an urban, highly educated caste. Chandrasena was some mythical king whose name seems to be brought in to strengthen the claim to Kshatriyahood.

social reformers and the very fact of their intermarriage made them a subject of public controversies. One can say that such marriages are not given great public importance now-a-days.

There are however other types of marriages which break a generally accepted endogamy which can still become in an orthodox city like Poona, though not in Bombay, a cause for public demonstrations. Such are marriages across the religious barriers. The marriages of sub-sects among Hindus or of Hindus with Jains and Sikhs do not agitate public opinion. Marriages among Hindus on one hand and Muslims or Christians on the other seem to rouse peoples' resentment and can be made into a political issue. The study referred to shows that such marriages occur generally among the most poor, illiterate classes or among the very educated well-to-do classes.

The *gotra* exogamy has been broken by many families. One such marriage had been challenged in a court of law, because a large *jagirdar* estate was involved in it. Now of course with the coming in of the new Hindu code such marriages are perfectly legal. Examples of the *devak* exogamy being broken have not come to the notice of the author but one expects that with the passing of the Hindu code such rules as *gotra* and *devak* will fall into disuse.

Cross-cousin marriage is allowed in the majority of castes. But both as regards this custom and other customs like the *gotra* exogamy and the village exogamy there are in Maharashtra certain castes whose rules of marriage seem to follow northern practices. Such practices are not followed consistently, nor in the entirety. Some castes follow one practice and some another. One wonders if all such and other practices (dress, food, vocabulary, etc.) would allow one to make an accurate guess as regards the immigration in historical times or recently of a caste or castes either from the north or from the south. An illustration would suffice. The Rigvedi Deshastha Brahmins allow cross-cousin marriages as also maternal uncle-niece marriages. The Saraswat Brahmins too allow such marriages. The Karhada Brahmins allow only one way cross-cousin marriage—a man marrying his mother's brother's daughter. The Chitpavan taboo all cousin-marriages. The Madhyandin Brahmins taboo all cross-cousin marriages and marriage with anybody from the mother's *gotra* (a northern custom). Among some northern Maharashtra peasant communities, e.g. Gujar, cousin-marriage is not allowed. As regards village exogamy it appeared to the writer some years ago that among a caste (a type of Kumbhar) there was something like such an exogamy. The people who were investigated had family names based on certain villages and people who had the same name did not marry. This fact could not be further elucidated because those with different names living in the same locality could marry¹.

¹ Such cases and those of the exogamy based on worship of certain gods (Devara Vokkal) described by Mrs. Bhavani Banerjee in:—"Marriage and kinship of the Gangadikara Vokkaligas of Mysore" Deccan College Dissertation Series: 27. Poona, 1966—need to be gone into as they may cast a light on habitation patterns, totem and marriage taboos.

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One type of cross-cousin marriage i.e., a man marrying his mother's brother's daughter is allowed in Maharashtra. Castes which tabooed it also often broke the taboo. Such marriages were found northwards upto and including Rajasthan. It appears as if it is a variety of hypergamous marriages where the groom's family is supposed to be superior to the bride's. (This again is a northern sentiment.)

The Hindu Code which frowns on all consanguine marriages will help to lessen this type of marriage especially as it will remove the social obligation felt in contracting such marriages.

The law of inheritance which prevailed in Maharashtra was governed by *Mitakshara*, a mediaeval commentary on *Yajnyavalkya Smriti*. The property was held and transmitted by males to males. When no male heir existed adoption was the usual rule and a daughter's son could be adopted. The property was owned jointly by all the male members according to certain rules (sons inheriting *per-capita* equal shares and son's sons and further descendants inheriting as a branch i.e., *per stirpes*. Certain minimal rights of maintenance of widows¹ and unmarried daughters were recognised². In spirit it is as patriarchal as the northern *Dayabhaga* system except that while the northern system made a man absolute owner of inherited property, the *Mitakshara* system made him a co-owner with his own descendants.

In the new Hindu Code the joint family is sought to be done away with except in respect of agricultural land (for which no explicit provision is made).

A man can will his self-earned property as he chooses but he cannot do so in the case of his ancestral inherited property. It gets divided according to the shares of the descendants. The new Hindu Code provides that the daughters and the widows have a share in it. The widow had the right to 'enjoy' but not to dispose of i.e., sell the property. Now all who inherit property do so absolutely. It is this right which is going to help the abolition of the joint family. It has been seen that the daughters are not very vigilant about their rights but their husbands file suits in the law courts to secure their property.

This is the legal aspect. The actual sentiment everywhere is very much male-oriented. The ideas handed down for thousands of years still have their hold on people's minds. Perpetuating the "name" i.e., the family-name is still a strong motive. And as the family-name is transmitted by males alone, a male child is much desired. This explains the many adoptions which take place among all classes of

¹ An Act to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows Act No. XV of 1856. Srimati Kamalabai Deshpande *Strivachya Kavadyachi Vachal*, 1829 to 1929). Parishishtha : pp. 293. Published by Manohar Granthamala Prakashan, June 1960, No. 106.

² I. Karve, *Kinship Organization in India*, Chapter VIII, Ownership of Property, Succession & Inheritance. Published by Asia Publishing House, p. 342.

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society. Besides perpetuation of the name there is the wish to get the 'Shraddha', food offered by the male child, so as to secure 'good' life after death. The third motive for wanting a male child and an extremely strong one is economic support and security of shelter in old age. There is no female infanticide but the neglect of the female child is prevalent. The father of girls considers himself unhappy and he is supported in this belief by all his relatives who lay the blame on the mother. In most cases the mother agrees with this evaluation of the situation. This sentiment is found everywhere in India barring a few matrilineal and primitive communities.

Certain customs show that Maharashtra has much in common with the southern social organisation. In the north the gift givers are always the bride's people¹ while the gift receivers are the groom's people—the groom's-(husband's) mother, sister and groom's father's sister. In Maharashtra among many Brahmins this is the pattern but among many non-Brahmins the bride's people received the dowry and the gifts are more reciprocal than in the north.

There are many customs which show Maharashtra to be nearer to the south than to the north. While some customs are found among all castes, others seem to be more prevalent among non-Brahmins. The most prevalent custom is that of sending a girl to her mother's (father's) house for the birth of a child. Among all castes the girl is sent to her mother's house for the birth of her first child, among many castes for the births of three or four successive children as well. A girl is sent in the 7th month of pregnancy and comes back to her husband's house when the child is a month old, sometimes when the child is three months old. This custom is found in the south but not in the Gangetic Plain nor in the classical Sanskrit literature of the north. The other custom is found among most castes but more often among the peasantry. After a girl's marriage, she goes on long visits to her parent's house. These visits continue even after years of marriage and motherhood. This becomes sometimes very irksome and expensive as the husband or husband's people have to make repeated requests to the wife or wife's people to get her back. They send people with gifts to fetch her back. Each

¹ Classical allusions are the gifts brought at the marriage of the Pandavas to Draupadi by the Yadavas and the gifts at the marriage of Abhimanyu *Mahabharata*: 1. 194, 13, 14 and 4.167.25. Another famous example is the Gujarati Poem "*Kumvarhainu Mameru*" by Permanand—see "M. M. Jhaveri "*Milestones in Gujarati Literature*" pp. 65-77. The Gujarat Printing Press, Bombay, 1914.

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time a wife is brought back the husband is put to a lot of expense. Among Brahmins and one or two other castes the groom receives dowry from the bride's people at the time of the wedding. Among most others it is the bride's people who get the bride price. Thus the husband is anxious to bring his wife back to live with him because if she refuses to stay with him, he loses the wife and generally the bride price too¹.

Because of this custom a girl is not a burden to her parents but a source of wealth as she brings in a bride price. Still ritual practice has such hold on people's minds that even among non-Brahmins who take bride price, lack of a son is deplored.

The kinship terms used in Maharashtra illustrate the mingling of the northern and the southern cultures in this region. There are terms which have certain special features found in neither of the two cultures. When kinship terms are systematically arranged they suggest certain behaviours. This behaviour is suggested by the meaning of the term or by the relationship of the terms or by both. Thus kinship terms are a kind of a shorthand or code to a series of social behaviours in the familial context. In Marathi kinship terms the code does not fit the behaviour as well as either in the northern regions or in the southern regions. Between the terms and behaviour they indicate there is not always an accord.

Before discussing this it is necessary to point out another source of apparent confusion. In this situation the users of a term and the people for whom it is intended find no confusion, but to the stranger the use is certainly bewildering. This use occurs in almost all families due to certain familial circumstances and is generally confined to direct address and not to terms of reference which are never used so as to create confusion. They are precise. An example will make it clear. In a joint family the younger brother addressed his elder brother as *Bhau* (brother). The elder brother got married and had children before the younger brother was married. The elder brother's children started calling their father *Bhau*. The younger brother who was called by name till then also came to be addressed as *Kaka* (Uncle) by them. Later on when the younger brother got married and had children they too called him *Kaka*. The wife of the elder married brother was called *Vahini* ('elder brother's wife') by the younger brother. Her own children and her husband's brother's children then also called her *Vahini*. In each family the terms of

1. Besides literature, cases are known to the author from different castes (1) Of two brothers one had six daughters and the other seven sons. Both were washermen. The girls' father is now rich. The boys' father impoverished through paying bride prices for seven sons. (2) A man, the driver of a horse carriage and Maratha by caste, was complaining bitterly about the money he had to spend each time to bring his wife back from her parents. He said "Among you Brahmins it is good". You can refuse to send the wife to their parents. (3) An educated man of the Maratha caste pleaded with his wife to stay with him, she would not. He finally got married again, this time to an educated girl and refused to have anything to do with the first wife, even when she wished later to come back.

A story published recently vividly depicts this position. Anand Yadav—"Sun", Satyakatha Magazine, July 1966. Mauj Prakashan Griha, Bombay-4.

address are different depending on the family situation. Another peculiarity of Maharashtra is the prevalence of nicknames. These nicknames seem to be taken from all over India, most of them had a kinship connotation originally. It is now lost as far as the particular nickname is concerned, but some of the terms used as nicknames are also used in the proper kinship context. The presence of these nicknames was well established about two to three hundred years ago. They are found commonly during Shivaji's times too and isolated examples in older literature suggest that they were used much earlier but perhaps were not very common. In present day Maharashtra they are very common in public and private life. *Dada*, *Nana*, *Anna*, *Tatya* are nicknames used for elder brothers. They might also be used for father (note the familial situation cited above) or other relatives belonging to an older generation. *Bapu*, *Babu*, may be used for younger brothers.

However, this is not a fixed rule; sometimes they are used irrespective of age among siblings. *Bal* is another such name; *Baba*, *Daji* are still others¹. *Anna* is borrowed from Tamil and means in southern languages today, "the elder brother," in olden days it meant "an elderly male relative". *Dada* in the north is a term applied to father's father. In Marathi it means somebody powerful (the strong man of the street is the *Dada*). *Dadla*, *Dalla* is used for 'husband' by many castes. '*Dadulepana*' is 'the quality of being powerful' and is used in that sense in old Marathi literature.

