

## CHAPTER IV

### VILLAGE SOCIETY

Few will question the proposition that no discussion on agriculture, land tenures and land revenue is complete without an account of the village society. It was in the villages where majority of the agricultural population or the holders of rights and interest in the land lived, and the administrative machinery operated in order to collect land revenue. The state and its political, economical and to a large degree social edifices were built on the revenue from land.<sup>1</sup> The village or mauza was the smallest and primary unit of land revenue. Then judging by the role that village played in the plethora of medieval politics it is important to study its socio-economic structure.

Social life of villages centered around its village communities, which were regarded by early British writers as (autonomous in matters of administration, economically self-reliant, largely self-sufficient, and sort of mini republics, capable of catering to the local needs.<sup>2</sup> Mountstuart Elphinstone expressed his great admiration for the village communities in the following words, "though probably not compatible with a very good

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1. Noman Ahmed Siddiqui, op.cit., pp.8-9. Also see, Baden Powell, Village Communities in India; and Ravindra Kumar, Western India in the Nineteenth Century, a study in the Social History of Maharashtra, London, 1968.

2. See, H.S. Maine, Village Communities in East and West, London, 1895, pp.100-111.

form of government, they are an excellent remedy for the imperfections of a bad one, they prevent the bad effects of its negligence and weakness and even present some barrier against its tyranny and rapacity."<sup>3</sup>

However, this character of economic self reliance and independence has been over done (by Charles Metcalfe, Henry Maines, M.Elphinston etc.). Villages were very much a part and parcel of the whole economic set up of the region. Urban Hinterland relationship i.e. flow of goods (and services) from one to another and vice-versa and its effect on the absolutely autonomous nature of the village society has to be kept in mind. Especially in 18 th century, under the Maratha system of Ijara or revenue farming village society lost its independent character. Most of the revenue farmers i.e Mamlatdars and Kamavisdars were<sup>4</sup> big bankers or merchants from the gasbah or cities . These moneyed men had deeply penetrated into the rural sector. Village Patel and Baniya, the most important constituents of village society who wielded great social economic and political power in the village, were bound with these capitalist by common interests. Thus it would be fallacious to consider village society as an autonomous body.

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3. M. Elphinston, Report, pp.15 - 16.

4. Daftar No. 280, 283, F.No. 10, P.No. 39, D.No. 5, 1812; S.S.R.D., Vol. VII, No. 435; Ibid, No. 438.

Similarly, the belief that village society was formed by a group of families united by the assumption of common kingship, does not hold ground.<sup>5</sup> Frequent alienations of lands by the original proprietors augmented the heterogeneous ethnic and inter communal character of the agricultural population. Moreover the policy of the state of extension of agricultural land, led them to lease out the villages to the willing ( and of course resourceful) persons of different castes and clans.

#### Origin and Constituents of the Village Society :

Village societies were of the most primitive origin, and were probably coeval with the villages themselves.<sup>6</sup> A few cultivators assembling together for mutual protection were glad to receive among them such artificiers, as their humble manner of life required the service of, and as in other societies some one more influential than the rest would be required to represent them (to the paramount power and settle the revenue demand and look after other needs. Slowly some others like a priest, Jyotishi, and some menial servants etc., also joined the rest.

A village, was thus termed a self-constituted unit organized rather from the primitive necessity of its inhabitants than by design, and strengthened and perpetuated by the hereditary succession of its office bearers.<sup>7</sup> The numerous and rapid

5. Maine, op.cit., p.101. Also read an article by B.R.Grover, The Concept of Village Community in North India, During the Mughal Age and Pre British Era, pp. 5 - 11.

6. S.R.B.G., IV, 1852, A Report by R.N.Gooddine, p.2.

7. Ibid.

changes of government in dissolving all stability, taught men to seek for preservation of name and property - within themselves and conferred a degree of importance upon village society, which under more stable governments, they might never have attained to.

Village officials though purely the servants of government, ancient usage had made their offices hereditary, and these offices formed the only description, other than personal, of hereditary property in Gujarat or rather all over the country. Such hereditary rights and privileges granted both in land and cash formed the watan of the officials.<sup>8</sup> It was counted by all who possessed wealth or influence : wealth or the service of the State might pass away, but a watan - a sure livelihood and source of respect always remained. The mere right of settlement in, or of belonging to, a village, was a mark of respectability, an indispensable requisite to all classes of people: not only the cultivator, but the poorest artisans must belong to, and possess a house - real property in one. To become puraganda or deserted was the greatest misfortune and the sign of irremediable poverty.<sup>8a</sup>

Thus, village formed the basic unit of stability and the repository of civil rights in the rural sector. It was the only institution with which the people had emotional ties, the only object of their national attachment.

8. Ibid ; Vaze's Manual, section IV, part I, p.4867.

8a. Jamav, R. No. 1, D.No. 42, 1752.

Village was thus a desirable place of residence for those who had not already gained a settlement. But the inhabitants having been at considerable labour and expense and feeling their own importance, were usually unwilling to admit a settler without an equivalent. The usual way of gaining a settlement was by making some village improvement such as digging a well, building a temple or repairing the wall. The village, as thus constituted, consisted of two principal classes of inhabitants - the cultivators and the office bearers, right from the Patels down to the establishment called Vuswaya.<sup>9</sup>

At the apex of the village society stood the Patel as the head of the village and at the lowest rung the village establishment of hereditary artisans called Vuswaya. Most of them held large or small pieces of land in accordance to the position held by them in the village community and which was considered as their watan. The most useful and legitimate employment of the artisans was that of labouring for the villagers in the several lines of their craft, but they also held another position as the village staff and attendants on the Patel, and assistants in the various social and festival ceremonies of the village.

