

## CHAPTER - VII

VILLAGE SOCIETY

Closely connected with the subject of land tenures is the village organisation as the village or mauza formed the prime fiscal unit of revenue. The term 'village' may be used to denote a group of land holdings with usually a central aggregate of residences, the inhabitants of which had certain relations and "some kind of union or bond of common interest."<sup>(1)</sup> The village included the arable lands, the inhabited area, pools, groves, water courses, forest and waste land and had clearly demarcated boundaries. In Gujarat the villages were seldom surrounded by walls though ~~they~~ may had bound hedges.

As has been discussed earlier, the villages could be distinguished into two broad categories viz. Rasti and Mewasi. The Rasti villages were further categorised into two viz. - Senja and Narwa. At the head of the village organisation was the Patel. The origin of the Patels as heads of the villages was in many instances of a very ancient date and had arisen from various causes - among the most common of which was that of their ances-

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1. B.H. Badenpowell, Op.cit., Vol. I, P.97.

tors having founded the villages they belonged to or re-established them when they had fallen into decay.

The office of the Patel was hereditary, not elective; when there were several in number the order of precedence was strictly maintained.<sup>(2)</sup> The internal management and administration of the village was entirely conducted by the Patels. If a well was to be built or repaired, if a tank had to be dug or deepened, if the village establishment had in any way fallen into insufficiency and required to be restored and in short whatever was necessary to be done for the common use and benefit of the village originated with the Patels.<sup>(3)</sup> It was the duty of the Patels to regulate the affairs of the village and to accomodate if possible any disputes which might exist between the inhabitants. The Patels were the agents of their villages and regulated the cultivation of its lands and possessed great influence with ryots. Thus the government looked up to them to answer for the conduct of those subordinate to them.

The settlement of revenue was always made with the Patels who were consequently required to enter into the

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2. S.R.B.G., XI, P. 92.

3. R.D.D. 1818, No. 130, P. 2760.

yearly jamabandy for the due realisation of the revenue, which the government thought the village capable of yielding. If the patels (of Senja villages) agreed to discharge this sum, the whole of the internal arrangements of the village were left to them.<sup>(4)</sup> If they refused to do so, they were then considered to have failed to fulfil their part of the contract and government had a right to make the collections itself direct from the actual cultivators. The patels therefore knowing that they would be called upon every year for the revenue of their village endeavoured as much as possible to increase its produce in order that there might remain a profit to themselves after satisfying the demands of government. For this purpose they encouraged cultivators to come and settle in their villages they built houses and wells for them and then gave them a lease according to their abilities of small farms of 15 or 20 beeghas. The best lands of many villages were given to such under tenants, the patels finding it more profitable to cultivate them in that way than to keep them in their own possessions.<sup>(5)</sup>

Aboveall, it was the patel's duty to serve the public revenue and on his performing this with fidelity

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4. R.D.V. 1823, No. 5/57, P. 87.

5. Ibid., P. 88.

and success depended the permanency of his office and all the rights and privileges which he enjoyed.<sup>(6)</sup> Thus he had to make up somehow or the other the sum at which the village was assessed. During the Maratha sway in Gujarat there was no one to enquire whether the Patels collected the revenue by means of a money demand on the land or on the crops or on the plough or by levying a certain share of the produce in grain. Whatever the out turn might be they had no check but that of expediency which taught them to look at the future and not to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs. Thus if by regular assessment they could not collect the sums demanded, they borrowed money themselves or levied an additional cess called Khot Vera on the ryots or sold or mortgaged the village lands to get a little ready money.<sup>(7)</sup> This was the origin of the Vechania and girania tenures which have already been detailed in chapter two.

The position of the patels varied in the senja and narwa villages. In the Senja villages, all of the family of the patels were eligible to the Patelship but this office was generally monopolized by a few of the most powerful or the most intelligent to whom the others

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6. R.D.D. 1813, No. 87, P. 1751.

7. List No. 11, Ahmedabad Volumes No. 27.

gave way. Usually in these villages a majority of the proprietors acted the part of cultivators only and left the whole management of the village to such of their body as was capable of conducting it. Again, in these villages one or more Patels according to the wish of the parties affixed their Matt or signature to the documents embodying the terms of the annual revenue settlement of their village and thus became responsible for its fulfilment.<sup>(8)</sup> They were known as the Mattadar Patels.

In the Narwa villages, all the sharers and sub-sharers had equal rights and were called Patidars and individually addressed by the title of Patel. However at the head of each division was a man called mooksh, bhagdar or mattadar (from muttoo, a signature), generally the head of that family but apparently sometimes elected by the members.<sup>(9)</sup> These persons jointly managed the common lands of the village and individually the common lands if any of his own mota bhag, they jointly acted as managers of all village affairs and as representatives of the village in all dealings with the government or with other villages.

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8. Vaze's Manual, Section IV, Part II-A, P. 597;  
R.D.D. 1820, No. 157, P. 4134.

9. B.G.S. No. CXIV, P. 6.

It may be mentioned here that the oldest and the wisest Patels or the representative of any one family who from long habits of exercising the duty of mattadars, claimed this right as one based on prescription and were generally those who transacted all affairs on account of their community. It was also the custom in the Kheda Jilla to withhold the official emoluments of a Mattadar Patel who refused to sign the deed of revenue settlement.<sup>(10)</sup>

In the Senja villages all that were eligible to Patelship had a right to certain services from the inferior castes or village servants. In the Narwa villages, this practice sometimes prevailed, the whole of the Narwadars enjoying it in common but sometimes these castes were divided and each principal share had so many attached to it.<sup>(11)</sup>

For their fiscal and other local management, the Patels were granted certain allowances which they divided according to the interest each held in the village. These allowances which were in land and money were considered as much their hereditary right as the fees and

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10. Vaze's Manual, Section IV, Part-II-A, P. 5972.

11. R.D.D. 1820, No. 153, P. 1846.

perquisites enjoyed by the revenue officers of a higher grade viz. Desais and Majumdars.<sup>(12)</sup> We do not have much information regarding the lands the Patels held except that they were known as Passaita and were rent free. They cultivated these lands themselves or through cultivators.

The money granted in inam to the Patels was a deduction from the gross revenues and its amount varied considerably, in some instances, the villages paying nothing as inam. We have a few figures detailing the money inams as follows :<sup>(12.a)</sup>

<u>Name of pargana</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Jama</u>	<u>Inam</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Nadiad	1783-84	203746	2817	1.38
2. Matar	1785-86	131395	2696	2.05
3. Napad	1787-88	33577	1949	5.80
4. Petlad	1814	353097	28725	8.13
5. Thasra	1815	44747	1194	2.66
6. Antroli	1815	4406	111	2.51
7. Balasinore	1815	3269	115	3.51

12. In Gujarat considerable differences existed in the remuneration of the Patels. In the Ahmedabad and Kheda Jillas they were principally awarded by a money payment though Passaitas were in existence also. In the Broach Jilla they had no money inams. In the Surat Jilla like that in Kheda both money and land inams existed.

12.a Daftar No. 289, P.N.4, No.1, CROB; Daftar No. 290, P.N. 7; Prant Ajmas Gujarat, Rumal 41, No. 30, P.A.; Jamav Section, Rumal No.1, P.A.

The diversity in regard to the appropriation of the inams had arisen from the system of revenue management that had obtained and which rendered everyone of the Patel's family eligible to the office of Patel. Such a system afforded scope to the ambition of all and those who generally were most frequently employed, naturally enough obtained the sanction of the local agents to retain a portion of the inam adequate to the trouble imposed on them. (13)

The disbursement of the inam was considered by the Marathas as a matter which they had a right to regulate and as a fund at their disposal from which to remunerate those who had yielded the most active assistance in the promotion of their views. If they did not interfere the amount was then appropriated by the respective village Patels as they chose themselves but even in this case the most intriguing and least deserving sometimes secured to themselves the largest share. (13.a)

The Mattadar Patels, as such received no official allowances from government. (14) However from the consequence attached to their offices, they enjoyed the profits of the manual labour of the ryots whom they got

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13. R.D.V. 1821, No. 5/15, P. 39.

13.a R.D.V. 1821, No. 5/15, P. 168.