Nana in the north means a mother's father, a meaning not known in Maharashtra. It might also be a borrowal from Andhra of the word *Naina* (our father). *Bapu* in Gujarati means father. In old Marathi it was the same word, meaning the same thing, but today the word used for father is *Bap*, while *Bapu* is a mere nickname. *Babu* is a respectful prefix or suffix for names in the north e.g., Babu Maithili Sharan, Ravindra Babu. In Maharashtra it is a nickname. *Bal* means a baby. It and its feminine form *Bali* and *Balu* are used as nicknames, for men and women. *Daji* means husband's younger brother—the same as *Bhauji* but it is also used as a nickname. For women the nicknames are *Akka* (eldest sister from Tamil, *Akka*), *Tai* (feminine of *Tay* from Sanskrit *Tata*?) In north India *Tai* is the wife of father's elder brother used for elder sister, or sister in general. *Mai* (from Sanskrit *matr*—mother) for younger sister, as

¹ Some well-known examples of the public use of nicknames for prominent persons are:—

Dadasaheb Peshwa (the killer of Narayan Rao).

Dadasaheb Khaparde—(A leader from Amraoti, a contemporary of Tilak).

Baburao Jagtap—(An educationist of Poona).

Tatya Tope—of 1858 rebellion fame.

Nanasaheb Peshwa.

Babaji—(Tukaram's spiritual teacher).

Bubasaheb Ambedkar.

Annasaheb Karve.

Bapu Gokhale—(a general in Peshwa times).

Balasaheb Kher—(a former chief minister of Bombay).

Balasaheb Desai—(at present a minister in the Maharashtra Government).

Daji Khare—(a social reformer).

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also for step-mother. *Babi* (feminine of *baba*?) for any girl in the family or outside.

Very often a further suffix '*sahab*' is applied to these names to denote a well known person.

Sometimes people are known by these names only, while their own names (called "cradle-names" in Marathi) are forgotten. There is a peculiar flavour to these names. We have said above that many of them had a kinship connotation. In some cases actual kinship terms like *Kaka* (father's brother), *Mama* (mother's brother), are used as nicknames. With the suffix '*sahab*' applied to all the names the familiarity is lost but nevertheless a vague kinship feeling is indicated. Most of these nicknames are indicative of the patri-family—either the siblings or the parents. There are a few names like *mamasahab* which indicate the mother's family, strangers or people not belonging to one's village are so addressed. There is a term *vahini sahab* which is a term of address used by servants or sometimes by acquaintances to the woman of the house. *Vahini* is the eldest daughter-in-law of the house. The term in Maharashtra indicates both respect and distance and is not used too often as a nickname. (See further about the term *vahini*). One wonders at this extensive use of nicknames. One possible reason for this is that because there are definite taboos on uttering the real names of certain relatives there appears to have been a general reluctance to use any one's given name.

It was a practice among Brahmins not to utter the name of the eldest son and his wife. The eldest son was always known by a nickname. [The author knows a case in which a new proper name (*Vithu*) was used, while the boy's real name was *Vishnu*]. The eldest daughter-in-law was called *Sunbai* (daughter-in-law) or addressed by the name she had been given in the parental home and not by the one given to her after her marriage. Sometimes she was called *Vahini*. All over Maharashtra the husband's name was taboo to the wife and is still so among the majority. This custom is at least as old as the 13th century¹. In the same way a husband does not call the wife by name, nor utter her name. A woman was not supposed to utter the name of any of her husband's relatives. A man did not call by name his wife's relatives who were older than him. It would appear that there was a taboo on names among kinship groups to such an extent that nicknames became quite general. The author remembers a time when all her own brothers, except the youngest, and all the sons of her father's brother and cousins except again the youngest, and her father, father's brothers and cousins were all called by such nicknames.

¹ In oldest literature husband and wife uttered each other's names (*Mahabharata*, *Ramayan*). In the classical Sanskrit dramas e.g., those of Kalidasa, the wife addressed the husband indirectly without uttering his name (*Arya-putra*—the son of the father-in-law). *Dnyaneshwari* written in A.D. 1290 mentions how a wife reveals her husband's name by not uttering it. *Dnyaneshwari*, 15, 468.

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The variety of such names is smaller for women. Some are feminine forms of male names. There is no *Dadi*. *Nani* which was quite usual, is not a feminine of *Nana* but seems to be a form of *Lahani* (little girl) which is also used as a girl's name (The male form of this is *Nanu* or *Lahanu*).

There is no confusion as regards these names. They have lost kinship connotation and if they are used in a kinship situation, the proper suffix (*Nanu-Bhaoji*, i.e., *Nanu*, the husband's brother, etc.,) is used to avoid confusion.

In those terms which are based on Sanskrit a clear distinction is made as in the north between the kin by marriage and the kin by birth, especially by patrilineage. The common words for kin by marriage are *Soyara* (Sanskrit *svasuraka*) or *Pahuna* (*praghurnaka*), a guest. Individuals are referred to as *soyara* or *pahuna*, families are referred to as *soyare* or *pahune*. The people of one's own patrilineage are *bhauband* (brotherhood). *Soyarik* means the condition of being affinally related. *Bhaubandi*, *bhaubandki* or *bhacki* means the condition of being related as brothers. The words also have the added meaning (like the Sanskrit classical use of *Bhratrya*—brotherhood-enmity) of animity or general rivalry among paternal kin.

The confusion as regards the code occurs when other terms are used as illustrated below.

Like other Indian languages Marathi has no terms equivalent to 'cousin' to apply to children of parent's siblings or for distant relatives. Parents' siblings' children are all equated to own siblings with a descriptive term attached to show what kind of sibling is meant. *Bhau* is brother, *bahin* is sister, *chulat bhau-bahin*, are brother and sister who are the children of one's father's brother. *Ate bhau-bahin* are siblings who are the children of one's father's sister. *Maus bhau-bahin* are siblings who are one's mother's sister's children and *mame bhau-bahin* are siblings who are one's mother's brother's children. But out of these relatives called *bhau* and *bahin* a man may marry one type of *bahin* and a woman may marry one type of *bhau*. It is usual in Maharashtra, barring a few castes, for a man to marry his mother's brother's daughter. In very few castes a man may marry also a father's sister's daughter, but such a marriage is looked down upon. The author has met a couple of people who used the word *mehuni* (wife's sister or wife's brother's wife) for a cross-cousin but otherwise the word *bhau* or *bahin* is used commonly by castes which allow cross-cousin marriages as also by castes which do not allow cross-cousin marriages. It is not a difference of linguistic expressions between Brahmin and non-Brahmin castes. There are among Brahmins castes which allow and prefer cross-cousin marriage, others who taboo it. Among non-Brahmins also there are a few castes which taboo cross-cousin marriage. A similar confusion of meaning is found in the terms *mama*, *mami*, *mavlan*. *Mama* is one's mother's brother, also one's father-in-law. *Mami* is the *mama*'s wife as also the mother-in-law. Both the words *mama* and *mami*, do not appear in the early Sanskrit literature. For the father's sister two words are used: *atya* is from

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the Dravidian word *atte*. *Mavlan* is from Sanskrit *matulani*, feminine form of the word *matula* which means one's mother's brother¹. In Marathi the word *macla* is used not for one's mother's brother but for the *atte*'s husband. Sometimes the *atte*'s husband is called *mama*, so we have an equation: *mama*=*mavla*=mother's brother=father's sister's husband=father-in-law; and *mami*=*mavlan*=mother's brother's wife=father's sister=mother-in-law. These equations hold good in kinship situations in the south. One does not know whether *mama* is the father-in-law or a blood relative or both. The equations hold good only in rare cases in Maharashtra and the usage *ate-mame-bhau-bahin* runs contrary to these equations, because *bhau-bahin* are sibling terms which must not be applied to relatives whom one may marry.

Some north Maharashtra castes allow levirate while almost all allow sororate. The distinction between the husband's elder brother and younger brother and their wives is not rigorous while that between the wife's elder and younger sister is. Part of the kinship terminology and behaviour is northern, part of the terminology and behaviour is southern, neither the southernness nor the northernness is divisible neatly by castes.

Another feature of the Marathi kinship terminology is that there are more kinship terms than one generally finds in any other northern or southern language. It has almost the whole of the northern set. It has adopted a few Sanskritic terms to new kinship meanings² and it has borrowed freely from the south³ [a list of Marathi kinship terms is appended at the end of this chapter].

Besides the features of family and kinship described above the actual constitution of the family in Maharashtra shares many features with the whole of India and is also subject to the same forces of change as are found all over India.

The most general rule for marriage in India is that the bride and groom should be of the same caste. In fact endogamy is the chief characteristic of a caste. Caste has come under bitter criticism for a century by social reformers but still holds its own and has found new fields for self-perpetuation like politics. However, it is receding very gradually to make room for social classes based on standards of spending and earning. This is the case in urban areas where neighbourhoods mixed in caste are springing up and where girls and boys of different castes attend the same schools and colleges. The extent of intercaste marriages, as also certain facts like age at marriage and civil condition were revealed by a study made of Poona city and taluka towns of marriages which were registered in the year 1955-56⁴. Among the total number of 5,181 Hindu

¹ The root meaning appears to be "mother's family," any relation from mother's family.

² These are found in Ardhmagadhi literature.

³ See the author's *Kinship Organization in India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 3rd Ed. 1968, for further treatment of this subject.

⁴ Dr. P. R. Mokashi, *Some social aspects of marriages in Poona district 1955-56*. Published by Deccan College, Poona, 1968.

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marriages only 186 i.e., 3.6 per cent were intercaste marriages. In the rural area (Taluka towns) the percentage came to only 0.5 per cent. There were only 45 inter-religious marriages in a total of 6,120 marriages; the percentage is 0.7. The rural area in this investigation were all Taluka towns, so that we can safely presume that in the villages almost no intercaste or inter-religious marriages took place. Civil condition and age at the time of marriage revealed characteristics which probably hold good for other urban and rural areas throughout India and are not peculiar to western Maharashtra. Still they are recorded here as they reveal the differences between urban and rural groups, between different religious groups and between India and Europe. In a total of 6,250 urban marriages and 1,180 rural marriages 91.2 per cent and 91.1 per cent marriages were between grooms and brides who were both marrying for the first time. In 5.6 per cent cases in the urban area and 7.0 per cent cases in the rural area the groom was marrying for the 2nd time while the bride was marrying for the first time. In the city 2.4 per cent marriages were between grooms and brides both marrying for a second time and in 0.8 per cent cases bachelors married brides who were marrying for second time. In the rural area 1.5 per cent marriages were between grooms and brides both once married while only 0.3 per cent marriages were among bachelors and once-married women. Most (above 92 per cent) marriages were among people who had not been married before. Of the remaining mostly once married grooms marry virgin brides, while less than 2.5 per cent once married women i.e., widows or divorcees marry again. The prejudice of the Hindu society against widow remarriage is well brought out in these figures especially if we compare these figures with those for Muslims. Among the Muslims 79.7 per cent urban marriages recorded were between unmarried partners. 11.7 per cent of marriages were of widows and divorced women. Of these, 2.3 per cent. were between bachelor grooms and widows or divorcees. In this respect again the urban Muslim group shows greater difference from the Hindu model than does the rural Muslim group. The tolerance of the Muslims to widow remarriage may be due to levirate (a man marrying his brother's widow) or to the fact that the prophet himself had enjoined that widows be given protection. The prevalence or non-prevalence of divorce and the remarriage of divorced men and women and of widowed men and women introduce certain new factors in the family as a social institution. Where the number of such marriages is small the situation and the stresses created by it are described since ancient times in all world-literature and have given us kinship terms like step-mother, step-father, step-children, step-sister and step-brother

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(In Marathi the word *Savatra* is prefixed to primary kinship terms) Dr. Mokashi* has given the following figures for some other countries.