Patel : Patel stood at the apex of the village society. Origin of their position as head of the village was in many instances very ancient and had arisen for various causes, in amongst the most common of which was that of their ancestors having founded the

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9. S.R.B.G. IV. P.5.

villages they belonged to, re-establishing them when they had declined or fallen into decay.<sup>10</sup> Their office was hereditary and in many situations they had proprietary rights and termed as Zamindars.<sup>11</sup>

Being head of the senior most family in the village his position as the leader of the community was formally endorsed by the State. The Patel, therefore, combined in his person facets of legal and traditional domination which made him the most important individual in the village and invested him with sweeping powers.<sup>12</sup>

He was the chief revenue officer of the village, as the settlement of yearly Jamabundy was to be reached upon with the Patel.<sup>13</sup> The placing of a total amount of revenue on each village and holding the Patel responsible for the amount, placed much of the internal management of the village in Patel's hand. He was the head of police and judicial administration of the village.<sup>14</sup> Infact Patel performed on a small scale what a Mamlatdar did on a district level. He allotted the lands to such cultivators as had

10. Ahmedabad Vol. 27, P.4; Report, p.3.

11. R.D.D., 1805, No.46, P.1317, M.S.A.B.

12. J.D.V., 1823, 5/57, P.88; R.D.V., 1821-22, No.21/45, p.663

13. Elphinston, Report, p.37; R.D.D., 1819, No.145, p.413; R.D.V., 1823, NO.5157, pp.85-86; J.D.V., 1827, No.71133, p.463.

14. J.D.D., 1823, 5/57, p.87; R.D.D., 1805, No.45, p.1317

no landed property of their own and fixed the rent which each was required to pay. Patel collected the revenue for government from all the ryots, conducted all its arrangements with them and to meet the government demand promoted the cultivation. Knowing that they would be called upon every year for the revenue of their village, Patels 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.<sup>15</sup> For this purpose they sought to encourage uprees to come and settle in their villages by offering favourable terms to them, such as building a house or digging a well for them or give them on lease, according to their abilities, small farms of 15 to 20 bighas.<sup>16</sup>

He acted both as representative of the people and an agent of the government.<sup>17</sup> He was not less useful in executing the orders of the government than in asserting rights or at least in making known the wrongs of the people. He wielded great influence over the ryots. His system was entirely that of exclusion and self aggrandizement and the settlement of a new cultivator, shop keeper, or artisans could not be effected without his making a considerable concessions. The new cultivator wishing to become a permanent settler must purchase the privilege with a handsome

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.; For rights and privileges enjoyed by Patel in general, see, Pune Jamay, Daftar No.26, Document No. 154-A, 1758.

17. J.D.V., 1827, No. 7/133, p.463.

donation and the occasional upree, artisan or shopkeeper, by submitting to the best terms of impost he could obtain.<sup>18</sup> For any work of improvement in the village, say for digging a well etc.<sup>19</sup> it was Patel's duty to undertake it or superwise it.

The position and power of the Patel had greatly enhanced under Maratha system of revenue farming. The whole pargana was given out in farm to the highest bidder probably some wealthy banker or influential land holder. This person proceeded to his district, armed with letters of authority for the entire administration of it, both in criminal and revenue matters and was styled as Kamavisdar or Mamlatdar. In some cases another person who might have interest at court was allowed to retain the title in order to benefit by its emoluments but all power was in the hands of the farmer.<sup>20</sup> The farmer, then called together the land holders of his district the Muzmoodars, Desais, Amins and Patels, and with their aid fixed a certain amount to be levied from each village in it, so calculated of course as to cover the general expenses of management and remuneration to himself in addition to the amount at which he might have taken the farm. The rental fixed for each village was again explained to the Patel. After this the Patels were solely responsible for the collection of the revenue. Patels power was absolute and unhindered as to the means they may choose to

18. S.R.B.G., XIV, P.15.

19. R.D.D., 1818, No. 130, p.2760.

20. List No.11, Ahmedabad Vol. 27, p.23.



employ for the purpose. If they were able to collect more the profit was theirs or if they failed to collect the required sum (tankha) the loss was to be made up by them.

Under the system pursued by the Marathas the powers of the Patel was at its zennith, as much was left to their own discretion. The farmers being only concerned with the revenue and restrained themselves from interfering with the task of the revenue management and collection. So, whenever the contracted sum could not be recovered from the regular assessment the deficit was made by the Patels either by borrowings or from throwing any additional vera on the peasants. This deficit tax was denoted as

<sup>21</sup>  
Khote vera. Another course pursued by the Patels was to mortgage or sell the Khalisa villages in order to get the ready money.<sup>22</sup> This practice which became widespread during the 18<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to tenures called Vechania and Giranea. Lands thus alienated by mortgage were called Giranea and its various categories have been discussed in Chapter II.<sup>23</sup>

All the lands alienated by sale were categorised under <sup>24</sup>Vechania. These sales were made in entire resignation of all rights, claims and titles. Some of them were absolutely rent free or Nukro Vechan while some paid a small quit rent and were

21. List No. 11. Ahmedabad Vol. 27, p.8.

22. R.D.D., 1805, No. 45, p. 1317.

23. Giras Volumes, Residency File, 1806, No.713/V, C.R.O.B.

24. Ibid. (See Chapter II for details).

thus known as Salamee Vechan. Such lands as held in perpetuity were also known as aghat.

Alienations of land had become a serious problem. In Dholka 44 percent of the arable land was alienated, in Daskrohi it was 33 percent, Parantij it was 20 percent and Harsol, Modasa and Bayer the alienations were only to the triffling extent, viz. 14 percent, 6 percent and 12 percent respectively. It must be remembered that this is the proportion of the arable land, as almost all the alienated land of these Paraganas was under cultivation, the proportion would appear much higher if shown upon the cultivated land alone.

Alienations caused great problems in the assessment of the land revenue. Various instances were found whereby Bechan Salamee lands were inserted in the village Numoona and Mohsul was placed for the purpose of levying a Bigoti of Rs.10 per bigha, whereas holders of such lands were ready to pay salamee at the rate of half a rupee per bigha,<sup>25</sup> Various petitions were filed by the Patels in this regard.

Not only were the government lands thus alienated, even a portion of Patelship - a fourth, a third or a half was disposed of in adverse conditions.

As has been stated earlier Khalisa villages were either held

25. R.D.V., 1827, No.23/177 p.

26. R.D.V., 1823, No.5/57, pp.361-87.

Nirwa or Senja. In Senja villages there was only one or sometimes more number of Patels. The chief of these Patels was called Mattadar Patel as he used to affix his signature or Matt to all the documents related to the revenue.<sup>27</sup> All revenue settlements were made with the head Patel and he was responsible for whole of revenue. Position of Patel in a Senja village was much higher than that of Patels of Nirwa village.

