

### C O N C L U S I O N

Comprising one of the finest fertile tracts of Gujarat, the district of Kheda was primarily an agricultural region. Its industrious cultivators (specially Kunbis) produced a wide variety of crops, both ordinary as well as superior, and were eager to adopt themselves to the changing demands(of crops) of time. The cropping pattern under the British was primarily moulded by their interests in trade and commerce. However, it were the food-grains which continued to dominate the area under agricultural production. There was hardly any change in agricultural technology. The implements used in husbandry were traditional with little improvements being effected to any of them. The facilities for irrigation also failed to develop to the extent required (and desired) both under the Marathas and British.

The proprietary cultivators enjoyed the hereditary rights of ownership in their land holdings under different tenures. The division or otherwise of the tenures held under the direct control of government,(Talpad) led to the origin of two district categories - Narwa and Senja tenures, the former being a more scientific one. The Narwadars were in fact, the proprietary and hereditary cultivators of land who jointly collected the

revenues and jointly conducted all village affairs. Many of the Narwa tenures which broke up under pressures from the Marathas, were revived on their original footing by the British. The alienated tenures existed under a wide variety of names, some owing their origin to the exigencies of time under the Marathas. The reasons for which they were assigned were several; some were held rent free while others subject to a quit-rent. The British (like their predecessors) failed to formulate a definite and clear-out policy toward these alienations and by their haphazard decisions created more confusion in this arena.

Land revenue, as elsewhere in India, formed the main source of income for the state. The methods and rates of assessment, under the Marathas, differed according to the type of land the crops grown and the castes that cultivated them. The enquiries conducted by the British in the late 1840s into the modes of assessment, removed many inequalities and bighoti rates ascertained on the beegha were introduced. The practises of rasad and manoti (which were well-suited to the financial requirements of the Maratha) were not so harsh and oppressive as they came to be regarded later under the British who abolished them. In fact, the Maratha administration marked by insecurity and distrust felt the need for

Bhat surety and manoti. Perhaps, a stricter and regular administration, enabled the British to reduce the pressure tactics (Roze Talbana, Mohsali) to force ryots to pay revenue. Again, under the British ready money payments of revenue were substituted for the pudgar system.

The decentralisation of the ruling authority during the second half of the eighteenth century led to the ascendancy of the local potentates viz. the Desais, Majumdars and Patels, the amins, in most cases being substitute for the Desais.<sup>(1)</sup>

Most of them increased their powers and emoluments under the Marathas. Special mention may be made of the desais who, in some cases, came to be regarded as revenue farmers-cum-managers of the different parganas. The prerogatives of the hereditary officers were curtailed to a large extent by the British. However they still continued to perform important functions, those functions which an ordinary government establishment would have found difficult to perform. Thus they were still not without their use especially the Majumdars, whose duties were considered onerous and res-

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1. These were the intermediary Zamindars as discussed by Nurul Hasan in 'Zamindars under the Mughals', in Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History. (Ed. R.E. Frykenburg, New Delhi, 1979).

possible. <sup>With</sup> The appointment of Mattadar Patels as also the Mukhi Patels under the British, three categories of this class seemed to emerge - (1) Mukhi Patels (2) Mattadar Patels (3) Those patels who were the descendants of the original patel and though not enjoying official duties enjoyed the hereditary right of possession. (Similar to the Khudkashta category). They could sell and mortgage their lands and could not be removed as long as they paid revenues to government regularly.

With the introduction of the Kamavisdar in the pargana administration, ijara practise gained momentum under the Marathas. As our study has shown, ijara was not all that ruinous as it might appear at first glance. This perhaps prompted the British to adopt ijara practises on a widespread scale. They were however not every successful primarily due to the high rates of assessment. However, their Khata leases led to the introduction of ryotwari settlement to a large extent.