14. Ibid., 1848, No. 80, P.6.

to cultivate their lands free. Besides they also obtained the loan of their bullocks to work in their fields as well as rice plants to be transplanted in their lands. Thus these could be considered as the haqs of the unpaid Mattadar.

Apart from the land and money allowances, the Patels enjoyed a number of haqs or perquisites which were held by no other title than that of prescription.<sup>(15)</sup>

These perquisites were exacted in cash and kind and included in the main coconuts, ghee, goor, opium and manure either free or at a concessional rate. Monetary haqs included a certain amount levied by the Patels on the rate of every maund of certain articles like tobacco, grain etc. sold.

Apart from these, some of the Patels enjoyed revenue from transit duties on trade passing through their villages, the total amount of these being about Rs.1500,<sup>(16)</sup> in the eleven villages of parganas of Mahundha, Nadiad and Thasra.

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15. Ibid., 1836, No.7/694, P. 35. A detailed account of these is given.

16. Ibid., 1826, No. 15/147, P. 602-604.

The patels had a prior claim to all village services. Their lands as well as those belonging to their relations, were exempted from the full payment of revenue. The patels, it may be presumed may have derived advantage from the village expenses in the disbursement of which they enjoyed a free hand. They were also exempt, by the custom of the country, from the payment of 'Furmaish' and 'Veth' or the requisitions of authority which when made on the village, they distributed on their ryots.<sup>(17)</sup>

With regard to the question whether the office and emoluments of patels were alienable by the possessor or otherwise, we find that the Patel was generally a substantial landholder who had seldom occasion to resort to an extremely which demanded the 'greatest of all sacrifices, the sale of his watan or rather of his name'.<sup>(18)</sup> Thus such sales were extremely rare in Gujarat where the Patels were a comparatively independent, industrious and wealthy race while among the small and poor villages of the Deccan, this practice was common.<sup>(19)</sup>

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17. R.D.D. 1820, No. 157, P. 4141.

18. List No. 14, Farishta No. 282.

19. Ibid.

The offices and emoluments of the patels were considered hereditary and treated as such by government. On the whole we find that the chief dignity of the office of patel depended on the uncontrolled position of the holder. Thus the patel of a large village was indeed a substantial person and compared with the humble inhabitants of his village occupied an influential and enviable position. His authority was unquestionable and his will absolute, while his privileges of precedence on all public and social occasions formed according to local taste, an imposing picture of greatness.<sup>(20)</sup> The profits of his office depended of course on the system of revenue pursued and on his influence in the village.

#### Changes in the position of Patels :

The advent of the British in the early 19th century witnessed a change in the position of the patels. The near absolute authority which they had enjoyed under the Marathas was curtailed by the changes in the revenue system of the British who made minute enquiries into the village resources and contributions

A significant change in the position of patel was brought by the Regulation of 1818 A.D. whereby heads of

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20. Bombay Government Selections No. IV, Section 6-4, P.A., P. 16.

villages were appointed as Mukhi Patels.<sup>(21)</sup> Accordingly it was stated that the Mattadar Patel was to be appointed as the Mukhi Patel; in cases of doubt, it was left to the discretion of the Collector. The Mukhi Patels were authorised and directed to apprehend all persons charged with committing crimes or offences or breaches of the peace and all persons accused of injuring the public buildings, roads, tanks and water channels and forward the same together with the accusers and witnesses to the police officers of the district.

The Mukhi Patel in the performance of his police duties was assisted by Rawnias (village watchman) and Puggees (persons who tracked thieves) and Bungeas (persons who blew the horn and gave the alarm).<sup>(22)</sup> When any offence was committed within the bounds of any village, the patel of that village was the first to receive the information. His primary duty was to send for the puggees and instant pursuit was commenced, the footsteps being traced to the boundary of the next village. The patel and puggees of that village were immediately summoned and all proceeded together without loss of time till the retreat of the offenders was discovered or till all vestige of them was lost. The

----- Bombay Regulations -----  
 21. Publication No. 49312, Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay.

22. J.D.V. 1836, No. 34/387, P. 26.

occurrence was then reported to the Kamavisdar and a Karkun was immediately sent to the village to take depositions and collect information.

However the police powers of the Mukhi Patel as specified in Section IX Regulation IV of 1818 were extremely limited, the punishment he was empowered to impose being confined to imprisonment in village Chowra for 12 hours. (23)

The appointment of the Mukhi Patel was considered permanent in the Kheda Jilla and no changes were made unless where the person holding the office might have discharged his duties carelessly or harshly. (24) Of course, if complaints were made against them, they were duly fined. (25)

As has been already stated, it were the Mattadar Patels who were also appointed as Mukhi Patels. Thus the revenue and police duties were combined under one head. In case of their refusal to enter into annual Jamabandy for their villages (this being one of primary

23. J.D.V. 1825, No. 14/98, P. 16.

24. R.D.V. 1821, No. 5/5, P. 169.

25. Ibid., 1839, No. 40/1003, P. 37. Here in it is stated that the Mukhi Patels of some of the villages of Napad pargana were fined when complaints had been filed against them.

duties) they ran the risk of their watan(allowances in land and money) being suspended.<sup>(26)</sup> No change was made in the duties of the Mattadar Patels who continued to affix their signatures on the annual revenue settlements as under the Marathas. They were also responsible for the accuracy of all entries of fields and the tenures on which they were held as shown in the number Khurda or field book of their respective villages and to supply any information required by the government authorities on any revenue matters connected with them. The privilege of signing the revenue settlements, bestowed a position of respectability on its possessor, was hereditary and highly prized.<sup>(27)</sup>

The British were shrewd enough to realise the significant and respectable position the Patels held with the ryots. Thus when they introduced the village leasing system on an extensive scale, it were the patels who were encouraged to come forward as the revenue farmers. This has been studied in detail in Chapter V. The Patels had a permanent interest in their villages and combined with this the significant power which they wielded amongst the ryots, it was felt would lead to the pros-

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26. R.D.V., 1849, No. 100, P. 86-87. This happened in 1849 when the Mukhies and Mattadars of Roondun and Sankhej villages had their watan's stopped on refusing to conduct their fiscal duties.

27. List No. 11, Ahmedabad Volumes 17, P.A. Pune.

perity of the villages. This opinion was strengthened by the fact that the improvements effected in the villages were generally conducted by the patels. Thus it was remarked that they had expended many lacs of rupees in building houses and wells for their cultivators.<sup>(28)</sup> Again, the role of the Patels in founding new villages was clearly established.<sup>(29)</sup> Thus it was stated that during the years 1819-20 to 1821-22, seven new villages viz. Fookhutpura Vishwanathpura in Kapadvanj pargana; Rampur in Thasra pargana; Ajoopura, Amritpura, Ludmonpura, Witulpura in Alina pargana, were established when 100 beeghas of land to each of the founders, who was designated as the patel was allowed.

The Talati Regulation of 1814 severely curtailed the power of the patels and a somewhat blind reliance came to be placed on the former. To the talati, the ryots made all references; the talati made the collections and was thoroughly acquainted with the circumstances of the village. He even carried on correspondence with the Kamavisdar without consulting the patel who upon enquiry was most likely to be found ignorant of the communications that had been made. Thus from having usurped too much authority under the Marathas which extended even

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28. R.D.V. 1823, No. 5/57, P. 106.

29. R.D.V. 1846, No. 14, P. 67.

to the permanent disposal of village lands, the Patel by the 1850s was in the danger of falling into the opposite extreme - he either possessed too little, or he was unwilling or fearful to assert it.

The hereditary character of Patels' rights was extremely valued by its possessors. Thus in 1822, a complaint was made to the government by patels of the Qasba of Oomret stating that their Kamavisdar by various contrivances and machinations had placed new patels and Mukhis for the said Qasba and that such proceedings had never been heard of before and that they tended to embarrass the system anciently established.<sup>(30)</sup> The actions of the patels were brought within the purview of the regulations in 1833 A.D. whereby it was stated that the Patels entrusted with the charge or collection of the public money were liable when convicted to embezzling the same to fine and imprisonment to which the Kamavisdars and Talatis etc. were also subject.<sup>(31)</sup>

Of course it may be presumed that such punishment for penalties were looked upon as being harsh and severe by the Patels. An instance of a petition being made by the Patels of Karamsad of Petlad pargana for a remi-

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30. Ibid., 1822, No. 13/37, P. 316.