Nirwa or Bhagdaree villages were divided into bhags amongst the descendants of the original Patel. These bhags were further divided into numerous Patees and holders were called Pateedars.<sup>28</sup> Infact all the Pateedar had equal right and privileges according to the share he had in the village and was a Patel in his own right. The most prominent of them took the responsibility of officiating the revenue settlements with the government.

According to the Vyut or usage of the village, from the consequence attached to his office as a government servant, he enjoyed the profit of the manual labour of the ryots whom he got to cultivate his lands as from being frequently called upon to attend the Kutchery and to various other duties he himself could not do so; besides, he obtained the loans of their bullocks to work in his fields, as well as rice plants to be transplanted in his lands.<sup>29</sup> All this formed a part of his Hugs. There were

27. Vaze's Manual, Sec.IV, P.II-A, P.5972.

28. Ibid.

29. R.D.V., 1848, NO.80, P.5, 11; R.D.D, 1820, NO.153, P.1844.

other underhand gains, all of which were never publicly brought to the notice of the Collector but continued uninterrupted from being sanctioned only by ancient local usage. The ryots who performed the services of the above nature for the mattadars were said to do so voluntarily.

For the management of the villages and carrying out other duties the Patels were entitled to certain allowances and privileges. These allowances were both in cash and land. Patels enjoyed them in perpetuity as their hereditary emoluments. The land grants to Patels were known as Patel Passaita, quite similar to Desai Passaita or Majmundar Passaita.<sup>30</sup> Patels held these lands, rent free. Besides these rent free or nukro lands Patels were entitled to various cash allowances and all these comprised of their watan.

In most of the villages in Ahmedabad Collectorate Patel's<sup>31</sup> were entitled to Mull Vera. It was an allowance paid annually in every village to Patels, normally to defray the expenses of the entertainment of strangers or for other petty improvements in the village such as aid for light at the Chaurah, etc. This allowance was fixed at the rate of 1.5 percent on the revenue of each village. Figures for Mull Vera are given below :-

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30. R.D.D., 1820, No.153, p.1847.

31. Ahmedabad Volume 27, P.23; Vaze's Manual, Section IV, Part II, P.5301.

	Rs.	a.	r.
Dholka, 91 villages	2855	8	11
Ahmedabad Daskrohi	4025	12	6
Jetalpur Daskrohi (48 villages)	2799	14	11
Parantij, 125 ditto	3172	13	5
Dhandhuka 11 ditto	47	6	9
Gogha 3 ditto	37	8	0
Viramgam 11 ditto	1673	4	8

Under the Marathas the payment of inams to patels was very irregular. In some cases the whole was taken by the person who was the active agent in settling the affairs of the village at the head kutcherry and the promise of an increase to his inams was often the means of obtaining an increase to the Jamabundy. In other cases all the Patels who signed the bond for the revenue of the village shared in the inam. Sometimes it was divided among the Patels according to their shares in the village and in some instances the whole amount was taken by each Patel alternately.

They used to receive Patel Sukri i.e. 5 to 10 ser from every heap or on every well and sometimes on every koss or bag used for drawing water. Patels had a prior claim to all village services. Their land as well as those belonging to their

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32. R.D.V., 1821, No. 5/5, p. 39.

33. R.D.V., 1821-22, No. 21/45, p. 824.

relations were exempted from the full payment of revenue. They<sup>34</sup> were also exempted from various veras.

Under the British, this irregularity continued in the initial period. As the system of farming was adhered to in the initial years, the inam was paid to the farmer but there was no particular sum received by those who discharged the duties of Patels. In many villages there was no inam whatever.

In some villages such allowances were made in the form of hull vera or plough tax. Plough tax originated in a practice of the Patel levying a certain sum on each plough, house or individual in order to supply a fund for the contingent expenses of the villages. An allowance of the similar nature called Chora<sup>35</sup> Kharch was prevalent in some parts of the Collectorate. It also covered contingent expenses of the village in entertaining travellers, celebrating festivals etc.

Apart from these, Patels were also entitled to other hugs enjoyed in cash and kind. For example they were entitled to receive 1/4 ser per mun on every produce of the village. They<sup>36</sup> also used to receive a present of cloth called Sapora. It was regulated by the amount of the revenue they paid to the government. When the custom of giving cloth was laid aside, the

34. R.D.D., 1820, No.157, p.4141.

35. R.D.V., 1827, NO.23/177, P.145 & 410.

36. R.D.D., 1804, NO.43, R.D.V., 1836, NO.7/694, P.35.

value of it was granted in money which was to be deducted from the amount of each kist payable to the government.

#### Changes witnessed under the British Rule

Advent of British rule brought about various marked changes regarding the power and prestige of the Patels. Patels who had till then wielded absolute power witnessed a great setback.<sup>37</sup> Regulation I of 1818 greatly stripped them of their powers.

The first blow came with the appointment of Talatee or accountants in each of the villages under Regulation II of 1814. The office of Talatee had existed earlier also. They were all over India hereditary functionaries of the village, subordinate to the Patels to whom they served as clerk and assistant. When on their best footing they were generally in league with the Patel and their accounts were often falsified to serve the purpose of the Patel. So his duties had almost become nominal and he failed to pose any check to the Patel. There was a sort of stigma attached to this office, as when the British got the power there were very few people with that designation or either with that title attached to their name and during the initial years great difficulty was faced by the Collectors to find suitable men to fill that office.<sup>38</sup>

Talatee's duties were defined to keep records of the village

37. B.R.S., III, P.685, Bombay Regulations, publication No. 19308.

38. B.R.S., III, P.685.

39. R.D.D., 1819, NO.149, P.402.

lands and resources and amongst other duties they were directed to maintain a register specifying every description of land exempt from paying revenue to the government.

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Before the Talatee Regulation was enacted fights between different candidates and their adherents for village management had become so frequent that it had abstracted their attention from their agricultural matters. In pursuit of personal financial gains immediate interest of the village and that of the State were being neglected. Much of the Khalisa lands were alienated in the form of Vechan and Giranea. Now, after the appointment of the new Talatees, the powers of the Patels were greatly curtailed. Talatees could correspond directly with the Kamavisdar, sidelining the Patels.