1st Marriages	England	France	Canada	Ceylon	Poona district and Poona City
(Percentage)					
Grooms	.. 85.1	85.7	91.8	91.3	91.9
Brides	.. 86.6	86.7	91.4	86.0	97.0

This table shows that in England and France the number of first marriages is smaller than for Canada and for the two Asiatic samples. The number of first marriages for women and men is about the same (only 1.5 per cent more for women), i.e., there is very little social prejudice against the marriages of divorcees and widows. In Canada which is a colonial country with rapidly expanding economy, there are pressures for marriages and so we find the number of first marriages comparable to Asia. Again apparently widows etc., have a better chance of marriage in Canada than in all the other countries given in the table. The Ceylon and Poona figures show up the prejudice against a woman's second marriage.

The number of twice married grooms and brides is larger for the U. S. A. Many of these marriages must start with a family in which the children from a previous marriage of either or both partners already are in existence. Socially and psychologically a family of this type is different from the family in which all the children are produced by one couple and as a rule after the establishment of a household.

The age of marriage is also a factor connected with the above facts. In the case of 75 per cent of all marriages the bride's age was less than 19 years in the urban area and less than 18 years in the rural area.

The civil condition works out as follows for urban area.:

TABLE No. 1.

	Age of bride	Virgin bachelor	Virgin non- bachelor	Non Virgin bachelor	Non virgin non- bachelor	Total
All Hindus of Western Maharashtra from the sample.	Below 19, 75 per cent of total.	2361 94.9	121 4.9	1 0.04	5 0.2	2488 (100)
	above 19, 25 per cent of total.	685 82.7	75 9.1	14 1.7	54 6.5	828 (100)
Muslims	Below 21, 75 per cent.	441 89.1	40 8.1	6 1.2	8 1.6	495 (100)
	above 21, 25 per cent.	84 51.2	14 8.5	9 5.5	57 34.8	164 (100)

*Loc. cit., p. 35.

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This table shows that (a) among Hindus there is still a prejudice against widow remarriage, (b) as the girl's age increases the chances of her getting a bachelor groom decrease, (c) the Muslims show a different picture but there too there are more instances of marriages between once married brides and once married grooms in the older ages as one would expect. One wonders whether there are more families among Muslims made up of step-parents and step-siblings, and if so, what are the stresses, strains and regulations operating in such families. Since the passing of the Hindu Code the number of divorces has been increasing especially among castes like Brahmins which did not formerly allow divorce. This practice is also bound to change the family though it has not yet become an important factor.

A more fundamental change is likely to result in the family due to the new laws of inheritance by which the widow and the daughters have rights in the property. The right of the widow was recognised by a Bill in the year 1937. The Hindu Code was only recently enacted; the few cases which have come up before the courts are those of married daughters whose husbands take the lead in fighting for the rights of their wives.

As regards the size and type of family the 1961 Census does not give us any definite information. The Census has enumerated 'households' and the composition of households. It defines household as a "group of persons who commonly live together and would take their meals from a common kitchen unless exigencies of work prevented any of them from doing so" [Census of India, Vol. I, India, part 11-A (i) page 21]. By definition this excludes enumeration of children or spouses who may be staying away for education or work. The size of such a household and its composition may give a rough idea of the family size and composition but it fails to give an accurate picture of what the family is like in India today. The table given below gives the average household size for urban and rural areas of different districts and percentage of households having one member only. The average size of a household works out at 5.08-5-14 for rural and 4.97 for urban areas.

The percentage of single member households works out at 7.18 total, 6.66 rural and 9.97 urban. The rural household is larger than the urban and there are more single family households in the urban area as compared to the rural area. This holds good for the family also as will be seen in the tables below (which are based on the data collected by the author and her co-workers), but the average family size is greater in all our samples than the average household size. There is no contradiction in these findings if we bear in mind that 'household' and 'family' are two distinct entities. The difference is seen in the table below which is made up from three studies in western Maharashtra carried out under the auspices of the Deccan College, Poona.

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TABLE No. 2.

Name of the area	No. of families	Average persons	Percentage of one member families
Koyna valley ¹ (Satara District) ..	602	5.99	4.1
Phaltan town ² villages around it (Satara District), ..	1,416	6.37	2.89
Kalyan and Thana ³ ..	227	5.7	2.6
Villages in the Thana District ³ ..	717	5.5	2.6

TABLE No. 3.
SIZE OF THE HOUSEHOLD FROM DISTRICT CENSUS.

District	Average size of the household.	Rural	Urban	Single member
Ratnagiri ..	4.93	4.92	5.07	9.51
Buldhana ..	4.86	4.85	4.92	7.89
Kolhapur ..	5.4	5.4	5.2	6.78
Bhandara ..	4.9	4.9	4.5	6.21
Dhulia ..	Not given	5.7	5.4	4.66
Satara ..	Not given	5.1	4.8	9.51
Chanda ..	4.8	4.8	4.5	6.31
Akola ..	4.7	4.6	4.9	8.74
Nanded ..	5.14	5.13	5.17	5.80
Thana ..	Not given	5.3	4.9	6.40
Nasik ..	5.5	5.6	5.2	6.36
Kolaba ..	4.95	4.94	4.97	7.64
Ahmednagar ..	5.4	5.4	5.0	7.59
Poona ..	5.3	5.6	4.9	8.43
Parbhani ..	Not given	4.90	5.16	6.31
Aurangabad ..	Not given			66.6

¹ I. Karve and J. Nimbkar : "A survey of the People Displaced through the Koyna Project", Deccan College, Poona (Unpublished Report).

² I. Karve and J. S. Ranadive : "The Social Dynamics of a growing town and its surrounding Area", Deccan College Building Centenary and Silver Jubilee Series : 29, 1960.

³ J. S. Ranadive : "Family in Urban and Rural Area" (Unpublished) Ph.D. Thesis, Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, 1961, Poona.

It will be seen that the average number of people in the family both for urban and rural samples works out to be larger than average number of people per household as given in the Census. On the other hand the number of one-member families is smaller than that given in the Census. The one-member households listed in the above table are really one-member families. Elsewhere it was seen that a family was divided in two, sometimes even in three places. Generally one or two members worked in Bombay, while wife and/or children and/or parents lived somewhere else and cultivated ancestral land. In a few cases a man possessing land in two places was himself in Bombay, while family members were divided between the two places where land was cultivated. Upto 5 per cent. of families consist of one-member families of unmarried parentless bachelors, childless, widows or widowers. We have no family with an unmarried woman as an only member though the author has seen rare examples occurring in the cities in recent times.

As regards types of families, again Maharashtra does not present a picture different from other parts of India. There are non-joint families and joint families. Big joint families with one's father's brothers and their children also living with oneself are rare but families where one or both parents, self, with or without partner and married and unmarried sons and unmarried daughters living together are quite frequent.

A joint family in which married and unmarried brothers live together is collaterally joint and is a transitory form before a lineally (father-son-sons) joint family is finally broken into its constituent non-joint families. In an article written in 1963,¹ the author had reached a conclusion that if one studied the lives of individuals, one would see that the same individual in his lifetime passed from joint to non-joint and again to joint family and that in many cases jointness and non-jointness represented different phases in time of one and the same family. Tables are given below on the same material as treated in the table given above.

TABLE No. 4.

JOINT AND NON-JOINT FAMILIES IN CITIES, TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS.

	Joint families	Non-joint families	Blank	Total
(1) Phaltan town ..	414	438	2	854
(2) Villages near Phaltan ..	303	257	2	562
(3) Villages in Koyna valley ..	335	267	..	602
(4) Thana and Kalyan cities ..	86	133	6*	225
(5) Villages in Thana district ..	343	360	18*	721
Total ..	1,481	1,155	4	2,964

*These were one member families.

¹ I. Karve, *Individual Case Study and The Statistical Method*, Economic Weekly, April 27, 1963.

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TABLE No. 5.

TYPES OF FAMILIES BY AGES OF THE HEADS OF FAMILIES.

Age-group of head of family	Non-joint		Joint		Total
	Nos.	Percentage	Nos.	Percentage	
1	2	3	4	5	6
16—25	47	29.56	112	70.44	159
26—35	245	48.61	259	51.39	504
36—45	298	59.24	205	40.76	503
46—55	212	50.96	204	49.04	416
55—above	106	30.37	243	69.63	349

The tables show that there are about the same number of non-joint-families in the town as there are in the surrounding villages. Phaltan is a small township where the major business of the population is agriculture and where money-crops like sugarcane and cotton are grown. The largest single group is over 45 per cent families which belong to non-joint families. The next are joint with 41 per cent. The Koyna data show comparative figures though being predominantly a rural people the joint families outnumber non-joint. The Konkan data, where Thana and Kalyan are in the vicinity of Bombay and have taken on the size and type of fast growing industrial cities, the percentage of non-joint families is greater.

In the 1963 study quoted above it was said that the cases in which heads of families are younger the joint family may predominate. The non-joint family may be found headed by men between 35–50. A joint family may again predominate in the older age-groups. This seems to be the situation if the above tables are considered.

We see thus that the family in Maharashtra shares certain features with the northern family, certain others with the southern family and is undergoing certain changes in response to the needs of the present day but these transformations are slow. The pressure on land and the opportunities of employment outside the native village or town have both grown. We find members of a family leaving the ancestral home to go to the cities but the ties with the family members at home and rights in land are not relinquished with the result that we find families who share landed property and earnings of members who may live two hundred miles apart. This type of joint family was in existence formerly among trading communities but is now also not uncommon among other castes and occupational groups. Quite a large proportion of the urban population is still based on its old village or rather, it is reluctant to let go its tenuous tie with the village. The family, the house, the bit of land represent for

an urban labourer security for old age and sickness; on the other hand an urban labourer in a family provides cash, an opportunity for educating the children in a city or town and also an opportunity for seeking work at any future time for another family member. Family is still a unit comprising a group which represents co-operative work, mutual gain and mutual security. Prolonged stay over generations in a city, assurance of continued work for generations and some new principles of social security like pension may change this picture in the future.

APPENDIX.

MARATHI KINSHIP TERMS.

The kinship terminology is arranged as follows. First, general terms indicative of the family as a whole and its different groups of relations are given. Then follows a list of individual terms of reference and address which is arranged into blood relations and relations by marriage by generations.