31. Bombay Regulations, Op.cit., P. 395.

ssion of part of the punishment to which they had been sentenced in consequence of a dispute between their village and the village of Wallasan in which two persons lost their lives is recorded in the documents.<sup>(32)</sup>

These patels were one of the 6 or 7 families who were looked upon as superior in rank to the patels of the other villages of the Kheda Jilla. They were the 'gentleman farmers', the whole cultivation of their village being carried on by under tenants. Thus they considered it to be very impolite and degrading to be sentenced to hard labour (that part of the sentence submitting them to imprisonment was acceptable to them) with irons on their legs alongwith thieves, robbers and other worthless characters. They further appealed that by this they would sustain a great loss of character as well as be unable to marry their children among people of their own class. Thus the last part of the sentences declining the Patels to hard labour was omitted by the Governor-in-Council.<sup>(33)</sup>

Not only the position of the Patels changed under the British, but the remuneration which they received in land and money for the due performances of their duties were considerably altered. The practice of the appropriation of the inam (money) continued to be quite irre-

32. J.D.V. 1823, No. 15/15, P. 161.

33. Ibid., P. 207.

gular in most places, the inam had become a long established revenue allowance amounting comparatively to a small sum, and was certainly not sufficient to compensate the Patels for their assistance in collecting the revenue and the personal risk they incurred when the settlements were made with them.<sup>(34)</sup> In some villages particularly in the parganas of Mahemdabad and Dascroi and the Tappa of Napaad, the inam had been incorporated with the revenue and abolished altogether so that the total amount of the inams was much less than they had been under the Marathas.<sup>(35)</sup> The amount of inam had no apparent reference to the revenue derivable from the village nor to the habits or extent of its population, for villages of small revenue and of limited population had often larger inams than others of a superior description.<sup>(36)</sup>

When one of the Mattadar Patels came to be selected and entrusted with the police charge, justice demanded that he be granted some remuneration for the extra trouble this new duty imposed on him. This was particularly realised when the Mukhi Patels made complaints of the expenses to which they were liable in attending

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34. J.D.V. 1825, No. 11/95, P. 333.

35. List No. 11, Kaira Vol. 31, P.A., Pune.

36. R.D.V. 1821, No. 5/5, P. 166.

at the Kutcherry and Adawlut on business, connected entirely with their official situation. Hence it was proposed to remunerate the Mukhi Patel with a sum equal to one half of the pay of Talati but limited to Rs.100.<sup>(37)</sup> It was also proposed that a sum equal to one half of the pay of the Talatis was the amount to be divided among the other Patels, but in villages where the inam was less or had long been discontinued altogether, it was not necessary to grant the whole of this allowance.

The above remuneration was intended to remove discontent in consequence of unpaid services and to secure zealous service in an office which was the key stone of the village constitution. However there still remained villages whose Mukhi Patels enjoyed no inams whatsoever. Thus it was proposed (and later sanctioned by government in 1839) that a sum of Rs.3370 was to be given to the Mukhi Patels of 93 villages in which no inams existed.<sup>(38)</sup> These inams were calculated with reference to the rate of inam then enjoyed in other villages of the Kheda Jilla and averaged from Rs.2 to Rs.3 percent on the Jama. In other villages a certain amount was taken from the Mattadars inam to remunerate the Mukhi Patels. It was however still felt that the latter were not sufficiently

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37. List No. 11, Kaira Vol. 31, P.A., Pune.

38. R.D.V. 1839, No. 40/1003, P. 42-44.

remunerated. Hence in the late 1840s further increases were made in the salary of the Mukhi Patel.

From the above it is clear that when the British introduced the office of the Mukhi Patel they made all efforts to adequately pay them. Thus the Mukhi and Mattadar Patels were distinctly remunerated, the former being generally paid in cash and the Watans of both being held separately. Money allowances to the Mattadars were shown in the district and not village accounts, whereas their land as well as that of the Mukhi and the cash pay of the latter were detailed to the village in the 'Gaon Khurch'. The Mukhi Patels were paid their allowances permanently as were these of the Narwa villages. However the Patels (Mattadars) of Senja villages received their official inams only during the period they held the village in farm on signed the Jamabandy agreement.

It is evident that not all the Patels in a village were the officiating members. We lack evidence at present to study the proportion between the officiating and non-officiating members among the Patels. Also the differences between the Mattadar Patels and the other patels who fixed the jamabandy are not very explicit, either with regard to their duties or their salaries. Table No. I, giving in the end of Chapter shows the total

emoluments in land and money enjoyed by the Patels of the Kheda Jilla. The amount value of their rent free lands was not much, accounting for about 15% of their total emoluments. These lands were let out for cultivation by the Patels themselves as it best suited them without any interference on the part of government. The payments in money were quite considerable and were derived from two sources - (a) as deductions from the gross jamabandy, (b) paid from the collector's treasury.

The different hags or perquisites enjoyed by the patels as stated earlier could not be tolerated by the British and many of them were ordered to be discontinued.<sup>(39)</sup> However the hags of the Mattadars viz, those of enjoying the manual labour of his ryots was allowed to be continued as no complaints had been made by the ryots.<sup>(40)</sup> After the passing of Act I, 1838, it was agreed to give compensation to the Patels who had suffered loss of income from transit duties. They were settled in the same manner as that of Desais and Majumdars. Thus under the British the influence of the Patels as well as their emoluments declined considerably. Their police duties became more defined and detailed with the appointment of Mukhi Patels. With the changes introduced in

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39. R.D.V. 1836, No. 7/694, P. 35.

40. R.D.V. 1848, No. 80, P. 7.

the revenue administration the talatis came to acquire a lot of significance sometimes even more than the patels. The actions of the patels being subject to scrutiny under the regulations, must have upset the social status of this class, which had hitherto enjoyed an enviable position.

Talati :

Just as the majumdar assisted the desai in the performance of his duties at the pargana level, in like manner was the patel assisted by the talati at the village level. The talati was the registrar of the village and was to attend and transact all business which required the aid of a writer.<sup>(41)</sup> It was the duty of the talati to draw out the accounts of each cultivator or of each share according to the practice obtained and to give credit for all receipts. He was to keep an account of all the lands in cultivation.

Regarding whether the office of talatis was hereditary, it was generally accepted that the greater part of these government ministerial appointments connected with the local revenue administration of the different districts were so far considered hereditary that their succession was but seldom interfered with and probably

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41. R.D.V. 1820, No. 157, P. 4135. The talati appears to be the, 'Patwari', found in Northern India.

never forfeited to the family.<sup>(42)</sup> Thus, if the talati office had been hereditary many persons would have been found who though not actually employed would yet have been known by the distinctive appellation of talati, from the tenancy in retaining the designation of such government offices as might have been conferred on their predecessors long even after they had been dispossessed. However on the introduction of British rule, there were very few persons who were found retaining the official designation of the talati as such. This would mean that either the office had been entrusted to temporary agents or that with the lapse of a long period, the persons who would otherwise have been found retaining the official designation had gradually relinquished it as a distinction which was not advantageous to them.

When the British rule was introduced in Gujarat, the talatis who were found in existence hardly pretended to have derived their appointments from government or that their employment was hereditary.<sup>(43)</sup> They were merely the private accountants of the patel and their knowledge of accounts seldom or never extended further than the registry of the transactions of their principals. Such accountants were always nominated by the

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42. R.D.D. 1820, No. 156, P. 447.

43. Ibid., P. 3451.

patels and as the intrigues of these officers caused many changed in the village management they (i.e. talatis) always followed the fortunes of the particular patel who patronised them by making room on a change of patel for the agent of the successive rival. It was indeed a sufficient reason for discontinuing the service of any such village accountant that he was the servant of the predecessor of the patel actually in power. In some villages the office of the talati had been entirely discontinued the patels performing the duties themselves.<sup>(44)</sup>

The talatis were sometimes the inhabitants of the villages in which they were employed but they were more often residents in the Qasbas and only repaired to the village occasionally during the time their patrons were in power to frame their accounts and to ensure their own remuneration. Sometimes the same man was employed in several villages during the course of a few years.