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Talatee was an officer direct from government and looked upto in village as its agent. He examined every man's condition and tenure and he was employed to make the collections and in a great measure to supersede the Patel in all his acts as agents of government. Various concealed possessions of the villages were also brought into light. Illegal alienations of government lands were to some extent, checked, improvement in agriculture and increase in revenues was also witnessed in various parganas. Thus this regulation proved quite beneficial to the village community, as well as in promoting the interests of the government.

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40. B.R.S., III, P.685.

41. Ahmedabad Vol. 27, p.7, B.R.S. III, P.682.



Next step which further curtailed the powers of the Patel was the Regulation of 1818 which called for the appointment of all the heads of the villages as Mukhi Patels.<sup>41</sup> The Mukhi Patels wielded great judicial and police powers and were responsible to the magistrate alone. Villages where there was only one Patel, he was to be appointed Mukhi and where there were numerous the chief or the head of those was to be appointed to this post. He was authorized to apprehend also the persons charged with committing crimes or offences. Mukhi had generally distinct remuneration in money or rent free lands for his services in that respect.

Both of the above mentioned Regulations greatly curtailed the powers of once so powerful a class of village headmen. On the other hand British administrators and specially Elphinston, were shrewd enough to realize the important position which the Patels held in the villages and the support which they had with the ryots. While analysing the advantages of the Talatee regulation M.Elphinston cautioned that Talatees had a tendency of extinguishing the authority of the Patels, who were already so much weakened.<sup>42</sup> He advised that care was to be taken, when the necessary information had been acquired to bring the Talatee's power within its natural bounds and to withdraw them from all interference with the immediate duties of the Patel.

When, on the inception of the British rule farming system was resorted to, the preference was still given to the Patels if they could offer the amount bidden by other farmer.<sup>43</sup> Plan to give

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42. Ibid., p. 685.

43. B.R.S., III, P. 685.

villages on leases whether ordinary or istavia, was found to be less objectionable as British realized that Patels had various ties with the ryots with whom he had been brought up and among whom he had to pass rest of his days. Moreover, he wielded great power and also respect among the ryots. He would be far more interested than any other farmer in the improvement of the agriculture and ryots as such. Thus, Patels were always encouraged to come forward and take up leases. But as farm was not given till every Ryot's rent had been settled, the Patel had not avowedly either the chance of gain or the risk of loss, except by discovering abuses. Rates at which every type of crop on different soils was to be adjudged were also clearly mentioned. In levying veras on different castes, Patels were to strictly adhere to the usage of the village as recorded in Talatees accounts. The usual village charges as Devasthan Kharch, Dharmadaya etc. were to be defrayed by the Patels. Earlier, for sinking wells and making other improvements in the village, Patel's permission was the only requirement. But in this field also his powers were curtailed. Before commencing on any of this kind of work notice had to be given to the Collector through Kamavisdars. The notice contemplated the time likely to be occupied in completing it, estimate of the probable expense that would be incurred. Then a person was sent to the proposed site by the Kamavisdar for inspection. After the completion of the work, again inspection was to be done. Only after this a gunwat or lease was given to the person by whom the work was undertaken securing to him twice the

sum spent by him. So the right which Patels had enjoyed since time immemorial of undertaking or supervising all improvement works in the village was also curtailed.<sup>44</sup>

Patels could not remove any ryot from the village on their own wish. The occupancy rights of the ryots were strongly respected and protected. Patels were required to report such matter to the Talatee and also furnish the reason for ryot wishing to change his place. If at the time of expiry of the leases the resources of the village appeared to be in a declining state due to mismanagement and oppressive conduct, a fine equal to five times the amount of defalcation was to be levied upon them. Introduction of ryotwari system i.e. a direct settlement of revenue with the ryot whereby he alone was held responsible for the assessment on his holding, effected a corresponding change in the circumstances of the Patel. The principal onus was removed from Patel and he was deprived of uncontrolled action and shorn of a great portion of his dignity.

Division of Patelship among various shares in Nirwa villages and selling of Pattees by Pateedars to outsiders had also effected position of Patels. Various hereditary hugs enjoyed by hereditary officers in land or cash were abolished. For instance Mull Vera, fixed at the rate 1.5 percent of the revenue of each village, was abolished.<sup>45</sup>

44. R.D.V., 1826, No. 1/33.

45. Ahmedabad Volume, 27, p.23.

Even after the commencement of the British rule, shares of each watandar was held in separate watan, and was paid separately. Money allowances to the mattadars were generally shown only in the district and not in the village accounts whereas their lands as well as that of the Mukhi and the cash pay<sup>46</sup> of the latter were debited to the village in the Gaum Kharch. By the Act XI of 1843, whole of the hereditary emoluments or watan of the Patel were considered one and the Mukhi was to be only one of their number selected from among the watandars of members of the Patel fraternity to perform duties belonging to the office.<sup>47</sup> Realizing the importance of this class always an attempt was made to conciliate this class to make their interests coincide with those of the State.

It was strongly felt that Patels allowance being granted as a remuneration for discharging the duty of Patel, the same should<sup>48</sup> not be subjected to division. This practice had produced serious evil, of the officiating officer being inadequately rewarded or the inconvenience of the office being filled yearly in rotation by one of a number of partners in the watan, in both cases rendered the discharge of the duty inefficient and unsatisfactory. So, it was suggested to form a fund to repay the services of some one individually, otherwise eligible head of the Patel family was to be deployed as Patel. It was finally decided

46. Statement of charges incurred on Khalisa villages (inclusive of Gaum kharch) is given in Table I.

47. Ahmedabad Volume, 27, P.12.

48. Vaze's Manual, Section IV, Part II, P.5335.

to remunerate them not by a percentage on the collections of their respective villages.

Thus, we can notice a clear change in the agrarian relations since the introduction of the British rule. Many of the powers of the traditional head of the village were scrapped and the ryot became the focal point of all settlements. His occupancy rights being acknowledged, attempts were made to fix Jamabundy directly with him under the ryotwari system. This greatly altered his position in the village society vis-a-vis Patel. A check was always put on all the actions of the Patel. In the villages which were given on lease to the Patel, care was taken to safeguard the rights of the ryots. Patels were required to report to the Talatee the removal of any ryot from his village and also the occasion of his wishing to change his place of residence as well as the name of the village to which he may have gone.<sup>49</sup> Due to the want of good kunbi ryots the Patels were cautioned against enticing old ryots from any of the villages belonging to the Company to come and reside in their villages.