(A) General.

Family : *Ghar*, *Gharane*, *Kutumba*, *Kula*, *Vamsha*. All these are derived from Sanskrit and have slightly different meanings.

Ghar—(Sans. *Griha*)—a house, used for the family in certain expression e.g. *Amche Ghar basale*—our family came into dire want.

Gharane—derived from above used for a family with its extension in time and into several branches generally patrilineally. The word is also used for a definite line of teachers and pupils especially for vocal music with peculiarities of that particular “house of music”.

Kutumba—(Sans. *Kutumba*, does not appear to be originally Sanskrit). Most often used for a family joint or non-joint living under one roof but is also used for a whole patrilineage, e.g. *Karve Kutumba* may mean a big extended family called Karve or it may mean one small unit living together.

Kula or *Kuli*—(Sans. *Kula*) is used for one paternal branch. The words *donhi kuli* (both lineages) are often used to refer to (a) paternal and maternal lineage or (b) husband's lineage and father's lineage. The word *Kuli* is used among many castes to indicate a patrilineal mostly totemic exogamic division of a caste. *Kulachar* (Sans. *Kula achara*) are special religious performances of a patrilineage.

Vamsha—(Sans. *Vamsha*). A patrilineage loosely. The word is not as frequently used as the others though it is not rare.

Relations by blood : *Bhau-band* or *Bhavaki* (Sanskrit : *Bhratru*—brother). These are only male relations belonging to one's patrilineage.

Relations by marriage : *Soyare* (singular *Soyara*), *Pavane* (singular *Pavana*) : Sans. *Svashuraka* belonging to father-in-law's house and *Praghurnaka* a late word meaning ‘guest’). These

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words are also used for male persons and families related by marriage.

Woman or women born in a house, 'daughters' of the house :

Maherwashin (singular) *Maherwashini* (plural). San. *Matru*-mother, *grisha*-house, living in mother's house.

Women or women married into the house, "brides" of the family : *Sasurwashin* (Sans. from *Svashur*-father-in-law) living at the house of father-in-law.

A generation—*Pidhi*.

Upper generation—*Varachi pidhi*.

Lower generation—*Khalchi pidhi*.

Step-father—*Savatra Bapa*.

Step-mother—*Savatra Ai* or *Mawashi*.

Any relation by blood or by marriage, if it is a relation of such a type can be expressed by the term *Savatra* prefixed to it, e.g., *Savatra Suna*—step-daughter-in-law, *Savatra mama*—mother's step-brother etc.

A particular distant relation by marriage is expressed accurately by suffixing the terms for marital relations to terms for blood relations e.g., *Mame-Sasu*=husband's mother's brother's wife. *Ate-Jau*=husband's father's sister's son's wife etc.

(B) Blood relations.

Above father's generation—

	Terms of reference	Terms of address
1. Father's father	.. Aba, Thorla Bap	.. Ajoba.
2. Father's father's father	.. Panja	.. }
3. Mother's father	.. Aja	.. }
4. Mother's father's father	.. Panja	.. }
5. Father of 2 and 4	.. Nipanja, Khaperpanja	
6. Wife of 2	.. Aji, Thorli Ai	.. Aji
7. Wife of mother's father	.. Aji	.. Aji.
8. Wife of 2 and 4	.. Panji	..
9. Wife of 5	.. Nipanji, Khaperpanji	

Father's generation

10. Father	.. Bapa, Bapu (Archaic)	Baba
11. Mother	.. Ai	.. Ai
12. Father's brother	.. Chulta, Kaka	.. Kaka
Elder	Thorla chulta-ba	.. Kaka
Younger	.. Dhakta chulta-ba	.. Kaka
13. Mother's brother	.. Mama	.. Mama-Mavla
14. Father's sister	.. Atya-Mavlan	.. Atya-Atyabai
15. Mother's sister	.. Mawashi, Mauasi	.. Mawashi

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Ego's generation

16. Brother	.. Bhau	.. Bhau
Elder	.. Thorla Bhau	.. Dada etc.
Younger	.. Dhakta Bhau	.. Bapu etc.
17. Sister	.. Bahina	.. ....
Elder	.. Thorli Bahina	.. Akka, Tai
Younger	.. Dhakti Bahina	.. Mai
18. Father's brother's son	.. Chulata Bhau	..
19. Father's brother's daughter	.. Chulata Bahina	.. ....
20. Mother's brother's son	.. Mame Bhau,	.. ....
	Mehuna (rare)	
21. Mother's brother's daughter	.. Mame Bahin,	.. ....
	Mehuni (rare)	
22. Father's sister's son	.. Ate Bhau, Mehuna	.. ....
	(rare)	
23. Father's sister's daughter	.. Ate Bahin, Mehuni	.. ....
	(rare)	
24. Mother's sister's son	.. Mawas Bhau	.. ....
25. Mother's sister's daughter	.. Mawas Bahin	.. ....

Children's generation

26. Son	Leka, Lyoka, Mulga, Puta	
Elder	.. Thorla	.. Name not used in olden days.
Younger	.. Dhakta	.. ....
27. Brother's son (man speaking)	.. Putanya, Lyoka	.. ....
28. Brother's son (woman speaking)	.. Bhacha	.. ....
29. Sister's son (man speaking)	.. Bhacha	.. ....
30. Sister's son (woman speaking)	.. Lyoka, Put, Bhacha (rare)	
31. Brother's daughter (man speaking)	.. Putani, Dhadi	..
32. Brother's daughter (woman speaking)	.. Bhachi	.. ....
33. Sister's daughter (man speaking)	.. Bhachi	.. ....
34. Sister's daughter (woman speaking)	.. Lek	.. ....

Children's children and below

35. Son's son	.. Natu	.. ....
36. Daughter's son	.. Natu	.. ....
37. Son of 35	.. Panatu	..
38. Son of 36	.. Panatu	.. ....
39. Son's daughter	.. Nata	
40. Daughter's daughter	.. Nata	.. ....
41. Daughter of 39	.. Panati	.. ....
42. Daughter of 40	.. Panati	.. ....
43. Son of son's son's son	.. Nipanatu, Khapar-panatu	.. ....
44. Son of daughter's daughter's daughter	.. Nipanatu, Khapar-panatu	
45. Daughter of son's son's son	.. Nipanti, Khapar-panati	
46. Daughter of daughter's daughter's daughter	.. Nipanti, Khapar-panati	

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*Relations by marriage**Above ego's generation*

Father's brother's wife	.. Chulati	.. Kaku, Kaki
Mother's brother's wife	.. Mami, Mavlan, Mami	
Father's sister's husband	.. Mawla (among some castes)	
Mother's sister's husband	.. Mause	
Husband's father	Sasra, Mamanji, Mavla	
Husband's mother	.. Sasu, Mawlan, Mami	....
Wife's father	.. Sasra, Mama	
Wife's mother	.. Sasu, Mami	
Husband's } father's	Aje Sasra	..
Wife's } father		
Husband's } father's	Aje Sasu	..
Wife's } mother		....

Ego's generation

Sister's husband	.. Mehuna	
Brother's wife	Bhavjaya	
Elder brother's wife		Vahini
Younger brother's wife	..	Name plus vahini
Co-wife	Savata, Bahina (Sometimes)	
Husband	Navra, Pati, Ghardhani (Karbhari in some castes)	
Groom	Navra-mulga, vara	
Wife	.. Bayako, Ghardhanin	
Bride	Navari-mulgi, vadhu	
Husband's brother	.. Dir	.. Bhauji, Daji
Elder	.. Bhava (archaic)	Do.
Younger	.. Dir	Do.
Wife's brother	.. Sala, Mehuna	.. Younger by name
Husband's brother's wife	Jau	
Husband's elder brother's wife		Bai
Husband's younger brother's wife	.. Name plus bai or only name	
Wife's brother's wife	Salai, Salkai (literature) Mehuni	
Husband's sister	.. Nananda, Vansa	
Husband's elder sister	.. Do.	Vansa
Husband's younger sister	.. Do.	name plus vansa
Husband's sister's husband	Nandoi (among some castes)	
Wife's sister	Mehuni	....
Wife's sister's husband	Sadu, Sadhu	....

Children's generation

Husband's brother's son	.. Putnya, Lyoka	....
Husband's sister's son	.. Bhacha	....
Wife's brother's son	.. Bayakocha bhacha	....
Wife's sister's son	.. Do. do.	....
Son's wife	.. Suna	Sunabai or name. In olden days name not uttered for oldest son's wife.
Daughter's husband	Javai	....
Son's wife's } father	Soyra, Sam-	
Daughter's husband } father	bandhi, Vyahi	
Son's wife's } mother	Vihina	..
Daughter's husband's } mother	Vihinbai	

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CHAPTER 7—RELIGION AND GODS OF MAHARASHTRA

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IN MAHARASHTRA A MAJORITY OF PEOPLE OF ALL CASTES worship as family deity either one or two of the following Gods :

- (1) The Mother—goddess.
- (2) Shiva
- (3) Khandoba.

The fourth God is Vithoba. He is worshipped and revered by most Marathi people but he is not the family deity of many families. Another very popular God is Maruti. The God is known as “Hanumanta” in Maharashtra, Karnatak and Andhra Pradesh, as “Anjaneya” in Tamilnad and “Mahabir” in the north. He is, however, never a family deity. Other Gods, besides these, are Vishnu, with his incarnations of Ram, Krishna, Narsimha, in rare cases Vamana. A count taken while doing field work in Satara showed that only a minority of people belonging to Brahmin, Maratha, and Mali castes claimed Rama, Krishna, Narsimha as their family deities. Of these again a small number only are worshippers of Narsimha. Narsimha used to be not an uncommon given name in Andhra, Karnatak and Maharashtra¹. Dr. S. V. Ketkar wrote that there was an ancient King of Maharashtra called Narsimha perhaps then as later, parts of Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnatak were under one rule. The name would change to Narsu or Narsia in common parlance. It is possible that Narsimha was a legendary hero in this area. He is also connected in a legend of the Chenchu, a tribe from Andhra.

People worship many gods. Worshippers of Shiva also worship Vishnu. The kind of rivalry bordering on enmity between Shaivites and Vaishnavites which one finds in Karnatak is absent in Maharashtra. There seems to be an effort on the part of the poet saints deliberately to play down the rivalry between Shaivism and Vaishnavism and adopt an attitude of worship to all great Gods. Because of this perhaps in Maharashtra the two most sacred days of fast are *Maha Ekadashi*, a day sacred to Vishnu in the month of Ashadha (June-July) and *Maha Shivratri*, a day sacred

¹ Dr. S. V. Ketkar : *Prachin Maharashtra*, Vol. 1. Chap. 7, pp. 44-53. Maharashtra Jnanakosha Mandal Ltd., Poona, 1935.

CHAPTER 7. to Shiva in the month of Magh (February-March). In this respect Maharashtra is nearer to northern India than to the Dravidian South.