Further, the talati office which had more or less ceased to exist under the Marathas was revived under the British. The office was made stipendiary and incorporated with a lot of responsibility, much to the discredit of the position of the Patels. The scrutinises

conducted by the talatis into the resources of the different parganas served in removing anomalies in revenue assessment, collection and administration. This, in turn must have helped to protect the cultivators against unlawful exactions and unwarranted disputes regarding property, etc. However, it must not be forgotten that these talati scrutinises were not always accurate and thus irregularities continued.

Though primarily Rajputs, the grassias also belonged to different tribes of Hindus and Muslims. The attempts by the ruling authority (beginning with Ahmed Shah) in subjugating these autonomous chiefs led to the rise of talpad and wanta tenures, the latter subject to a salamā, the rates of which were generally not fixed. Those who remained turbulent and rebellious came to be known as Mewasis. The grassias were either semi-autonomous chiefs (as these found in the Ahmedabad Collectorate) or those who were enjoying small wanta holdings or even those who were only being paid grass in cash (these latter categories were found in the Kheda Collectorate). The Mughal or the Maratha government, did not interfere in the internal management of the possessions held by grassias. Their independence was much circumscribed under the British, who increased their tribute and appointed Mukhi, Patels and talatis in their areas of jurisdiction. Non-accept-

tance and clamour against such hitherto, unheard of changes, prompted the British to revise their policies towards these privileged classes. The small wanta holders were made to surrender their land holdings to the village (in which they existed) in lieu of a cash payment. The grass payments in money continued as before, but, these were not to be collected by the grassias themselves (this practise being made, in some cases, a source of oppression) but paid through the government treasury under the British.

The Mewasis were either Rajputs or Kolis and also Muslims, generally occupying the intractable areas. Under the British, the military activities of this class were restrained to a large extent, though in all other respects they were left on their ancient footing. The Maliki tenure peculiar to the Thasra pargana, lost its original characteristics, in a marked degree, under the Marathas and British.

Inferences may be drawn on the condition of the peasants under the Marathas and British. The improving condition of the parganas under the Marathas proves, that the lot of the peasantry, if not ameliorated, would not have also declined to any appreciable extent (from that of the Mughal rule). The amendments in revenue administration under the British must have fostered the interests of the cultivators. However, whether there were any significant changes in their condition is

difficult to say due to lack of evidence. Regarding village servants, evidence indicates that they were supported by the village as a whole and the Jajmani system did not prevail here.

The geographical location of the Kheda Jilla made it an important centre for transit trade. Its import and export trade was mainly confined to the markets in Gujarat, Bombay, Konkan and the gulf countries, its principal commodity being tobacco. The transit and town duties, comprised under sayer were abolished by the British which diverted trade to the British ports, to the exclusion of non-British ones.

Generally speaking, the Marathas maintained a status-quo in their policies during the period under study. The loopholes in their administration appear to have been born out of their rule being transitory and due to lack of a centralised administration. Their financial exigencies encouraged rasad, manoti and ijara practises. However it appears that the Marathas and cultivators adopted themselves to the changing situation - if land alienations increased under the Marathas (perhaps due to increased revenue demand or due to lack of supervisory control) the latter imposed veras on such alienations; thus ultimately the public revenue was not allowed to suffer.

The British policy, primarily underlined two objectives - (i) Maximisation of revenue, (ii) Encouragement of trading and commercial activities. The interests of the cultivators appear to have been accidental and secondary to them. Thus, though many of the veras and land customs were abolished by the British, the magnitude of land revenue demand remained the same as it was under the Marathas. Again self interest prompted the British to encourage the cultivation of cotton and prohibit that of opium much against the wishes of the cultivators. Further, the sale of British cloth and yarn was encouraged at the cost of the indigenious cloth and yarn, by removing the duties on the former. This must have had an <sup>d</sup>average effect on the economic condition of the artisans. The heriditary officers were brought within the purview of the judiciary to a greater extent under the British, which must have upset the social positions of these classes, especially that of the Patels. However, these officers still continued to indulge in mal-practises. Inspite of the claims of the British officers that they had offered a more regularised and systematic administrative machinery many annomalies continued to exist in different areas. Whether these were removed by the British later, is the subject for future research.