#### Cultivators

Ryots were broadly divided into proprietary and non proprietary classes.<sup>49a</sup> All of proprietary classes possessed the freedom of or right of settlement in it and were hence termed as Pateedars in Gujarat, Khudkashtakars in Bengal and Gawkurees or

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49. R.D.V., 1826, No. 1/33.

49a. Ibid.

Mirasees or Thulwaheeks in Deccan. But the value of a settlement in a village naturally increased with the increasing population and in the course of time there arose another class of inhabitants, those who either from poverty or other causes could not obtain the right of settlement. This class was designated as Uparwaris or Uparis, a name fully expressive of their non right of residence in the village (this class was termed as Pahikashtas in Bengal).

Before going into the details of rights and privileges of those classes it is important to mention that this distinction between proprietary and non-proprietary ryots comes out more distinctly in Khalisa villages. In Talugadari, Grassia and Mewasi, the pattern of relationship was bit different. In Talugadari villages where ownership had been absorbed by the growth of wider landlord interest and the superior tenures had overshadowed the villages and they had become mere groups of tenants or had always been so, being located by the landlord himself or by his family members.<sup>50</sup> The only proprietary rights of the peasants were mere customary one that as long as he paid his rent to the chief<sup>51</sup> he would not be turned out. The Chief was the dhani (lord). The other form of villages usually designated as talpat or Khalisa were originally founded by the groups of cultivating castes and have been discussed in preceeding paragraphs.

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50. S.R.B.G., No. 106, P.46, A report by Peile.

51. Rogers, op.cit., P.22.

The proprietary class usually consisted of Pateedars.

Pateedars were the descendants of the original Patels or head of the village and all possessed an hereditary right of cultivation over the whole of the lands of their villages of which they could not be deprived so long as they continued to pay the assessment. In the beginning the proprietary body held the land in common agreeing upon the portion of the land to be cultivated by each member and other such details but with the passage of time differences started cropping up and new tenures emerged which could be termed as Nirwa or divided and Senja or entire.<sup>53</sup> When the village was Senja or managed by all the Pateedars jointly, no one could sell or mortgage his individual right because the interest of each was undefined and if any profit could be derived by employing a person to cultivate part of the land this profit was to be brought to the joint account. However, when a village was Nirwa, the whole land was divided among the Pateedars, each of whom was answerable for a portion of the revenue exactly in proportion to the extent of the share he held his interest in the village then ascertained.<sup>54</sup>

These proprietary cultivators enjoyed a prescriptive occupancy rights over their land which guaranteed the possession and usufruct of the same as long as the dues of the state were met.<sup>55</sup> All the descendants of the original Patels of the village

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

53. R.D.V., 1821-22, No.21/45, P.794.

54. Ibid.

55. Mackay, op.cit., P.78.

were said to have hereditary rights. They could not be dispossessed while they paid their revenue and even then, they had for a long time (at least 30 years) the right of reclaiming their lands on paying the dues of government. Their revenue was fixed, but under the Mughal subhadars in first half of the eighteenth century and the Maratha rulers in the second half they were loaded with other impositions which rendered that advantage to a mere name; destroying the value of their estates. Although, government took advantage of their attachment to land to make them pay considerably more than an upari, yet they were ready to keep their lands even after becoming a losing concern, until they were obliged to part with that from absolute want or until oppression lasted so long that advantages accruing from proprietorship were no longer there.<sup>56</sup> This attachment to their land did not flow exclusively from a desire of acquisition. It was equally a result of the privileges they enjoyed in the rural society and tremendous prestige which possessor of watan or right in land bestowed on its owner. Proprietary classes equally participated in the affairs of village and were thus an integral part of village society.<sup>57</sup>

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56. B.R.S., III, P.679.

57. G.W.Forrest,ed., Selections, p.286. Capt. Briggs Political Agent in Khandesh, explained the position of Mirasis of Deccan (which is also to an extent true to the Pateedars of Gujarat) as under the wattandars or Mirasi, Rayat. hold their land of right, it is also hereditary, saleable or transferable and on the occasion of its alienations from the family, title deeds are made out and witnessed not only by the military authorities but the deshmukhs of the districts and several surrounding Patils are called upon to be present at the transaction -----"



As has been mentioned above this class mainly constituted of Patels and Pateedars and their descendents. In Ahmedabad, in Nirwa villages there were generally four to five principal shares with a number of under shares.<sup>58</sup> In case a bhagdar wished to sell or mortgage his share he could do so but the share could only be purchased by his brothers or other near relatives or any other Pateedar. In case no one was ready to take up that bhag it could be offered to any stranger. But the problem in the last case was that other sharers<sup>59</sup> would not acknowledge him and the principal bhagdar would not be responsible for him, for as it was the custom if one of the sharers suffered loss, for other to give him assistance.<sup>60</sup> It could hardly be expected that this practice of sharing responsibilities of other sharers would be kept up in favour of a stranger or person of another caste, as majority of the Pateedars were Kunbis and Kunbis were held highest in social division. So, the course of selling a bhag to stranger was very rarely adhered too. Usually, it was managed by Pateedars on their joint account. The Pateedars who managed share during the absence of a Pateedar had a claim on his resuming it for any loss they may have sustained or for any permanent improvement they may have made.

The proprietary cultivators hired non-proprietary cultivators who were usually of two kinds - customary tenants

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58. R.D.V., 1821-22, NO.21/45, P.808.

59. R.D.V., 1843, NO.64/1506, PP.167-68.

60. Vaze's Manual, section II, Part 3, P.1827.

(Chalu) and tenants at will firta. In the Pateedari villages the customary tenants were generally those who cultivated the common lands. As the proprietors did not want these lands themselves and as it was an object to them to get them cultivated the tenants were undisturbed in their possession and thus they gradually acquired a customary title to the possession of their holdings. These under tenants, also known Assamis, were generally favoured to the utmost of the Pateedars power.<sup>61</sup> So the relation of Pateedars with his Assamis was a cordial one. Self interest<sup>62</sup> prevented him from increasing the assesement on his ryots. For, if the cultivators were forced to leave his share, the Narwadar would have had great difficulty in replacing him, as there was always a demand for good cultivators.<sup>63</sup>

Uparwaria cultivators were assessed lightly in comparison to the proprietary ryots. For example the ryots share was divided off at the rate of 1/2 of bajree, juwar and kuthal. 1/3 of mut, gowar, makai and sathee; 1/4th of kodra, tulee and all rabi produce, 1/5th of Kang and Chana whereas from the produce raised by uparwarias only 1/4th was taken.<sup>64</sup> However, this was not the uniform practice throughout the district. In some parts of the Dholka pargana the uparees were assessed at the same rate as the other ryots.<sup>65</sup>

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61. B.G.S., CXIV, PP. 3-7.