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Though people worship many gods, the occasions and the manner of worship differ from god to god. A god and a goddess (a pair), or sometimes only one god is worshipped as the *Kula Daivata* or the *Kula-Swami*. This deity is supposed to have always been the chief deity of a particular Patri-family. The name of this deity or merely the formula, *Kula Swami prasanna* (by the favour of the Kula-Swami or the Kula Swamini) is printed always at the head of a marriage announcement, or invitation (*Lagna-Patrika*). Sometimes after a marriage or a thread ceremony people go to the shrine of their particular god to worship. This is especially the case with regard to Khandoba. Newly married couples are taken there to perform a Puja called '*Wawar Puja*' (Wawar, Sanskrit—*vadhuvara*—meaning the bride and the groom). Besides the *Kuladaivata* people pay homage to the *Gramadaivat*, i.e., the deity of the village or town. Maruti or Hanumant is such a *grama-daivat*. He is supposed to guard a town. It was also the custom for a groom's party when they came to the bride's village, to halt at the Maruti temple where the bride's party gave them refreshments and led them to the house allotted to them for their stay in the bride's village. There is a ceremony called '*jyeshtha-jawai puja*' (honouring of the eldest son-in-law) at the time of the marriage of a younger daughter. In this ceremony the elder son-in-law is made to sit near the younger son-in-law-to-be in the Maruti temple and both of them are given gifts¹. The Maruti temple is also many times either part of or just near the village *chavdi* (place of business of the Patil). Other village deities may be Bhairoba, Mhasoba, Viroba, Dhuloba, Jakhai, Jokhai, Mariai. These deities generally are not worshipped at home but they are given their dues on the day sacred to them.

The third type of deity worshipped daily is the *Ishta Devata* (desired or chosen God). This may be either one or many Gods of the Hindu Pantheon, like Vishnu or one of his incarnations or Shiva or Datta etc. A man at any time in his life may feel a call to worship a particular deity of a particular place, for fulfilling certain needs, bodily or spiritual. He may choose for himself or be swayed by the advice of friends to approach a certain deity, or he may get sometimes a revelation in a dream or a sudden impulse to go and worship a certain deity. That deity then becomes his *Ishta Devata*.

The pictures or figurines or other things representing the deities which are worshipped at home, may sometimes be as many as fifty. All these Icons are brought out every day from the place where they are kept, bathed, covered with *kumkum*, *halad*, and flowers and the whole process might take as much as an hour. One goes on collecting

¹ The informant, a Maratha, told the author that the gift to the elder son-in-law has always to be slightly more valuable than the gift to the son-in-law-to-be. The reporter said that because in her case the elder son-in-law was not satisfied, there was an year-long feud between the two families.

new Icons and keeping on old ones which were worshipped by one's father or grand-father, etc. The daily worship in the family was more common some fifty years ago than it is now, although even now there are very religious families and people who still spend about an hour in worshipping. A number of older people have disposed of their Icons when they found that the younger generation was not going to worship them.

Below is a table which gives roughly the number of people who have given different deities as their *Kuladaivat*¹. In this context it may be noted that the mother-goddess is represented either as an independent goddess or coupled with Shiva. The name Laxmi or Mahalaxmi is also used for this mother-goddess who is not in this context the wife of Vishnu :—

• TABLE No. 1.

1. Khandoba	..	..	284
2. Jitoba, Jintoba	..	..	159
3. Sidhanath, Bhairoba, Dhavloba etc.	..	..	215
4. Shiva	..	..	61
5. Devi—independent or connected with Shiva	..	..	207
6. Mariai	..	..	14
7. Ganapati	..	..	7
8. Datta	..	..	10
9. Vishnu and his incarnations	..	..	54
10. Maruti	..	..	3
11. Jain Tirthankars	..	..	49
12. Buddha	..	..	81
13. Mohammad	..	..	66
14. Others	..	..	19
15. None	..	..	2
16. Christ	..	..	1
17. More than one	..	..	104
18. Nagoba	..	..	1
19. Blank	..	..	79
Total ..			1,416

¹ This list is compiled from the data gathered at the market town of Phaltan and surrounding villages at the time of a Social Survey referred to in this book under the name of Karve and Ranadive.

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It will be noticed that the highest number of people give Khandoba as their *Kula-daivat*. The next highest are those who give the Mother-goddess. It may be noted that the special deity worshipped by Mahars formerly used to be Mariai or Mari-amma also called Laxmi. The next are those who give some form of Shiva as their deity. It may have the name of Shiva or Linga. All the rest have named *Jyotiba* or *Jitoba* or *Mhaskoba* or *Bhairav* which are all minor deities who are followers of Shiva or created by Shiva. Very few have Vishnu or his incarnations as *Kula-daivat*. All Jains worship the Jain Tirthankars, all Muslims, "Paigambar" and the Neo Buddhists, Buddha. The position of Maruti has already been described above. Ganapati is the *Kula-daivat* of only seven families. But Ganapati receives worship from all at the beginning of certain important life cycle rites. At the time of marriage Ganapati receives the first worship. In Poona, for example, it was the custom to give the first invitation of such a ceremony to the Ganapati in the Kasbapeth who is supposed to be one of the older deities in Poona.

It will be seen from this table that it is the minor deities and the mother-goddess who are the *Kula-daivats* for the overwhelming majority of the families in Maharashtra. The minor deities as well as the original independent mother-goddess have been gradually drawn into the particular pantheon belonging to Shiva. This seems to be due to the effect of the Lingayat cult. Most of these deities require animal sacrifice like fowls or sheep. Hundreds of goats are killed every year at the more famous shrines of these gods. Many of these gods e.g., Mhaskoba and Bahiroba need a pipe (*chilam*) with *Ganja* (*hemp—Canabissativa*) in it as part of the offering.¹ Khandoba, who is the *Kula-daivat* of so many people, has most of his temples² situated in the basins of the rivers Bhima, Neera, Krishna and a few in the Godavari valley. There are two or three of them on the coast and almost none in north Maharashtra. This again shows that southern Maharashtra has much in common with the Dravidian south. The Devi (Mother-goddess) cult, however, is found all over Maharashtra and might represent one of the oldest deities worshipped from the Mediterranean right upto India.

In the table above, 104 people have mentioned that their family worships more than one God. A list of the Gods worshipped by these people does not go beyond Khandoba, Devi, Jyotiba, Nath, Siddha, Dhuloba etc. There is not a single person among them who gives Vishnu or Shiva among the Gods he worships as *Kula-daivat*. Therefore, in the table above, these 104 can be added to those who worship Khandoba, Devi, Jyotiba etc.

Below is a list of *Gram daivatas*. Here again we find that the mother goddess predominates. The name Paduba or Padmavati again shows the influence of the South.

¹ *Shree Nath Mhaskoba Devache Charitra*, pp. 28-29. 1962 3rd edition, Vir, District Poona.

² R. C. Dhere, "Khandoba", Deshmukh and Co., Poona-2, 1961.

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The names of the village deities were as follows:—

Devi or mother Goddess:—

Janai or Jannidevi,—Manai, Gaondevi or Gawdi or Gawdubai, Padmavati or Padubai, Sukai, Baglai, Sadai, Jogeshwari, Devalai, Kalkai, Waghjai, Zolai, Mahakali, Chandika, or Chankai, Kalashri, Navlai, Vaghubai, Vajubai, Vithlai, Mavaladevi, Navasari or Nava Shri, Dhavlai, Bhavani, Bahiri, Mari-ai or Laxmi, Kalubai, Ambubai.

Gods—

Narayan, Maruti, Jyotiba, Ram, Vithoba, Shankar, Laveswar, Utveshwar, Mankal-Makal, Kedar, Vetal, Khelti or Kheti (?).

Some of the Mother-Goddesses have their names from the village of which they are the goddess, e.g., Vazubai is the mother-goddess of the village Vaze. On the other hand a goddess called Manai was carried from one place to another and the new village has since been called Manai Nagar. This peculiarity of a mother goddess belonging to a particular village has been recorded for Karnatak by Mrs. Banerjee¹.

This is also the case with Shiva as the suffix Ishwar tends to be associated with one village or one town.

The city of Aurangabad used to be called Khadki. The only memory of the old name is found today in the temple of Khadkeshwar. Devi and Ishwar are "Brahmanisations" of the old village gods.

A few words about the priesthood of these various temples must be added. In the villages the temple priest may be a Brahmin or a man belonging to another caste depending on the type of temple and the deity. Temples of Vishnu, Rama, Krishna, Ganapati, Maruti, sometimes Devi have generally a Brahmin priest. The temples of Shankar (Mahadev), have generally a Jangam (Lingayat) or Gurav as a priest. Khandoba generally has a Maratha or Dhangar priest. Mari-ai or Laxmi has a Mahar priest. Devi and Maruti also many times have priests belonging to non-Brahmin castes.

At the village level the priest of the main village temple is a *Bakutdar* i.e., a recognised hereditary servant of the village. A number of temples in villages, towns and cities are private temples of a family in which case the family has the right to appoint priests. In the larger shrines of importance like the Bhavani temple of Tuljapur, the Vithoba temple of Pandharpur, the Khandoba temple of Jejuri and many others there are different classes of priests serving a shrine. These are all hereditary priests. Neither has the priesthood of one temple any connection with the priesthood of any other temple. The priesthood and the temple it serves are completely

¹ Dr. Bhavani Banerjee—*Marriage and Kinship of Gangadikara Vokkaliga*, Deccan College, Poona, 1966.

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autonomous. The priests do not take up the profession because they have a 'call' to it. They are in the profession because they are born to it in most cases as the hereditary servants of the particular god of a particular town or village. As such they do not guide the devotees in spiritual matters which task is fulfilled by the holy men and the learned Gurus of a sect.

Though Vishnu or his incarnations are not prominent among *kula-daivats*, the worship of Vishnu in the forms of Vitthal of Pandharpur has played a very important role in the cultural history of Maharashtra. Vithu or Vitthal is a word derived from Sanskrit Vishnu in Kannada language and taken into Marathi. The word occurs in Pushpadanta's *Harivamsha Purana* and means Vishnu in some places and Krishna in others¹. The god Vitthal has been referred to as "Kannada God Vithu", which shows that the Marathi people remembered the God as belonging originally to Karnatak. Vitthal is associated with the Varkari sect of Vaishnavism in Maharashtra. He may be termed an *Ishta Devata*² in this context. (Daivata and Devata are two words used interchangeably in Marathi in this context. The first is neuter, the second is feminine in gender).

There are small Vithoba temples all over Maharashtra, but they all were built after the famous temple of Vitthal or Vithoba at Pandharpur. The inscriptional records of Pandurangapalli i.e. Pandharpur go back nearly to 6th and 12th century respectively and the Varkari cult goes back to 13th century in Marathi literature³. Inscriptions mentioning pilgrimage to Pandharpur on every *Ekadashi* day, date back to the 11th century⁴. There is a ritual by which a person enters the sect. He has to take the vows of the sect and receive the principles of the sect from a well recognised holy man of the sect generally known as Maharaj or *Bunva*. This man is called the *Guru* (Teacher). The *Guru* gives a mantra (a short prayer like "*Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*") to the disciple who has to take a vow to give up certain things like liquor, meat, fish, money (another's) and sexual intercourse with another's wife i.e. things beginning with *M—Madya, Mamsa, Matsya, Mudra* and *Maithun*⁵. He has to wear a necklace made from the wood of the

¹ Ludwig Alsdorf, *Harivamsapurana*, pp. 134-136, Friederichsen, De Gruyter & Co. Hamburg, 1936.