The nature of the emoluments of the talatis was very irregular.<sup>(45)</sup> Those villages which were least capable of defraying the charges and in which there were less duties to perform were more heavily burdened with talatis, than those villages which from their extent and importance required correct accountants were either wholly

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44. Ibid., No. 157, P. 4136.

45. R.D.D. 1812, No. 81-B, P. 306.

diverted of such officers or the officers were mere tools in the hands of the patel.

When the British assumed power in Gujarat, they found the revenue administration in disarray. To remedy this state of affairs the British government passed regulations from time to time. One of the most prominent of these was Regulation II of 1814 A.D. which called for the appointment of talatis or village accountants subject to the immediate authority of the collector for the purpose of obtaining a correct knowledge of the resources of districts.<sup>(46)</sup> According to this Regulation, the talatis were liable to be dismissed from office by the Governor-in-Council for incapacity of disobedience or negligence. Complete records were to be kept by the talatis specifying the extent and of description of lands in each village, those given in grant whether wholly or partially exempt from revenue. They were also to keep records of the gross produce of all lands whether paying revenue to government or not and also records stating the rates and amounts of all fees, sukdis and cheerdas appropriated to the officers and servants of the pargana and of the village. In short all records relating to the lands, produce, reve-

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46. Bombay Regulations  
(Publication No. 19308) Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay.

nue and charges of the villages were to be maintained by the talatis. They were also required to be present at the estimation of the crops and at the measuring and dividing of the produce.

The rates of remuneration for the talatis were to be in proportion to the revenue of the villages as follows:

On a village yielding Rs.1000 the talati's pay was Rs. 50

On a village yielding Rs.2000 the talati's pay was Rs. 90

On a village yielding Rs.3000 the talati's pay was Rs. 120

On a village yielding Rs.4000 the talati's pay was Rs. 140

On a village yielding Rs.5000 the talati's pay was Rs. 150

On a village yielding Rs.10000 the talati's pay was Rs.200

On a village yielding Rs.15000 the talati's pay was Rs.250

On a village yielding Rs.20000 the talati's pay was Rs.300

The talatis were to reside permanently in all villages the revenue of which exceeded Rs.2000/- per annum.

A study of the above rates indicates that as the amount of revenue increased the rate of remuneration was decreased, although the total amount of emolument remained on the higher side.

In the appointment of the village talatis, the wishes of the patels were seldom consulted, as this would have impeded the establishment of an efficient talati system; since owing their situation to patels, the talatis would naturally have considered themselves as bound on

return to act according to their pleasure and consequently in direct opposition to their duty as directed by the Regulation.

A scrutiny into the revenue resources of the parganas under the talati regulation brought forth a formidable opposition of the Bhats who used to provide security for the payment of village revenues. In order to intimidate the government they even murdered two of their womenfolk. However under the strong hand of the British government, they gradually submitted and registered their lands. Besides the Bhats the Patels of Nadiad aided and countenanced by the Desais and the Patels of Mahundha, Matar and Napad formed a combination refusing to enter into the usual engagements unless an assurance was given to them that the Talati Regulation would not be enforced and an enquiry made into the rent free lands. However this insubordination by the local potentates could not be tolerated for long and steps were taken to crush the resistance.<sup>(47)</sup>

That the talati regulation was indeed beneficial both to the government and the people could be seen from the revenue administrative report of 1818-19. Therein it was stated that the increase in revenue had arisen

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47. R.D.D. 1815, No. 102, P. 2581-2585; Ibid., 1816, No. 109-A, P. 22. for details see Chap. IV.

from an equalisation of the rates of assessment of one village with those of another in its neighbourhood from the discovery of hidden sources of revenue and from increased cultivation.<sup>(48)</sup> These improvements were attributed entirely to the talati Regulation under the operation of which all information of the resources and capabilities of the villages which were formerly kept in the sole possession of the Patels were brought to light.

The talati system was advantageous not only for the government but also for the community in general as it served to check litigation and contention for the clandestine profits of village management thus improving the habits of the people and re-establishing order and industry. The evidence and records of the talatis were important for the speedy and equitable decision of disputes regarding property and the knowledge that such was forthcoming protected the industrious and honest against the plots of the malicious to dispossess or injure them.<sup>(49)</sup> The agency of the talatis was also of material use in the magisterial department by their keeping a record of all the proceedings held in cases of murder and other serious offences.

48. Ibid., 1820, No. 149, P. 379-420. Also see Chap. III.

49. Ibid.

The talatis however were open to corruption as other men and therefore required a close superintendence particularly at the outset of the system. The checks were the yearly survey of the district officers when fraud was suspected or information wanting and the circuits of the Collector and his assistants, when the talati accounts underwent a strict scrutiny.

In 1825, A.D. it was reported that the establishment of talatis was very complete in the Kheda Jilla.<sup>(50)</sup> In fact, the talati system was considered to be existing on the most efficient footing in this Jilla where a body of expert talatis could be found. One was stationed in every Rasti village except where the collections were so small as to admit of two villages being placed under one talati. In the beginning every difficulty had been experienced in procuring persons for appointment to the Talati Office.<sup>(51)</sup> However in a period of ten years the situation had changed and when a vacancy occurred a number of persons from respectable classes appeared as candidates. Though the talatis appointed were natives of the Gujarat province yet they seldom belonged to the village they had charge of. This was certainly an advantage in maintaining the efficiency of

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50. R.D.V. 1825, No. 21/131, P. 411.

51. Ibid., 1830, No. 38/319, P. 208.

the talati office, coupled with the effort that the office was not ~~be~~ given a hereditary character.

The lacunae from which the talati system suffered was the proper superintendence of the talatis. The talatis were a numerous body and the accounts of each were voluminous. Permanently stationed beyond the eyes of the Kutcherry they were the furthest removed from control of all revenue officers. Being constantly engaged in pecuniary transactions they were exposed to much temptation and liable to yield to it if not strictly looked after.<sup>(52)</sup>

Again the duties to be performed by the talatis were cumbersome. Thus it was reported in 1834-35 that the talati officers had been unable to complete the complicated and manifold tasks imposed upon them especially due to the labourious seasons of the past two years.<sup>(53)</sup> Therefore while the Kultur examination was proceeding in one village, the grain was spoiling on the ground in another and injury both to the ryots and the government was the consequence. This was because five or six villages were sometimes held by one Talati. Thus a change into the nature and extent of the duties of the talatis was called for.

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52. Ibid., 1825, No. 21/131, P. 415.

53. Ibid., 1836, No. 7/694, P. 32 .

To prevent frauds, to ensure correctness and regularity, the talatis were required to grant a receipt to each individual at the time of payment for every item of revenue received and to make a corresponding entry in the cash accounts. The accounts books maintained by the talatis were to be annually examined during the course of Jamabandi settlement and instances of carelessness and irregularity were to be duly punished with small fines.

The pay of the talatis as fixed by Regulation II of 1814 A.D. has been detailed earlier. This pay of the talatis was calculated on the net revenue realizable after all deductions.<sup>(54)</sup> For instance if the net realizable revenue of a village after the deduction of the value of alienated lands and expenses was Rs.5500/- the talatis pay on Rs.5000 would come to Rs.150; that amount and Rs.3.7.5 for the extra Rs. 500, would then be deducted, and his whole pay be calculated at Rs.153.7.5 and of this again 20 per cent would be deducted and the actual pay received by the talati would amount only Rs.122.12.4. This system had the advantage of making the talatis interest coincide with those of government for the more he managed to increase the revenue derivable from his village, the larger would be his pay.

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54. List No. 11, Ahmedabad Volume No. 27, P.A., Pune.