62. R.D.V., 1822, No. 4/28, p.5

63. R.D.V., 1821-22, No.21/45 p.838

64. R.D.V., 1827, 23/177 P.166

65. Survey Reports, Diary No. 11, Dholka paragana, 1824.

The tenants at will were by far the most numerous class, who generally held on written lease for short term of years at rent<sup>66</sup> entirely dependent on agreement either in kind or cash.

Some small pieces of land in the beds of rivers and situations unfavourable to a permanent occupancy, were let annually to tenants at will. It also frequently happened that the inhabitants of one village increased in number so much, that the lands of their own village did not afford sufficient employment; so, they were forced to work as uparwareeas in surrounding villages for which they generally made a specific bargain and sometimes took them at the village rate.<sup>67</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 putruck.

The tenure of the stranger cultivators was in the strictest sense of the term a tenancy at will as well. They were quite<sup>68</sup> numerous and held land on written lease.

Many men made practice of setting for one or two years in any new village, for the sake of the exemption usually allowed and the premium which was often given. They were always ready to desert again to the next new village or as they figuratively expressed it, 'leaving it without lamp', a matter of very little moment. The people readily disperse themselves through the surrounding country but they seldom loose sight entirely of their right in their own village and they were generally ready to return

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

67. R.D.V., 1821-22, No.21/45, p.691.

68. R.D.V., 1835, No.33/665, P.105.

if an opportunity was offered to them.

Apart from the class division in the village community as discussed above, caste division also decided the place and importance of a person in society. So in the ensuing paragraphs different castes involved in agriculture will be discussed. The most respectable of all castes of cultivators were the Kunbis, most of whom were Pateedars. Then, there were Rajputs, Kolis, Bheels, Muslim cultivators called Sipahees and also some Momuns.  
70  
Kunbis

The most enterprising class of cultivators in Ahmedabad and infact in whole of North Gujarat were the Kunbis. In Ahmedabad district Kunbis were numerous than any other single sect and were  
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cultivators from origin and caste. Kunbis or Kulubees or Kulmbees were pronounced in all these different ways. They possessed a mild and unobstrusive disposition and they abhorred a want of gentleness in others. Yet for all their mildness they had a latent warmth of temper, if oppressed beyond a point they could become difficult to tackle with. They were surprisingly well informed about questions concerning agriculture and the concerns of the little community of the village would immediately hold their interest. Kunbis appear to be superior to Grassias, Dharolas and Musalmans in the qualities of thrift, industry

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69. Mackay, op. cit. p. 882.

70. R.D.V., 1827, No. 23/177, p.86.

71. Monier Williams, Memoires of the Zilla of Baroche, p.90.  
Also see an article by Ravindra Kumar, Rural Life in Western India on the eve of British conquest published in I.E.S.H.R. Vol. II, No. 3, July 1965.

and skill. The important point, however, is that they possessed better resources than the latter and knew how to utilize them to the best advantage. The difference in the resources of the Pateedars and others was reflected in the character of cultivation and it was a common sight to see that the best lands were owned by the Pateedars and that the crops in the Pateedar's field were more prosperous than those of his neighbour or the other castes.

The Kunbis could be easily divided into four broad categories viz. Levas, Kadvas, Anjnas and Dangis.<sup>72</sup> The last one however were not found in this Collectorate. The habits, way of life and general character of Kadva and Leva were the same; but<sup>73</sup> although they could eat together, they did not intermarry. The levas were allowed to be the superior caste of the two. The kunbis were as peaceable as they were industrious. They were very simple regarding their food. The following remarks on the Kunbis by Mr. Marshall, appear to be very correct :- i.e. "The Kunbis were attentive agriculturists and were particularly well acquainted with the qualities and powers of all the variations of the soil and had distinctive terms for differences that to an inexperienced eyes were difficult to be perceived. They were also perfect masters of the circumstances which were favourable or adverse to the growth of each particular subject of cultivation and there was not a season in which this knowledge was not applied they were by no means averse to new experiments provided

72. R.D.V., 1827, NO.23/177; P.86; S.R.B.G.V, P.121.

73. Monier Williams, p.93.

they could be made without much trouble or expense, but they did not like to wait for a tardy result; and in case of failure they had neither enterprise nor capital to persist. Their processes if not the best possible were nearly the best that circumstances admitted of."

Kunbis were decidedly the best practical agriculturists in Gujarat. Many of them were Pateedars, enjoying hereditary rights in their villages and remainder Kunbi Kherroots or cultivators. These Kherroots also enjoyed full hereditary right of cultivating perpetually.<sup>75</sup> Kadva and Leva Kunbis had sacred regard for all animal life and hence were by and large vegetarians. The third tribe of Anjna Kunbis had little in common with Kadvas and Levas as regards to their agricultural skill and industry or their usual habits. Anjnas were more close to Rajputs in this regard. They killed and ate several kinds of flesh; but they had a singular aversion to feathered fowls.<sup>76</sup> They professed themselves as ready to fight as to cultivate and probably did not hesitate in defending their rights or property; but they did not however enlist as soldiers. They excelled the Rajputs as husbandmen but were inferior both in skill and industry to Levas and Kadvas. Kunbis were fond of asserting their independence and the helplessness of others without his aid.<sup>77</sup>

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74. Ibid.

75. S.R.B.G., V, p.120.

76. R.D.V., 1827, 23/177.

77. Ras Mala, II, P.243. It was a common saying in those times that, "wherever it thunders, there the Kunbi is a land holder and Tens of millions follow, the Kunbi but the Kunbi follows no man."