² *Ishta* is also mentioned as *Aradhya Devata* or *Upasya Devata*.

³ Pandurangapalli Inscription : 516 A.D. Pandarage Inscription : 1236 A.D. (G. H. Khare "Sri Vitthal and Pandharpur").

⁴ S. V. Dandekar : In "*Jnanakosha*" Vol. 20, pp. 172, 173. Published by Dr. S. V. Ketkar, Poona, 1926.

⁵ Hebbalil Inscription : 1248 A.D., G. H. Khare : "*Sri Vitthal and Pandharpur*, III edition. P. 40-41.

⁶ M. D. Sathe : "*Tantrashastra Va Shakta Sampradaya Yavishavi Kahi Vihar*" Nav Bharat : September 1966. The five things beginning with *ma* are first mentioned in the 'Shakta' branch of Devi-worship which again is part of an extreme Shaiva-sect. The five things are a must for a true Shakta-devotee. (R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Shaivism and minor religious systems*, p. 147, Strassburg. Karl J. Trubner 1913). He must honour and

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Tulsi plant round his neck, put big marks of a white paste called *Gopi Chandan* (white clay) on certain parts of his face and body, fast on every *Ekadashi*, worship Vithoba, visit the shrine at Pandharpur either once a month or once a year. This monthly or yearly pilgrimage is called *Vari*, hence the word *Varkari* means 'one who goes to Pandharpur again and again.' Marathi literary tradition begins with a commentary on the *Geeta*. This commentary was written by Dnyaneshwar in the 13th century. This book is sacred to the *Varkaris* and Dnyaneshwar is acknowledged as the first great *Varkari* saint. Dnyaneshwar was followed by a whole line of saints who have written magnificent poetry in the praise of the god Vithoba. They belong to all castes as will be seen from the list below :

Dnyaneshwar (Brahmin), Namdev (Shimpi—tailor), Janabai (the maid servant of Namdev), Eknath (Brahmin), Sena (barber), Savata (Mali-gardener), Chokhamela (Mahar—untouchable). The last great saint of the series was Tukaram who was a Kunbi. Dnyaneshwar at the end of his book has made mention of king Ramdev Yadav of Devgiri (modern Daulatabad). This king was defeated by Alaaddin and since that time up to the time of Tukaram, Maharashtra was governed by Muslim kings belonging to the Bahamani dynasty and Adilshahi dynasty. Paithan which was right upto Dnyaneshwar's time the capital city of the Yadavas was in the hands of Muslims. Paithan gradually lost its importance. Shivaji and the *Peshwas* who made Kolhapur, Satara and Poona on the edge of the Western Ghats the capital cities of Maharashtra were yet to rise. It was during this period when Maharashtra had no Hindu kings and no patronage of native kings that these poet saints and the Vitthal shrine at Pandharpur preserved the unity of Maharashtra. There are a number of songs and legends connected with the other gods like Khandoba and Devi but there is not a continuity of tradition and literature in the case of these which one finds among the *Varkaris*. The greatest among them were well respected in their own days and even today that respect has not diminished. According to Vaishnava precepts they ended their own lives. Dnyaneshwar chose to be buried alive at Alandi near Poona. Eknath drowned himself in the Godavari at Paithan and Tukaram did the same in the river Indrayani at Dehu not far from Alandi near Poona. All these are places sacred to the members of the *Varkari* sect and others. At present the shrine at Pandharpur is visited by nearly two hundred thousand pilgrims during the *Ekadashi* festival in June-July. People from all over Maharashtra and from other parts of India go to Pandharpur on pilgrimages all round the year. On the *Maha-ekadashi* day it is customary to carry images or symbols of saints from different places of

partake of intoxicating drink (*madya*), flesh (*mamsa*), fish (*matsya*), sexual intercourse (*maithuna*) and practise the different poses (*mudras*) prescribed in Hatha-yoga. Vaishnavism is in many ways a reformistic religion and looks down on these things and forbids them to a Vaishnava. So they become the forbidden things in the Varkari sect. According to devotees in Pandharpur the words *Mudra* in this context means money (other people's) and *Maithuna*—intercourse with another's wife.

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Maharashtra to the main shrine. These images are carried in a palanquin borne in bullock-carts or on men's shoulders. Each procession walks from its town to Pandharpur for eight to twenty days. The number of such palanquins is nearly 50. No two palanquins go from one town and they come from all corners of Maharashtra. All of them stop overnight just outside the town of Pandharpur in the village Vakhari. The next day they are received in pomp at the city gate by the citizens of Pandharpur. Each is accompanied by devotees and pilgrims from the town where it starts and goes on gathering more and more people on its way to Pandharpur. People join it in groups which are called *dindi*. In each *dindi* there is a man with a string instrument (veena). One man with a drum (mrudung) for keeping rhythm, and about 10 disciples sing. The man with the veena starts to sing the poetry of the Vaishnava saints. The disciples sing after him line by line. There are people who accompany the *dindi* group who may also join in the singing. The programme of the day is such that except for a mid-day pause and the night's rest this type of singing goes on almost continuously while people are walking with palanquins. In this way devotional and highly philosophical thoughts were communicated for centuries to mainly illiterate masses. This walking together, singing together, gathering of all the palanquins outside Pandharpur and then going into Pandharpur created strong group feeling among the Marathi speaking people, for centuries. The spirit of tolerance of the *Varkari* is shown in the fact that many of the pilgrims who accompany the palanquins to Pandharpur visit famous Shiva temples on the way and pay their respects there. And the songs sung on the day when the palanquin is passing the Shiva temple at Shingnapur contain praises of Shiva. This tolerance avoided sectarianism so that we have in Maharashtra a people who largely worship as *Kula-Daivat* gods belonging to the Shiva Pantheon and who have Vitthal as the *Ishta-devata* and the worship of this *Ishta-devata* has played a great role in recent times in fostering the idea of oneness among the Maharashtrian people¹.

A religious sect based on Krishna worship and reverence to a Guru deserves mention here. This sect is called Mahanubhava or Mahatma Panth. It was founded and flourished during the 13th to the 16th century. Some scholars think that it has a philosophy based on Vedic philosophy but others think it is nearer to Jain philosophy. The followers of this sect created magnificent prose and verse in Marathi. This has however remained almost unknown because owing to persecution at the hands of the last Yadava kings and later antagonism with the other Hindus the sect went underground and preserved its literature in a secret code in the monasteries of that sect. This code has been recently deciphered by scholars and this amazingly rich literature is made available to Marathi readers. The sect is still alive in certain parts of eastern Maharashtra.

¹ I. Karve, *On the Road, A Maharashtrian Pilgrimage*, Journal of Asian Studies, XXII, No. 1—November 1962.

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It is important in Maharashtra history inasmuch as for people of this sect Maharashtra was the sacred land and Marathi the language of their sacred books. In a manner different from the *Varkaris* they helped to keep and to enhance the solidarity of Maharashtra through this emphasis on the land and its language. It may be noted that this language is the same as in Dnyaneshwari and shows that a common literary form of Marathi had already evolved in the 13th century¹.

Besides these gods which are worshipped by Marathi people, holy men too have always found a worshipful following in all sects. This devotion is sometimes far greater than that shown to the Icons at home or in the temples. In some ways the worship of holy men has its roots in Indian philosophy which teaches that each man is the *Brahman* (*Aham Brahma Asmi*) and also in the doctrine of *Mukti* (deliverance) where the fourth or the highest kind of *Mukti* is complete union with God. The worship of holy men has, however, a nearer and more immediate source in the *Guru-sampradaya*. In its narrow sense *Guru-sampradaya* is a sect which worships Dattatraya or Datta, one of the latest deities of the Hindu Pantheon. There is also the doctrine that a disciple in any Vaishnav sect or Shaiva sect needs the advice and guidance of a spiritual master (Guru) to lead him to the proper modes of worship, contemplation, and the ultimate release. In Maharashtra in the earliest literature extreme devotion to one's gurus is depicted. This is seen specially in Dnyaneshwari and the literature of the Mahanubhav sect. Apparently from the 13th century onwards there were hosts of holy men or saintly men. They still dominate the spiritual life of Maharashtra. This holiness depends on many things. A man may be a peasant or a man belonging to an humble caste and yet be capable of holding discourses on spiritual life, capable of composing devotional poems or songs, and such a man, if he led a very simple life, almost in disregard of material comforts, could become a holy man if he wanted to. Sant Gadge Maharaj was one such man who, besides worship of Vitthal, also preached reforms of various types and politically indoctrinated

¹ (A) The following are some scholars among others who have studied and edited Mahanubhava literature.

(1) H. N. Nene.

(2) Y. K. Deshpande.

(3) Dr. V. B. Kolte—now Vice-Chancellor, Nagpur University.

(B) The following are some of the more important poems and prose writings of Mahanubhava Saints.

(1) *Shishupal Vadha*—1273 Bhaskarbhatta Borikar.

(2) *Uddhava Gita*—1274 Bhaskarbhatta Borikar.

(3) *Vachhaharan*—1278 Damodar Pandit.

(4) *Rukmini Swayamvar*—1291 Narendra.

(5) *Sahyadri Varnan*—1302 Rago Vyas.

(6) *Rudhipur Varnan*—1363 Narayan Pandit.

(7) *Leela Charitra*—1378 Mhaimbhat.

(8) *Dristanta Path*—1348 Keshirajbas.

(9) *Chakradhara Siddha*—1381 Gopal Pandit and Anerajbas.

(10) *Smriti Sthala*—1312 Nagadevacharya.

This list has been prepared from G. B. Nirantar "*Marathi Vangmayacha Paramarsha*," Venus Book Stall, p. 60, Poona, 1949.

For further information see books by the above scholars.

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illiterate masses. Another holy man who led only a devotional life was Gulab Rao Maharaj from Nagpur and Vidarbha. He was a blind man who had dedicated his life to Vittal. He himself practised what is known as *Madhura Bhakti*¹. He had a great following among the Vaishnavas. These were saints coming from the masses and have also swayed the masses. They were given devotion equal to God himself. Then there are people who are known for their scholarly or deeply emotional exposition of the Vaishnava sect. These are known as the *Pravachankars* and hold discourses either on the Sanskrit *Bhagavadgita*, *Bhagavata Purana*, or on *Dnyaneshwari* which is the Marathi commentary on the *Bhagavadgita* or on *Bhagavat* written by Eknath, or on any of the poems of Tukaram. These *Pravachankars* are educated people mostly Brahmins, though some of the best known were non-Brahmins like Dada Maharaj who was said to be a barber. A higher type of the saintly man is he who has a reputation beyond his province and some times beyond his country and is a man of learning and philosophy. Among them can be named people like Rama Krishna Paramahansa and Vivekanand, Shri Arobindo, Ramana Maharshi and Krishnaji, the guru of the Theosophists. They are also worshipped by their followers as one would worship God. There is no comparable figure in the recent history of Maharashtra.