However with the passage of time as the quantum of service to be exacted from the Talatis increased, the above mode of remuneration was found to be inadequate. It was argued that some of the Talati officers were possibly worse paid than the lowest peons on the establishment,<sup>(55)</sup> where it exceeded Rs.12 or 14 they were obliged to retain assistants at their own charge to enable them to get through their laborious duties. The average pay throughout the Jilla was less than Rs.8.<sup>(56)</sup>

On receiving the above complaints it was decided to fix the minimum pay of the talatis in the Kheda Jilla at Rs. 6 per mensem and the Collector was authorised to make any such alternation as might seem necessary.<sup>(57)</sup> More changes were affected in order to further augment the salaries of those whose charge consisted of more than a single village and whose salaries hitherto were computed on the amount of the revenues derived from each charge by which mode of calculation the amount of percentage by which their salaries were determined according to the existing rules came to a less amount than it would if the revenues of each village comprising the charge were taken singly,<sup>(58)</sup> e.g. one Hargovind Talati was placed

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55. R.D.V. 1835, No. 5/627, P. 247.

56. Ibid., 1837, No. 73/83, P. 176.

57. Ibid., 1835, No. 5/627, P.275.

58. R.D.V., 1835, No. 5/627, P. 275.

in charge of 2 villages viz. Ranasar yielding a revenue of Rs.3000 and Fatehpur of Rs.2000, by including both amounts the charge of this Talati would amount to Rs.5000 on which if his salary was calculated on the rules therein existing, it would have been 5 per cent on the first thousand, 4 per cent on the second thousand, 3 percent on the third, 2 percent on the fourth and 1 percent on the 5th, thus amounting to Rs.150 per annum. However if each village was taken into account separately by the same calculation the amount for the first village would be Rs.120, for the other Rs.90 making in all the allowance as Rs.210 which was Rs.60 more than that calculated by the earlier method. Thus it was proposed in 1839 A.D. to make a general rule to pay the Talatis according to the second method of calculation and to deduct 12 percent from such allowances as exceeded Rs.72 per annum with the exception of 14 stations viz. town of Kheda, Qasba, Mahundha Qasba Alina, Lasundra (pargana Alina) Kalsar and Dhoonadra (pargana Thasra) Qasba Oomret, Qasba Borsad, Rass Assamlee, Amod (pargana Borsad) Sarsa, Ore (pargana Nadiad) Qasba Mahemdabad. The duties of the above were unusually heavy and if in any case the salaries calculated for the same were less than Rs.72, they were to be augmented to make it up to that amount.

The counterpart of the talati in the Deccan was the Kulkarni. However the basic difference between the two was that though the former was a stipendary officer, the latter held his office in hereditary. This characteristic had its own advantage. The Kulkarnis were brought up in their own villages and were from the earliest years accustomed to agricultural pursuits.<sup>(59.)</sup> Thus they knew the fields belonging to each other so intimately that they could detect from their own personal knowledge any encroachment on the part of a ryot on property not his own. It was very different in Gujarat when in some cases a needy Brahmin was found to accept the office of a talati; he commenced his career in total ignorance of its duties. Again a stipendary officer was more prone to temptation for illegal activities than a hereditary one.

Thus we find that the talati office lost its hereditary character (if ever there was one) under the British. Besides, the power of the talatis gradually increased. The talati in conjunction with the patel was considered as the foundation of the revenue management.<sup>(60)</sup> In fact, the talati came to be reckoned as the mainsprings by which the whole revenue mechanism was set in motion.

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59. Ibid., 1840, No. 59/1143, P. 86-87.

60. Ibid., 1836, No. 7/694, P. 201.

The demands of government against each individual cultivator being accurately defined, the talati made the collections, sometimes even without reference to the Mattadar Patels.<sup>(61)</sup> It became his duty to induce new families to establish themselves in the village, to bring the waste lands into cultivation, to look into the state of wells, tanks etc. and in short to try every means in his power to improve the condition and resources of his charge.<sup>(62)</sup> This of course, resulted in the reduction of the power of the constitutional heads viz. the patels as has been stated earlier.

#### Village Artisans and Servants :

Apart from the patels and talatis, every village had its separate establishment of artisans, mechanics and servants which may be discussed as follows :<sup>(63)</sup>

(1) The Hajam : (Barber) in addition to his legitimate service of shaving had various other duties to perform. He procured flowers and other articles of food from the sellers of such articles for any government servant who might have lodged in the Chowra, cleaned the cooking

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61. Ibid., 1835, No. 5/627, P. 332.

62. Ibid., 1837, No. 12/770, P. 232.

63. List No. 11, Ahmedabad Vol. 27, P.A., Pune.  
For the village establishment in Broach, see R.D.D. 1808, No. 59, Para 11.

utensils of the same and received in consideration cooked food sufficient for himself, swept, cleansed and lighted the chowras and prepared smokes, Hookas or pipes for the Pattidars either of the same village or of others who might have come as guests or as travellers. He occasionally acted as the part of a mussalchee or torch bearer. And in this last respect his services were sometimes peculiarly useful in robbery or other criminal cases.

(2) Potters manufactured pots, dishes and other utensils. Some of the superior workmen even manufactured Hindu idols of clay, baked and painted them in imitation of those formed of prepared rice, alabaster and different metals.<sup>(64)</sup> The potters supplied the talatis, havaldars, ravnias who lived in the Chowra and any government servant who might lodge with pots of different descriptions, got water for them and received in consideration cooked food sufficient for one person.

(3) Carpenters prepared agricultural implements for the cultivators and others and all the wood work material for house building. In some villages the trade of bricklayers and carpenters was exercised by the same individual.

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64. James Forbes, Op.cit., Vol. II, P. 334.

(4) Ironsmith or blacksmith prepared all iron work required in the above said purposes.

(5) Tailors or Darjee were to be found only in large towns who also worked for the people of the neighbouring villages.

(6) Mali, (7) Mochie, (8) Washermen performed duties according to their professions.

(9) Dhers in Gujarat were a caste similar to the Mhars of the Deccan and the Pariars of Malabar. Their employment was to carry filth of every description out of the roads and villages and from their immediate vicinity. They carried away the dead cattle of the village and were entitled to their hides which they sold to the Chamars or tanners. They were also obliged by ancient custom to serve the state and travellers as carriers of baggage to the nearest village from their own. They subsisted themselves by weaving a coarser sort of cotton cloth called Dangaree.<sup>(65)</sup> In some villages the Dhers had a right to a maund of rice from every beegha of rice ground in which they sowed the seeds or performed other works for the cultivators.<sup>(66)</sup> Two changes were made by the British in the condition of the Dhers. One, a notifi-

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65. J.D.D. 1820, No. 123, P. 2833; R.D.V. 1846, No. 8, P. 56.

66. Ibid.

cation was issued in 1820 that the Dhers were to be paid at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  annas per coss.<sup>(67)</sup> Formerly a cess was levied on the Dhers of a village for the privilege of taking the skins of dead cattle and was known as Bhom Vera.<sup>(68)</sup> It was only in the Petlad pargana that the Dhers were exempted from the above general duty imposed on them all over Gujarat.<sup>(69)</sup> This levy was abolished by the provision of Act XIX of 1844.<sup>(70)</sup> The Dhers generally were looked down upon, because of their low caste, by the other villagers who considered themselves as contaminated by their vicinity.

(10) Chamars prepared for the cultivators leather cords used in drawing water from wells and for several other purposes. They also tanned and cleaned the hides purchased from the Dhers.

(11) Bhungees were the village scavengers but had many other duties to perform as well. They sometimes acted as guides to show the road to neighbouring villages to strangers, ran errands with letters and assisted the village accountant in the transaction of revenue business by going to call any individual that might be sent

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67. Ibid., P. 2836.

68. List No. 11, Ahmedabad Volumes 27, P.A.

69. Walter Hamilton, Op.cit., Vol. I, P. 689.

70. List No. 11, Ahmedabad Volumes, P.A.

for. They were sometimes expected to go on the rounds at night with the village watchman and to blow an alarm horn (in case of emergency or even otherwise). Thus the Bhungees were at everybody's beck and call and were usually supported by the village communities. They were the hardest worked as well as the most useful of village servants.