✓ Kunbis remembered the former basis of organisation only to the extent of enlisting the seniormost family in the community with the responsibility of collecting the land tax for the entire village. However, joint responsibility for the payment of the land tax was not rigidly enforced in many villages in this part of the Gujarat. The member of the oldest family in the village, who represented it in its dealings with the World<sup>78</sup> outside were styled Mattadar Patels or simply a Patel. Since the time immemorial the descendants of this family considered themselves superior in the social heirarchy than other<sup>79</sup> cultivators in the village. Their heads of villages generally lived in a very patriarchal way with their Ryots: there was a great apparent equality, but still an active superintendence and an undisputed superiority of the Mattadar Patel prevailed. Subjects of general concern were publicly and unreservedly discussed, and what appeared to be the general opinion, was usually acted on. Position of many of the heads had deteorated so much that their pretensions to superiority were not buttressed by any tangible social or economic privileges. Many of them were so disheartened and so much involved with the Banias that they were unwilling, through fear of incurring the oppression of the Bania, to undertake the management of their own villages which had long been in their hands.

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78. B.R.S., III, P.673.

79. Monier Williams, p.94.

It was a custom among the Kadwa Kunbis to celebrate their marriages only at stated periods. Every marriage in the caste, throughout Gujarat, took place on one particular day and an edict was sent forth from the chiefs of the tribe, fixing that day which was confirmed to by the caste in all quarters.

Rajputs - The Rajputs of this Collectorate afford another instance of a complete change from the warlike and turbulent character to that of quiteness, obédience and industry.<sup>80</sup> From their dress appearance and manners it was difficult to distinguish many of them from Kunbis. This, description only applies to such Rajputs as had become exclusively cultivators or proprietors of land cultivating that land themselves. Besides these there were grassia chiefs or land owners who lived a life of idleness on the rent of their lands. By the advent of the nineteenth century they almost lost their military character.

Kolis- The Kolis who formed between a fourth to a fifth of the population were chiefly of the Tulubda Class, the branch to whom agricultural habits were most consonant. A small portion of kolis also enjoyed Pateedari rights. The other division of Kolis<sup>81</sup> was Juhangreea. They were of a turbulent character. This division was more prominent in the Chuval and hence they were also<sup>82</sup> called as Chuvaliya Kolis. Juhangreea or Jangria Kolis subsisted by acts of petty theft and cultivation, paying a fixed

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80. R.D.V., 1827, No.23/177, p.455; S.R.B.G., V, p.121.

81. Ibid.

82. B.G.S., CX IV, 602.



sum or salamee on each plough without reference to the quantity of land cultivated by them. The Tulbudas and Jangrias did not inter marry or entertained each other.<sup>83</sup> The Burthuneas or village watchmen were for the most part Kolis of a different class.<sup>84</sup> The Koli bhagdars and cultivators were inferior in their appearance, manners and dress to the Kunbis. The different character of Kolis and Kunbis was evident from the appearance of their fields. The koli encouraged all the expense of his crops and other trees in the midst of his most fertile fields as a means of revenue without the neccessity of labour.<sup>85</sup> The Kunbi again scrupulously cleaned his land and laboured day and night. It was due to this reason that the villages in the same neighbourhood of similar soil by no means assessed alike and yielded very different revenue. Therefore it was always desirable to induce some Kunbi into the villages which had none. The Kolis stood low on the scale of Hindu castes and in his eating he was obliged to refrain from little else than the flesh of cow; he drank spirituous liquor but drunkenness was very little known among those whose profession was agriculture. In some parganas like Bayar, the Kolis were given a bigha or more of land termed, a wara, which he enjoyed as a private estate subject only to a light fixed tax. Each individual erected hut for himself and his family on his own wara.<sup>86</sup>

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83. R.D.V., 1824, No.12/96, p.74

84. Ahmedabad Vol.27, p.14

85. R.D.V., 1844, No.10/1567, p.100.

86. R.D.V., 1827, NO.23/177, p.86.

Bheels - Bheels of this Collectorate appeared to be different in their origin from those of Khandesh or Malwa. They can not here be considered as aborigines. <sup>87</sup> The Chiefs and principal men were without exception, all degraded Rajputs, still retaining the designation of the Rajput tribe, to which their ancestors belonged; and many among the inferior order had also the like derivation. The title, too, of the Chiefs, 'Thakur', was completely that of the Rajputs - neither Turree, Naek, nor other terms proper to real Bheels were known here. The Thakurs lived in their villages on a very equal footing and were often possessed of even less authority and treated with even less respect than an ordinary Patel. Prior to Muslim conquest, Rajputs formed the entire bulk of the population, and it is supposed that these Bheels were first mere robbers and outlaws, who increased in number as the prosperity enjoyed under the Muslim dynasty declined, and gradually incorporated themselves into a distinct caste. The tale that the degradation from Rajput to Bheel being caused by the accidentally drinking water presented by one of the latter, class was accepted as a universal truth.

Bheels were a poor, ill favoured race immoderately addicted to drinking, a propensity which the cheapness of the mowrah liquor enabled them to indulge. They also consumed opium. They were much found in Parantij, Bayar, Wagur etc. In these Parganas they had grabbed about 1/3rd of the alienated lands (see table No. 3).

Bheels had established themselves as an organised body and by obliging peaceful villages immunity from their attacks by yearly contributions, their chiefs derived a certain

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87. R.D.V., 1827, 23/177, P.71

revenue amplified at their own discretion. For so bold and so decided was their character, that they never failed to visit with uncompromising severity any village that failed in its annual payment and on the other hand, so careless were they themselves of all engagements that when they singled out a place for plunder, they merely preferred some exorbitant demand upon it, as a pretext for their violence and a prelude to its prompt attack and complete destruction.

Momuns - Among the cultivating classes there were some Momuns too, they were the converts to the faith of Mohammed but still continued so far Hindus as to require the marriage and other ceremonies to be performed both by a Brahman and a Kazee. They were good and hard working cultivators. The dress of the women was that of ordinary Hindus, but the men, in external appearance were not to be distinguished from the Bohras.

The Musalman inhabitants of the towns, generally termed Kasbatees, were in part converted Rajputs and in part pure Musalmans of Belooch and Patan tribes. They were generally poor, broken down and enervated by the constant use of opium. Many of them entered in to the service of petty Princes and Chiefs. Many of them also held much free land and generally enjoyed immunity from taxation. Some of them also acted as farmers of villages but for this occupation they have neither capital nor capacity and their establishments never thrive.

#### Village Establishment

Next important institution of village society was the

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88. R.D.V., 1827, No.27/177, pp.72-73.