Besides these people there are holy men who do not belong to any sect, who are not too well educated, who may live the life of an ordinary person or are aberrant types, who do not care what they eat or what they wear. After reading their lives one cannot understand why they have attracted the enormous following which is theirs in Maharashtra. There is again a tradition of holy people who claim that God has revealed himself to them and who, not caring for the world, behave like children, mad men, or the possessed. (*Bala*, *Unmatta*, and *Pishachavat*). It must also be remembered that among all ancient and mediaeval people there was a belief that a mad man was possessed by an evil spirit; but in the case of a holy man he is possessed either by a god or a benevolent spirit. One such man called Gundam Raul has been mentioned in old Mahanubhav texts. In the present day Maharashtra the holy man called Sai Baba had the largest following. He is now dead and his shrine is in the town of Shirdi in the Ahmednagar District. Thousands of people, educated and uneducated, visit this shrine and buy rings, amulets or photographs of the Baba to bring them luck. Another such figure also belongs to the Ahmednagar District. He was called Upasani Baba and attracted a great crowd of disciples². Among the

¹ Madhura Bhakti is the kind of devotion in which a man or a woman are attached to God as a lover. Gulab Rao used to put *mangalsutra* (black beads) around his neck to show that he was a "wife of the god". The great saint Meera is an example of *Madhura Bhakti*. Bengal is supposed to be the home of *Madhura Bhakti*.

² Dr. S. N. Tipnis, 'Contributions of Upasani Baba to Indian culture,' Shri Upasani Kanya Kumari Sthan, Sakuri, 1966.

The book is a thesis for Ph.D. degree accepted by the Poona University.

exploits and miracles attributed to these people are stories of how they abused some-body and how the abuse itself turned into a blessing. This type of contradictory behaviour is part of their holiness. **CHAPTER 7.**
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The gullibility of some people and the cunning of others also help to create holy men of this type. Some time during 1966 a naked man was seen on a street in Poona. He would sometimes sit in the shade of a tree. He sometimes accepted food when offered by some kindly passerby, sometimes he refused. He did not speak. Within a few days he gathered some people around him. Soon he became a holy man. Then later a small hut was built for him on the sidewalk where he used to sit down. In the hut is a bed on which the man sleeps and apparently he is fed. The police or the municipal authorities who remove encroachment in public places have not done so in this case. So apparently some people are made holy men this way. One would have thought that literacy and education would bring about a critical judgement and that the tradition of such holy men would gradually die out, but this has not so far happened. Some of these modern holy men were attacked¹ in a series of articles some years ago. Now and then voices are raised against this type of holy men and their following. There was a very famous holy man in Orissa called Nepali Baba². Besides Sai Baba there are hundreds of such holy men. Some give practical advice, some read holy texts, and some might even be themselves mentally ill. One wonders whether the uncertainties and pressures of a modern society lead to people's seeking security from such men.

The practices described upto now are found among the Hindus. In Maharashtra there are Christians—1.4 per cent, Muslims 7.6 per cent, Jains 1.23 per cent, Jews and Zoroastrians are put with 'others' as 0.24 per cent. and Buddhists 7.05 per cent. (1961 Census).

Jains: The Jains spread in Maharashtra apparently after the 10th century. They have many sacred places all over Maharashtra. Some of the place names, like Vasai and Thuwva are witnesses to Jain habitation³. A large part of the community are traders but all along south Maharashtra one finds Jain peasantry too. The Jains in many respects resemble the Hindus but their religion is governed by stricter tenets so that though there are recognized 'holy men' and 'holy women' their position is far different from that of the 'holy men' of Hindus. The Jain holy men and women are supposed to dress in a particular way and live in strict abstinence. They have to get themselves initiated before taking the vows. They are greatly respected, hold religious and spiritual discourses and have their lives

¹ Mahadev Shastri Divekar, *Hindu Samaj Samartha Kasa Hoil*, pp. 63-65 2nd edition. Hanuman Press and Samartha Chhapkhana, Poona, 1927.

² His fame was as widespread as it was short-lived. Within six months he had received nation-wide publicity and even ministers of states became his devotees. But soon afterwards he dropped out of sight and has not been heard of since.

³ Vasai derived from Vasati near about a Jain Temple or Monastery. Thuwva is from Stubha again originally a Buddhist or a Jain habitation.

CHAPTER 7. Religion and Gods of Maharashtra. regulated by the order to which they belong. At the Jain temples and *ashrams* there are again 'holy men' who spend their entire lives in contemplation and study and who too hold spiritual discourses. These places are visited in large numbers by the Jains.

Zoroastrians: The Zoroastrians who came to India in the 10th century are called the Parsis. They found refuge with a Hindu king of Gujarat. They spread along coastal Gujarat to Bombay and became a commercial community there. They are fire worshippers who have established their sacred fire in places called the Agyaris. At these places their life cycle ceremonies, like the thread ceremony (called *Navjyot*) and marriage take place. They have thus become temples as well as places for social occasions. Their dead are exposed in deep wells to be devoured by vultures. This goes back to a very ancient past, when the Persians and Indians had not separated. This mode of exposure of the dead finds a mention together with burial in *Rigveda*. Apparently, some time after coming to India the ancient Aryans took to cremating their dead. The Parsis however have kept to their ancient custom even today.

Among the Parsis there are not such a multiplicity of "holy men" as among the Hindus. A number of Parsis visit the "holy men" of other religions. Though the most highly educated community in Maharashtra, they are known to be indiscriminately charitable and give money freely to beggars and to religious mendicants like *jogis* and *fakirs* of other religions. Recently a 'holy man' has arisen in this community. He is called Meher-Baba and is said always to keep silent. He has followers among the Parsis, as also among citizens of the United States.

Christians: Though the oldest Christians (the Syrian Christians) claim that they arrived on the Indian West Coast (Kerala) in the early centuries after Christ, no definite proof of the claim has been found. In Maharashtra however, their influence was not felt till the establishment of the British Empire. Almost all varieties of Christianity are found here. The Christians are governed by the Churches of their denomination. Unlike the Hindus all the important life rituals for a Christian, take place at the hands of an ordained priest. There are no familial rituals, though there may be family festivities. The Churches have an entirely different significance in the life of the Christians as compared to the place which temples occupy in the life of the Hindus. The religion being institutionalised, there is no room for freelance, individual holiness as there is in Hinduism. There have been no great religious figures among the Maharashtrian Christians. Among all religions being discussed here this religion alone has Missions which besides religious work have been active in the field of education and medical relief so that a large share of education and help to the sick in Maharashtra has been taken up by the Christian Missions and convents.

Muslims: Muslims were known to south India as overseas traders, mostly Arabs, long before they became known in the north as

CHAPTER 7. Religion and Gods of Maharashtra. conquerors and kings. In this respect the conditions in Maharashtra seem to be like those of North India. Arab traders do not seem to have been trading with the Konkan coast as they did on the Kerala coast which is rather surprising.

Muslim religion thus came in the wake of Muslim conquest and almost all the Muslims in Maharashtra are converted Muslims. In rural Maharashtra Sunnis predominate while in Bombay the non-Sunni Bohras and Khojas (converts from Gujarat) are found.

Mohammedanism is a religion based on a book like Christianity. It also requires that life cycle ceremonies be performed in the mosque by a recognised and 'ordained' priesthood, but there is apparently room for local holy men. Maharashtra has no imposing mosques to compare with those in Delhi or Bijapur but it is strewn with holy places where saintly men lived or died or were buried. Healing and other miracles are reported from such places. These are visited by both Muslims and Hindus. In Maharashtra there does not seem to be at present a tradition of Muslim scholars giving popular lectures on Muslim religion. Muslim scholarship, religious or secular, seems to be confined to the urban elite.

Jews: This has been always a small community confined mostly to the west coast, which has lately penetrated slightly westwards to the cities like Poona. There are Jews on the Malabar coast especially in Cochin. They claim to have come to India before the Christian Era, a claim which has not been historically substantiated. They are a small community where men and women all have Biblical names, who strictly keep to their group and though there have been many Jews prominent in the public life of Bombay, there has been no influence of this community in Maharashtra. This is now especially the case since many of them have migrated to Israel.

Buddhists: The most important religious movement in Maharashtra in recent years has been the revival of Buddhism. Buddhist caves were being carved in the 11th century A. D. Since then Buddhism vanished from all over India except a small remnant in Bengal and on the northern borders in Ladakh and in some of the valleys on this side of the Himalayas. The present rise of Buddhism is not due to northern or Bengali influence. In fact the rise is not due to a revival. It can be characterized as a new identity accepted by one of the deprived and backward groups in Maharashtra. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was born as a member of the then untouchable ~~Mahar~~ caste in the year 1891. He became the greatest leader of the scheduled castes not only in Maharashtra but in the whole of India. He was also a patriot and a great scholar. His resentment against the majority community which treated him in the past as untouchable was very great. He did not like the half-hearted compromises, which Gandhiji offered. He succeeded in getting special representation on legislative bodies and special privileges in services and educational institutions for the untouchable castes in India in general and in Maharashtra in particular. He and his followers resented the term

CHAPTER 7 Harijan applied to them. He was in constant search of an identity for his group, an identity which would do away with the stigma of untouchability and of euphemisms like the word Harijan. He toyed for some time with the idea of converting to Mohammedanism, Sikhism, or Christianity. At last towards the end of his life he, together with thousands of people of his caste, embraced Buddhism. This action shows a maturity of judgement and a certain softening of his former attitude towards the Hindu community. Christianity and Mohammedanism had already Mahar converts which in fact did not add any advantages to the position of Mahars. Some of the old discriminations remained and became lost in the very big and assorted convert population of the two religions. They also became completely severed from the Hindus. Sikhism did not appeal to Dr. Ambedkar's scholarly and æsthetic mind. Ancient Buddhism has one of the richest literature in the world. It is grand both in its philosophical and moral concepts. In its Jataka and story literature it has a simplicity and humanity which has attracted people from all over the world. It is also indigenous in its origins. In converting to Buddhism Dr. Ambedkar symbolically remained hundred per cent. Indian and not completely cut off from Hinduism. He himself was a scholar, but those who became converted to Buddhism after him did so only because of political expediency. Buddhism at one time had influenced orthodox Hinduism in a very considerable measure. This might happen in future, as regards the new Buddhists but today's Buddhism in Maharashtra remains no more than a group identity and a political effort at improving the status of the deprived castes. Buddhism is so new that it has not yet created its holy men, poets or saints in Maharashtra.

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CHAPTER 8—MAHARASHTRA TO-DAY

THE MAHARASHTRA OF TODAY WAS BORN AS A STATE within the Indian Union on the 1st May, 1960 by an Act of Parliament. The statehood of Maharashtra is thus younger than the statehood of India and is a consequence of India gaining statehood. Maharashtra internally is faced with the same type of problems that India has to face.