(12) Kotwals were generally of the Koli caste and provided anyone putting up in the Chowra with cot and beddings which they borrowed from the village people. In some villages, they were useful to the village accountant in calling cultivators who might be required and assisting to measure land for determining the assessment. In time to come many Kolis came to be designated as Kotwals even if they did not follow that profession. Probably some of their ancestors who were first employed in this way received the professional title which afterwards descended in their family. The real Kotwals were remunerated in some villages by lands, in some by money while in some cases they received nothing from the government. In the latter case, they received, when the harvest was gathered, corn from 5 seers to a maund from the cultivators according as they had been of use to them. They also received some trifling presents of money or clothes and food on certain days on occasions of marriage or entertainments.

(13) Havalgars : The village Havalgar was not an inhabitant of the village he officiated in but was appointed annually by the Mamlatdar. He was sometimes entertained only as long as the crops were on the ground in any particular village. His duties were the ordinary ones of a government peon in his village. He assisted the village accountant in all revenue matters and the Mukhi Patel in magisterial ones.

(14) Puggees were of the Koli caste and were generally so called from Pug or foot or steps or track their regular employment being that of tracing the footsteps of thieves out of their village boundaries. If they failed to do so they were held answerable for the amount of loss if the sum did not exceed five or ten rupees. If the amount was considerable the whole village was held responsible but unless the party robbed possessed some influence with the officers of government it was seldom that he recovered the whole value of his property.<sup>(71)</sup>

Thus the Puggees were accustomed to go around their village early in the morning and mark any fresh footsteps that might have been made during the night so as to be ready to take them up in case any offence be traced in their boundaries. They enjoyed a special exemption from some of the Veras paid by the other villagers.

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71. J.D.V. 1821-23, No. 34/42, P. 321.

(15) Ravannias and Bhurtanias also known as Jawaeedars ✓  
 were to assist the village accountant and patels in all  
 revenue business to run on errands, to escort travellers  
 and act the part of village watchmen. Again the means  
 by which money was forwarded to the principal Kutcherris,  
 according to the custom of the country was by the village  
 Ravannias or Watchmen.<sup>(72)</sup> The sums carried by the  
 Ravannias were generally of small amount and hardly  
 exceeded Rs.1000. The Ravannias were jealous of their  
 character and were faithful in the performance of the  
 above duty. In fact, there was hardly any instance on  
 record of their being robbed or of their betraying the  
 trust reposed in them.<sup>(73)</sup> They were generally composed  
 of the Koli and Rajput caste whose natural character ren-  
 dered them well calculated, for all those duties that  
 were required of them. The designations of Bhurtanias  
 and Ravannias were generally used indiscriminately.  
 The former, however was used to imply a person in per-  
 manent possession of a quantity of land from the produce  
 of which he was required for his services while the  
 other were paid in money for village duties.<sup>(74)</sup> The  
 patels aided by these village watchmen maintained the  
 natural system of police in the village. These village

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72. R.D.D. 1816, No. 108, P. 1539.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid., 1813, No. 85, P. 897.

watchmen were not in all instances inhabitants of the village in which they were employed. In fact the number of them employed appeared variable and in some villages inconsiderable. In these villages where ravannias were not found, persons called Rukhas were frequently appointed instead. (75)

The carpenter, ironsmith, barber, potter, Dher, Chamar, Bhungee were so useful to the village that they were generally to be found in every village establishment and wherever such was not the case the villages obtained the temporary service of persons from other villages in the neighbourhood. The tailor, mali, mochee, washerman and Kotwals were generally not found in all the villages except in those that were very large and inhabited by Patidars. The Ravannias, Havalgars, Puggies and Bhurtanias appertained to the village establishment but were considered as servants of the village though not permanent or hereditary as others and their services could be terminated when they were of no use. (76)

The village servants and the artificers of trade were paid both in cash and kind. Labour when paid in money was from 4 to 7 paises per day according to the

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75. J.D.V. 1836, No. 34/387, P.26.

76. List No. 11, Ahmedabad Vol. 27, P.A., Pune.

the urgency of the business in hand but labour in the fields during harvest was usually paid for grain from 3 to 5 seers per diem. The curious way by which the remuneration was made may be gleamed from the dara or rule of assessment which was in use at Arara village of Nadiad.<sup>(77)</sup> "The Loohar (blacksmith) receives annually  $1\frac{1}{2}$  maunds of grain per plough from each cultivator and keeps all agricultural implements in repair free of any other charge. The sootar (carpenter) receives in like manner and on the like conditions  $1\frac{1}{2}$  maund; the Koomar (pot maker) 1 maund, the Darjee or tailor 1 maund and the Waland (barber) 1 maund. Upon any marriage among the villagers, the blacksmith presents a lamun deeva (a small utensil of iron used as a lamp) and is presented in return with Rs.1; the carpenter presents a Bajut or wooden stool and is presented in return with Rs.1; the pot maker supplies earthen pots for the marriage feast and is presented with Rs.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . The tailor has no offering to make but receives upon the marriage of a boy  $\frac{1}{2}$  a rupee and upon that of a girl 7 pice. The barber receives  $1\frac{1}{2}$  rupee upon the marriage of a Patidar and Rs.1 upon that of a Koli.

Table No. II states the money and land allowances enjoyed by the different categories of village servants. Their lands also known as Chakrea (see Table No. II of

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77. S.R.B.G. XI, P. 76-77.

Chapter II) were supposed to be rent free and were perhaps made as an additional temptation to <sup>induce</sup> ~~include~~ them to settle down in the villages. These lands were either filled by themselves or let out to others as was convenient, with little interference, from government. From the above table it is clear that some of the servants were remunerated only by land, and the value of the estimated produce derived from their lands accounted for about 60% of their total emoluments. Their payments in cash were made through the patels and talatis of the villages.

#### Agriculturists - Social Structure :

So far we have considered the non-agricultural population of the village. Regarding the agricultural population we may divide it into five distinguishing classes :

- (1) The Patidars; (2) Ordinary Kunbis; (3) Cultivating Muslims; (4) Better class of Kolis; (5) Poor Kolis.

The origin and land rights of the Patidars have been discussed in Chapter II. The Pattidars were generally Kunbis but not necessarily so as Rajputs, Bhattelas, Bohras, even Tulbda Kolis when belonging to families which once had proprietary rights were also

called Pattidars.<sup>(78)</sup> They were good substantial agriculturists possessing agricultural capital and stock and were proud of their traditions and the enviable position they enjoyed in society. In fact the Pattidari villages in the Kheda Jilla had an anna value put up on them, indicative of the social status of the community.<sup>(79)</sup>

The Pattidars Kunbis were very tenacious of their rights and refused to intermarry or even eat with the ordinary (non-proprietary) Kunbis of the same subdivision. They would only receive a daughter of that class in consideration of a handsome dowry; indeed, they lost character by the connection and it was therefore avoided by all who considered themselves high and of pure descent. The Pattidar's rights were strictly hereditary and he could leave his lands for any period reclaiming them again whenever he returned and continued to hold them as long as he paid or furnished security for his portion of the revenue.<sup>(80)</sup>

The Pattidars were excellent cultivators particularly of the superior kinds of malia crops, whenever capital was required they had a great advantage for their position and the weight their name carried in the region enabled them to raise money from the Sahukars,

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78. B.G.S., CXIV, P. 8.

79. Ibid., P. 154.

80. S.R.B.G., XI, P. 11.

which the ordinary Kunbi would have found difficult to do so.<sup>(81)</sup> In fact, those villages were found the most flourishing ones, which had the greatest number of Pattidars.

The ordinary Kunbis along with the Patidars formed one fourth of the total population and were the principal cultivators of the soil and almost all the Patels of the large villages were of this caste. The term Kunbi was generally given to the pure Sudra or fourth caste, but who in Gujarat was generally a cultivator.<sup>(82)</sup> According to tradition, the ancestors of Kunbis were emigrants from Ajmer and Central India. There were three tribes of Kunbis viz. Lewa, Kudja, and Arjana, in Gujarat the first two being more common. And amongst these the Lewa Kunbis were more numerous and were even considered superior of the two.<sup>(83)</sup> The habits, way of life and the general character of both were the same and although they ate together, they did not intermarry. The kunbis were strict vegetarians and abstained from fish and meat. They were first rate cultivators, industrious, preserving and thrifty. They were particularly well acquainted with the qualities and powers of all the variations of the soil and were perfect mas-

81. B.G.C., CXIV, P. 101.

82. Walter Hamilton, Op.cit., Vol. I, P. 612.

83. Monier Williams, Op.cit., P. 43.

ters of all the circumstances which were favourable or adverse to the growth of each particular crop.<sup>(84)</sup>

Again, they were by no means averse to new experiments. They carried on their cultivation with industry and skill and were rewarded with equivalent returns and thus were able to pay high rates of taxation.