Within the limits of Maharashtra as defined in Chapter 1, people speak one language which is understandable among all caste groups, status groups, economic and regional groups. But facility of communication, though a necessary factor towards feelings of solidarity, is not enough in itself. We have seen that various regions of Maharashtra were under different dynastic rules and had different histories. There was rivalry and mistrust and these historical divisions which run parallel to the regional divisions form a certain barrier in the path of the feeling of the unity of Maharashtra. There are certain factors in the modern situation which foster separatist tendencies while there are certain others which tend to strengthen unity. The greatest single factor towards unification is a feeling of linguistic patriotism which is revealed in the formation of a big state where power is dependent on unity, regional extent and the numerical strength of its population. The factors leading to division are many. Chief among them are mutual distrust of the different regions, a distrust which is expressed in various ways. The eleven districts of Western Maharashtra which formed part of the old Bombay Presidency aroused feelings of jealousy in the two new parts (Marathwada and Vidarbha) which have been joined to it. The five districts of Marathwada feel that as the most neglected part of Maharashtra they should receive special consideration in the new set-up. Nagpur and Vidarbha were formerly joined with the Hindi-speaking districts of the Central Provinces of which Nagpur was the capital city. In the new set-up Nagpur has lost that importance and a small section of people has been agitating for a separate Marathi-speaking State made up of the Marathi-speaking districts from the old Central Provinces and Berar. The movement is gradually subsiding in extent and violence but it reflects the mood of the people, who somehow feel that they could well have done without the vociferous and intruding western Maharashtrians. Western Maharashtra, though pictured as one by

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these eastern parts, is finding a new division within itself. There was a movement mostly led by the Saraswat elite to make a separate province of the coastal districts with the city of Bombay as the capital. Lastly there was a bitter struggle between Maharashtra as a whole and the Bombay people, mostly speaking Gujarati, joined by some Marathi speaking elements, to make Bombay into a separate independent bilingual State-like unit.

This attempt was put down by the Marathi people through a violent political uprising. The demand that Bombay be separated or that Bombay together with the coastal strip be made into a separate State, was obviously based on the fact that because of its industry, Bombay alone or Bombay with the coast, can become a viable economic unit and without regard to the economic and cultural aspirations of the rest of Maharashtra. In a sense the sub-regions with which we started the description of Maharashtra, namely northern Maharashtra, often referred to in these days as Nag-Vidarbha, the Godavari basin called Gangthadi, Southern Maharashtra, that is the Bhima-Krishna basin, and coastal Maharashtra, even today show the old tensions in new forms. The new Maharashtra is not a unity which can be taken for granted. It has to be consciously fostered, and the internal tensions need to be relieved in terms of the necessities of the modern political pressures and industrial and technological needs. In this context a reference needs to be made to a new organisation which has played a certain role in Bombay in the 1967 elections. A body of people calling themselves Shiva Sena has arisen as a militant organisation as its name suggests, to protect the interests of the Marathi-speaking population in Bombay.

In the recent poll taken in Goa certain communities voted against merger with Maharashtra. The Nag-Vidarbha agitation represents the anxieties and insecurity felt by one part of Marathi-speaking people. A similar feeling is existent as we have seen in the oldest part of Maharashtra, that is Marathwada. The Goa poll again brings forth the anxiety felt by certain people, particularly Christians, who are not in a minority in Goa, suddenly becoming a minority in a much larger Maharashtra. On the other hand anxiety represented by Shiva Sena is the one felt by the Marathi people who think that the political power which they have won with so much struggle is in jeopardy if they cannot possess the power of money in a metropolitan city like Bombay. In some ways all these groups crystallise and make clear the barriers of suspicion and distrust, which work against the smooth working of Maharashtra as a State.

The regional rivalries are clearly seen in the news-papers from different regions. Those in Bombay generally represent the larger point of view which is for the whole of Maharashtra, though the coastal people as a whole and their grievances are better reflected in Bombay papers, especially Marathi ones. Nagpur and Poona represent their own regions and this is emphatically the case for Aurangabad i.e., Marathwada.

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Internal rivalry is a healthy condition of progress provided it never loses sight of the overall unity. One can almost say that we are in a nation-building stage of a peculiar type in which the first stage is to build up smaller linguistic States and the second stage is to build up a multilingual federal State. Both have been achieved legally and constitutionally, but not psychologically and emotionally.

Connected with this problem is the one about non-Marathi minorities in all big cities where there are such minorities. In Bombay, the Gujarati-speaking population is numerically next to the Marathi-speaking population. There are besides a large number of people from other regions. In Nagpur, the Hindi-speaking population is the biggest minority. Sholapur is the meeting place of Marathi, Telugu and Kannada people. One has to achieve a *modus vivendi* by which linguistic, cultural and religious minorities feel happy and secure and the majority is also secure that its political power is not threatened by the minorities.

Within Maharashtra the old communities are getting crystallised on certain newer lines, but the old grouping called caste has not yet given way to what are called economic classes. At present caste and class seem to be mixed in certain crystallisation e.g., Brahmins as a whole, especially in western Maharashtra, have become a higher educated urban middle class community. The former untouchables are also tending to become an urban community of wage-earners. The old artisan groups are also becoming urbanized and taking a position between middle class and 'wage earners'. All these together are in a minority, perhaps 35 per cent. of the Marathi speaking peoples. The rest are mainly made up of peasant communities. Among the peasant community, the dominating community is called Maratha-Kunbi. They are ex-chiefs, landlords, small peasants, a small percentage of landless persons and middle class urban population, following more or less professions of Brahmins and other communities like the Kayasthas, the Pathare, the Sonars, etc. They are also in a position of power in the Maharashtra Government. In this situation they feel that they are fulfilling their historical role as rulers in Maharashtra. In some ways this attitude is helpful while in others it is a definite hindrance. The adherence to antiquated and no longer useful ranking systems through which they claim Kshatriyahood and through which they have hypergamous clans, jeopardises internal solidarity and perpetuates old reverence paid to kingly houses which worked such a havoc in the last election. Straight acknowledgement of their strength with its roots in peasantry and giving up of ancient *varna* ideas will take this politically conscious community much farther in its political aims than this romantic clinging to traditional status beliefs.

A new orientation is slowly emerging in the new social set-up. It is not yet crystallised to such an extent that the attitudes of one group are sharply differentiated from the attitudes of other groups, but they are clear enough to allow a description. The two poles of

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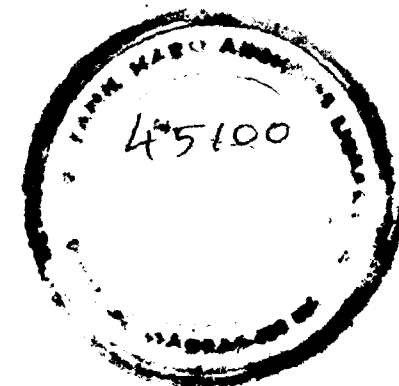
the orientation can be depicted as an urban-industrialized people involved in manufacture and the other of rural peasant communities. The urban group is made up of entrepreneurs and workmen. The entrepreneurs are investors in and starters of new capital enterprises. The workmen are the people who provide the actual working force on which the entrepreneurs dream of realizing profits. The entrepreneur wants to extend his activities in different ventures in different parts of the country, while the labourer wants access to centres of industry where he can get the highest wages. In a way both these elements are indifferent if not antagonistic to linguistic-cultural modes of thought. They are more cosmopolitan. In contrast to these, the rural peasant population is immobile, is rooted to its native place and the ancestral home. Most of the surveys have shown that the labour population in the cities lived only for a part of their lives in the city while 90 per cent. of the village population had lived in a particular village for generations. Land as representing native place and area of communication was a concept of value to these people. Their marriage area was also not very wide and was defined through generations of marital exchanges.

They were not conscious or articulate about these values, but responded to them when made over through propaganda of a class which comes between these two. This class is the middle class represented by a predominantly literate professional population drawn from all castes. They are conscious and proud of the literature and history of their linguistic area and they have been making propaganda in poetry, drama and novel about the oneness of the Marathi-speaking people. With the formation of linguistic states one would have expected these three groups of people to have realized the new State as a reality within which they had to work. But Indian situations tend to remain fluid with the result that the two types of people are still quarrelling over the older issues. Apart from the linguistic controversy these classes have contributed to different types of cultural life within Maharashtra. The people in the bigger cities belong to many creeds and many religions. The life of the city which caters to the needs of these people gets a standardization in dress and speech which is dependent on the need of communication and the needs of the industrial life. Smaller cities are still dominated by the professional middle class which is more parochially Marathi than the bigger cities while the rural area is overwhelmingly Marathi still lingering in the old value system laid down by caste hierarchy and caste professions.

Just as the old society with a hereditary hierarchical system is gradually giving place to newer classes, the new technologies and industrial needs have changed the relationships of the different sub-regions of Maharashtra to one another. The history of Maharashtra started with the capital at Paithan on the banks of Godavari, in what we have called eastern Maharashtra. This part was lost to Maharashtra politically from the 13th century to about a few years ago. After Paithan the centre of importance was moving westwards until at

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the present day it has reached the westernmost limit of Maharashtra and is located in the city of Bombay. The phenomenal growth of the city of Bombay, because of its harbour facilities have made Bombay a point of attraction for the whole of Maharashtra. Recently further southwards there has been an exploitation of iron and to a lesser extent aluminium. This may lead to subsidiary harbours and subsidiary cities in the coastal strip south of Bombay. The Bombay industries are spilling over on to the mainland north and south to Nasik and Poona, which are gradually being transformed from sleepy mediaeval towns to new hectic, and bizarre industrial centres. These industries are of the nature of feeder industries of Bombay. This part which is the top of the Sahyadri range and which represents the area of sources of many rivers has also become the producer of power through a series of dams, built in the catchment area. The water of these dams is made to descend over 2,000 feet to the coastal strip to generate electricity. Some of the dams are built to provide irrigation to the dry central Maharashtra areas. From being merely a hilly wall between the coast and the plateau, with well known passes, it has become a subsidiary feeder of western coastal industries, a provider of electricity to the power-hungry west and a provider of water to the water hungry east. This is an altogether new historical role taken up by this region. The water provided through the lakes of this region is giving rise to new types of industries in the central belt. This reaches from the Godavari to the Krishna, from the eastern Nasik district, through Nagar, Poona, Satara, Sangli right up to Kolhapur. This is the new sugar belt of Maharashtra. This industry is based entirely on an agricultural produce and gives hope that in this region and further eastward new agro-industries might grow up if the power supply could be increased by further efforts. Towards north-east where Maharashtra emerges out of the trap area, Nagpur and the Chanda Districts give a promise not only of agro-industries but mining. It looks as if certain very fertile areas will remain agricultural but the agriculture will itself take on new forms and might also support certain industries. The whole process of change is yet in its infancy and what is sketched above is merely an outline. The detailed picture cannot become clear for a few decades at least.



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