The dwellings of the Kunbis and Patidars were generally uniform, substantial and sufficiently roomy according to their respective stations in life.<sup>(85)</sup> The walls of the houses were built of bricks and earth and those of the higher order painted with Chunam whilst those of the lower classes were built of mud with thatched roofs. In fact they were considered as the most respectable part of the population as well as attentive agriculturists.

There were a good many Muslims cultivators in this Jilla amongst whom there were a few substantial farmers as well. However as a class they were not good cultivators; one reason being that their women took no part in outdoor work which gave the Hindu cultivators a great advantage as their women were industrious and did a large portion of the field labour of their farms.<sup>(86)</sup>

84. Ibid.

85. R.D.V. 146, No. 8, P. 59.

86. B.G.S. CXIV, P. 601.

Formerly the Muslims engaged little in agriculture or manufactures addicting themselves to trade and market professions. Under the British rule many gradually resorted to agriculture as their profession.<sup>(87)</sup>

The Kolis were generally bad cultivators unskillful and thriftless and were formerly known for their predatory habits. A better class of Kolis known as the Tulbda differed little from the ordinary kunbis in the fact that they were quite good cultivators. Thus they were an exception to the general notion of the Kolis being adverse to agricultural pursuits.

The Chuwalia Kolis were generally very poor, fond of drink and an adventurous life and were certainly not good cultivators.<sup>(88)</sup> They had no resources to secure them against the effect of bad seasons and being indifferent cultivators the profits of good crops even were not so great as to admit of the cultivators providing for contingencies after the payment of revenue. In the villages inhabited by these Kolis the soil, from neglect want of manure and other causes was less productive. They were generally poor and often much in debt to

87. Walter Hamilton, Op.cit., Vol. I, P. 612.

88. B.G.S. CXIV, P. 602.

Banians and others. The Koli hamlets of which there were a great number in the Eastern parts of the Kheda Jilla and along the banks of the Mahi river were almost entirely straw huts. Of course some improvement in the dwellings and habits of Kolis was effected under the British. (89)

The difference in the character of the Kolis and Kunbis could be seen in the appearance of their fields. (90)  
The Koli encouraged at the expense of his crop bamboo and other trees in the midst of his most fertile fields as a means of revenue without the necessity of labour; the kunbi on the other hand cleared his land and neglected to plant trees even at convenient places.

The cultivators also belonged to the castes of Rajputs, Brahmins and even the artisans in the villages generally had a few beeghas. (91)

The cultivators not only belonged to different castes but were also of different classes. Thus it was observed that in Gujarat the ryots had this in common with the same class in other parts of India that they

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89. R.D.V. 1846, No. 8, P. 59.

90. Ibid., 1844, No. 10/1567, P. 100.

91. R.D.D. 1820, No. 153, P. 1887.

consisted of two classes one proprietary and another non-proprietary.<sup>(92)</sup> It was among the proprietary class that almost all the land was distributed and they could not be legally dispossessed of their lands as long as they paid the government revenue.

In the main, the proprietary cultivators were the Patidars whose social position has been discussed above and also in chapter II. The proprietary cultivators hired non-proprietary cultivators who were usually of two kinds - customary tenants (Chalu) and tenants at will or uparwaree or firta. In the Pattidari villages, the customary tenants were generally those who cultivated the common lands.<sup>(93)</sup> As the proprietors did not want these lands themselves and as it was an object to them to get them cultivated, the tenants were naturally undisturbed in their possession and thus they gradually acquired a customary title to the possession of their holdings. These under tenants also known as Assamis were generally favoured to the utmost of the Patidars power.<sup>(94)</sup> Apart from the common lands the best fields were allotted for them and were manured from the Patidars own stock. The houses in which they lived were built

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92. B.G.S. CXIV, P. 3. Their rights and tenures seem to be similar to the Khudkastakar.

93. Ibid., P. 7.

94. R.D.V. 1822, No. 4/28, P. 5.

for them by the Patidars who rendered them all assistance in times of emergency.

The tenants at will were by far the most numerous class who generally held on written leases for short term of years at rents entirely dependent on agreement.<sup>(95)</sup> The rents paid by the tenants were not entered in any of the village documents nor did the tenants name appear except as cultivators in the annual phani putruk.

The tenure of the stranger cultivators was in the strictest sense of the term a tenancy at will as well. These cultivators known as upariwaree were quite numerous and held on written leases and were similar to the Pahi kast of Bengal.<sup>(96)</sup>

Special mention may be made in general of the non-proprietary cultivators of the Patidars. They were likely to be dispossessed by the Patidar on non-payment of revenue, the position of the upariwaree or tenants at will being more precarious in such cases.<sup>(97)</sup> The rate of payment by the cultivators to the Patidar was fixed on mutual terms either in kind or money and has been studied

95. B.G.S. CXIV, P. 19.

96. R.D.V. 1835, No. 33/655, P. 338. For details see Satish Chandra, Medieval India, P. 29.46.

97. Alexander Mackay, Op.cit., P. 882.

in Chapter III. Two veras were paid by the cultivators to the Patidars viz. betale vera and sookree which were abolished by the British. The tenants also gave a little Veth or gratuitous service to the Patidars by lending their carts bullocks, offering ghee etc. on births, marriages and other occasions in the family of the Patidar.

We do not have sufficient information to form an idea of the position of the tenants of Senja villages exclusively. However speaking on the condition of the cultivators in general, we find that the proprietary cultivator enjoyed a prescriptive occupancy over his land which guaranteed the possession and usufruct of the same as long as the dues of the state were met.<sup>(98)</sup> In fact all the descendants of the original Patels of the village were considered to have a hereditary right of possession and could not be dispossessed so long the revenue was paid. And as long as they paid the dues they were not only secure in their own possession but also could transmit the lands to their children as an inheritance. These proprietary cultivators could also sell or mortgage their rights to the land it being incumbent on the part of the Patidars to consult his fellow sharers in such cases.<sup>(99)</sup>

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98. Alexander Mackay, Op.cit., P. 78.

99. R.D.V. 1821-22, No. 21/45, P. 808. This is discussed in detail in Chap. II.

It may be mentioned here that to assist them in agricultural labourers, the cultivators employed free men principally, though a few had slaves, especially those belonging to the Rajput and Muslim castes.<sup>(100)</sup>

Speaking on the cultivators, in general, we find they were in fact the most industrious, economical and indigenious set of men anywhere to be found.<sup>(101)</sup> If they had any fault, it was in being too submissive and peaceable. They suffered from two main problems - no security of property, and less market for their crops. Every cultivator from the richest to the poorest man who strived to eke out a subsistence from small plot of ground, <sup>had</sup> to sit up night after night to watch his crop or hire others to do so for him or abandon the hope of reaping a harvest.<sup>(102)</sup> He had to lodge his cattle under the same roof with himself and every day he had to convey his implements of labour to and from his field which was at a distance of several miles. In the sale of his produce he was impeded by taxes and bad roads. Looking at the general circumstances of the cultivators we find that most of them were unable to contend with the vicissitudes of the seasons for paying their assessment

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100. R.D.D., 1820, No. 153, P. 1889.

101. R.D.V., 1840, No. 5/1089, P. 44.

102. Ibid., 1844, No. 10/1567.

from the profits of their cultivation and subsisting by the same, they could seldom amass wealth, and thus upon a good market price for their produce and the ready sale of it depended their stability, (103)

It may be stated here that anything like compulsion or appression in forcing the ryots to cultivate was not found in the Kheda Jilla, though it was prevalent in Surat. (104)

Generally speaking, the cultivators seldom quit the village "where their fathers were born and died; there they ploughed the fields, reaped the harvest and tended the cattle to the groves and lakes which surround their humble dwellings. (105) However when they were hard-pressed they removed to another pargana where they could obtain a settlement on more easy terms. (106)

Before concluding we might take cognisance of a most useful and valuable member, of the village community viz. the village bania. (107) At first sight he might

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103. Ibid., 1832, No. 3/407, P. 200.

104. Ibid., 1834, No. 12/556, P. 114.

105. James Forbes, Op.cit., Vol. I, P. 369.

106. R.D.D. 1803, No. 38, P. 843.

107. R.D.V. 1844, No. 407/664, P. 187-238.

appear to be a clog to the prosperity of the country by means of his absorbing an undue portion of the profits of the ryots. Yet, in the long run such was not the case. The village Bania was a friend of the ryot and in time of need supplied him with the means of celebrating marriages, performing religious ceremonies and enjoying festivals at which custom required large sums of money, to be disbursed. Thus the ryots were necessitated to have recourse to the sarrafs or money lenders rather than have a lasting stigma cast upon their families by the omission of any of their caste rites. Of course, government did grant them Tagavi loans but these were only to help the needy cultivators with cattle and seed for agricultural purposes, not to defray the cost of caste rites and ceremonies such as weddings etc.

Again, the government revenue to a very great extent was realised through the agency of the Pudgur sarrafs (already detailed in chapter III) which shows that the ryots could not do without the intervention of the sarrafs even in their transactions with government.

In the Kheda Jilla, there were about 50,000 cultivators of government land,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of whom were in a condition to dispense with the sahuakar aid by being possessed of sufficient funds of their own but the remaining  $\frac{3}{4}$ ths could not carry on their affairs without the assistance

of money lenders. Of this latter number about two-thirds were regular in the payment of sums borrowed from the sarrafs and consequently no suits were filed against them nor were they obliged to pay higher interest. The rest of the ryots about 125000 were so straightened in their circumstances as not to be able to discharge their debts punctually and were therefore required to pay 12 per cent interest on sums borrowed besides a premium of from Rs.1 to Rs.6 per cent of which was always added to the loan and bonds passed were for the total amount inclusive of premium. Those parties which gave trouble in the payment of debts were quickly proceeded against in the civil courts and the debt being proved attachment of property according to Regulations IV, Section 63 of 1827 ensued.<sup>(108)</sup> However such was seldom the case owing to the mutual dependence of the debtor and creditor. The latter by shackling the cultivators would only injure himself, he knew his interests better and saw good security in the saleable and valuable produce raised by the cultivators and thus the returns and advances made by one to the others formed a good system of exchange. The debts, too, did not appear to affect the respectability, or mode of living of the cultivators and seldom gave rise to difficulties or in convenience. The tie between the

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108. Ibid., P. 237.

the village sahukar and his poor cultivator was strong and well understood.

It may also be mentioned that the village banias in Gujarat as in the Deccan were not foreigners but lived for generations in the same village and were intimately concerned in its welfare and prosperity. When a village banian did migrate elsewhere, it was invariably supposed to have been caused by a want of success in dealing with the ryots and the desire of trying his fortune elsewhere.<sup>(109)</sup> Thus one could note the difference in the dealings of the village banian and sahukars of large towns. The former accomodated the ryots of their villages by purchasing their grain in advance often at a high price but still within their means to pay it while the sahukars took advantage of the necessities of individuals to advance them smaller sums on promissory notes, the contents of which they were usually ignorant of and taking advantage of their ignorance generally on terms for beyond all calculation of their risk of loss.<sup>(110)</sup>

However not all the cultivators were in debt. Several families in most villages had little capitals of their own which they made use of in lending to the less fortu-

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109. Ibid., 1844, No. 107/1664, P. 228.

110. Ibid., P. 229.

nate of their body, the proportion of such families in a village being 12 or 15 in 100. (111)

In Conclusively speaking we might say that though the cultivators could not live luxuriously they were not ill off and led a simple life. (112) They seldom visited the cities and preserved an innocent simplicity of manner. (113) While comparing the situation of the agricultural classes in the Kheda Jilla with their counterparts in England, It was remarked that the condition of the former had a great advantage over the latter. (114) The comparison was proportionately more favourable to those ryots who held land subject to a lighter assessment. Again, though the standard rate of rent of Government land was half the produce, the rate was far from being a heavy impost since it covered the landlords rent, the public dues to the state and most of the municipal charges of the country (these were levied on the cultivators exclusively in England).

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111. Ibid., 1825, No. 4/114-A, P. 459.

112. British Heber, Op.cit., P. 325.

113. James Forbes, Op.cit., Vol. I, P. 369.

114. East India Papers, P. 762.

## Chapter - VII/ Table No.1

Statement showing the amount of land and money allowances enjoyed by the Patels.

Name of the Pargana	Lands as Bee-2 Wuss-ghas	Wiss-wassa	Estimated picture of Land	Rs.a.p.	Payable in cash from the distri-cts (Patel's Inam Money)	Rs.a.p.	Total Amt. payable from the amt. of deductions from gross Jamabandi	Rs.a.p.	Payable in cash from treasuries of Kaira Jilla(Patel's Inam money)	Rs.a.p.	Total
1. Kheda	55	-	339.0.0	11.8.0	-	339.0.0	8.0.0	347.0.0			
2. Napaad	5	-	11.8.0	317.6.0	-	11.8.0	1045.0.0	1056.8.0			
3. Mahundha	113	10	499.4.2	860.4.0	-	317.6.0	3759.8.0	4076.14.0			
4. Alina	136	1	105.0.0	252.4.0	-	499.3.2	1541.0.0	2040.3.2			
5. Thasra	370	5	757.8.0	642.12.0	-	860.4.0	2504.0.0	3364.4.0			
6. Oomret	45	10	93.12.0	154.12.0	-	105.0.0	410.0.0	515.0.0			
7. Kapadvanj	204	-	255.2.0	67.7.7	261.15.0	514.3.0	1393.0.0	1907.7.0			
8. Antroli	202	10	0	0	0	322.9.7	624.0.0	946.9.7			
9. Borsad	185	5	0	0	0	762.8.0	9814.0.0	10577.4.0			
10. Matar	228	10	0	0	0	1543.0.0	3249.0.0	4792.0.0			
11. Mehem-dabad	29	-	-	-	-	93.12.0	75.0.0	168.12.0			
12. Sundana	50	50	-	-	2.0.0	156.0.0	290.0.0	446.0.0			
13. Dholka	208	-	-	-	-	529.12.0	759.8.0	128.4.0			

Chapter - VII / Table No. 2\*

Statement showing the Village servants of the Kheda Jilla who are paid their allowances from the deductions from the gross Jamabandi.

N A M E S	Lands			Estimated pro- duce of land	Payable in cash from the districts	Total amount
	Bee- ghas	Wus- sas	Wis- was- sas			
1. Rawanias	5578	16	5	11873.11.2	29376.4.0	41249.15.2
2. Paggis	9966	7	5	19312.6.6	1047.0.0	20359.6.6
3. Kotwals	1560	3	0	2879.8.4	358.8.0	3238.0.4
4. Havildar	10	-	-	20.0.0	349.7.9	369.7.9
5. Bhungees	22	10	-	67.8.0	-	67.8.0
6. Rukhas	250	15	-	475.6.7	23.0.0	498.6.7
7. Casseeds	94	-	-	211.4.0	-	211.4.0
8. Beldars	11	15	-	84.8.0	-	84.8.0
9. Carpenters	390	15	-	890.7.0	-	890.7.0
10. Koombhars	478	17	10	1144.13.11	35.12.0	1180.9.11
11. Darjees	52	5	-	118.12.5	0.8.0	119.4.5
12. Lohars	176	15	10	394.4.10	-	394.4.0
13. Hajams	2811	12	15	6735.7.8	47.9.3	6783.0.11
14. Mali	76	5	-	153.2.0	3.0.0	156.2.0
15. Mochee	2	10	-	6.8.0	-	6.8.0
16. Dhobhi	111	15	-	276.2.7	-	276.2.7
17. Brahmins	4	-	-	8.0.0	-	8.0.0
18. Tragallas	20	-	-	40.0.0	-	40.0.0
19. Sonnes	3	-	-	9.0.0	-	9.0.0
20. Dhuries	17	6	-	35.12.10	-	35.12.10