89. R.D.V., 1827, 23/177, P.97.

Vuswaya. The village establishment was known as Vuswaya in this part of Gujarat. They were of similar nature as the Balutedars of Maharashtra.<sup>90</sup> Thus, office of these village servants was also more or less hereditary. They provided all essential services to the Patel and the other villagers. They were remunerated by granting small piece of land called Passaita adjoining the village, set aside for their sole use or sometimes by a small share in the produce of the village. Vuswaya on, consisted of Hajjam, Sootar, Lohar, Kumbhar, Darjee, Dhobi, Mochi, Bhungi, Kotwal, Havildar, Puggy, Burtheneas etc.<sup>91</sup>

Hujjam or Gosenja - Village barber in addition to his legitimate profession of shaving, had various other duties to perform. He attended the village chowrah, swept and lighted it, waited upon government servants or other strangers or travellers coming into the village. They procured their beddings and other necessary articles for them and occasionally also acted as Masalchi.

Puggees - They derived there name from pug or foot or step. They were Coolies (also called Selate) or trackers and performed useful service to the village community by tracing the footsteps<sup>92</sup> of the depredators to discover the retreats of offender. It was customary in those days that if a theft took place the footsteps of the robbers were traced and village where they merged, was

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90. B.R.S., III P.673; Vaze's Manual, Part 3, Sec-IV, P.5203-5.

91. R.D.V., 1826, No.1/33, R.D.V., 1836, 7/694; List No.11, Ahmedabad Vol.27, pp.14-32, R.D.D., 1819, No. 145 R.D.D., 1819, No.145. R.D.V., 1821-22, No. 21/45, pp.662 Table I gives some details regarding the remunerations of these officials.

92. R.D.D., 1810, No.55, p.1249; Ibid, 1820, No.125, p.3535.

held responsible for the repayment of the lost amount. It was the duty of the inhabitants or villagers on the route of the official to give him protection in the execution of his duty and to supply him with lights etc. No uniform rules appeared to have been established for the maintenance of Puggies.

The different sizes of villages and the different castes of which the population happened to be composed appeared to have had quite a influence on the appointment of Puggies. Villages inhabited basically by Kunbis or unarmed classes, provision made for puggies was much greater than where Dharolas or persons of the armed classes i.e. Rajput, Kolis and Mohemmedans were numerous.<sup>93</sup> In villages composed almost entirely of Rajputs, the establishment of puggies was objected to, considering it a reproach that they showed not be deemed capable of protecting themselves. In Qasbas, towns or thanas also, puggies were maintained alongwith other police establishment.

Regarding the means of their remuneration, in almost all the villages a portion of land was assigned to them but over the years even this land was alienated and went in to the hands of farmers or other moneyed men.<sup>94</sup> Puggies generally also received contribution in grain which was estimated variously in different villages on each bigha cultivated or on each plough or cart used. These contributions were understood to be paid for the particular duty of guardian of the crops in all the different states of their progress. In some parganas an allowance of 2 annas per bigha was paid.

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93. Ibid, 1820, No.125, p.3536, Ahmedabad Vol.27, p.20.

94. S.R.G.B., X; 1st No.11, Ahmedabad Vol No. 27.

Burthuneeas- Burthuneeas were usually Bheels or Kolis. Their duty was to watch the village lands, specially by patrolling at nights.<sup>95</sup>

Each village had about 10 to 25 bhurthuneeas. Their services were liable to be called upon whenever the public interest required it. They were allowed 6 bigha of Passaita each. Such people were common in Daskrohi, Jetalpur and Viramgam. In Parantij they were known by the name of Puggies.

Bhungeeas - The Bhungeeas, Sonwa or Olgana were the village scavenger. There were about three to eight in each village. Apart from the traditional work of scavenging they also acted as messengers and helped in the collection of the land revenue from the ryots. Whenever any ryot was called for any enquiry or any settlement, bhungeeas were sent for calling the said person. They sometimes even guarded the entrances to the village.<sup>96</sup> They were allowed 6 bighas of Passaita each. They also kept fire ready at the Chora, served as agva (guide) as far as the next village, on a road accompanied the Chowkiwalas with a horn in going the rounds at night and assemble the people by means of horn or Dhol when anything caught fire.

Sootar - The carpenter was at the head of the artisans, his services were most in requisition; he made and mended all wooden implements for agricultural purposes. But for any other work as building a house or making a cart for other than agricultural purposes, he was paid.<sup>97</sup> His average remuneration was about 6

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95. R.D.D., 1808, No. 59.

96. R.D.V., 1824, NO. 12196, P.90.

97. S.R.B.G. IV, P.11, List No.11, Ahmedabad Vol.27, pp.17-18.

paulees per paeen.

Kumbhar - The Potter made pottery of every description : earthen frying pans, ovens, pitchers, water pots and Jars were supplied by him according to the needs of each household. He generally received a cake of bread on the supplying of a fresh article. When the corn begin to shoot into the ear, he used to take a jug and water vessel to each field for those engaged watching the crop, receiving in return his nimboor (ears of corn). The artisans, mahars and the village staff generally, claim their pottery free also, but the Koombhar stipulates for some service in return. He also made images for the village festival and received a present.

Darji, Dhobi professed services indicated by their professions. <sup>98</sup>

Dher or Bhambee were called upon to act as porter. They were much looked down upon on account of their low caste by the other villagers and so accustomed that they seldom complained. They didn't have any remuneration from the government, either in rent free land or money and were paid by villagers in grain. They subsisted chiefly by weaving coarse cloth, curing the skins of cattle that die in the village which they had a right to and selling the leather. For this a Bhom Vera was expected from them.

<sup>99</sup>  
Bhom Vera was ultimately abolished in 1844 by act XXX. Chamar or Tanner prepared for the cultivators, leather cords for coss used in drawing water from well and for several other purposes supplied leather for making coss or leather bag to hold water. He

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98. List No.11 Ahmedabad Vol.27, pp.17-18.

99. Ibid

made all leather halters, whips, ropes and bands for agricultural purposes. He finds the leather for all repairs such as mending buckets whips and ropes as above mentioned. He also repaired farmers shoes though they were supposed to pay him for new ones. His average remuneration per paeen was 5.5 paulees.

Kotwal - Kotwal performed the same duties as the barber, described earlier with reference to attendance the village Chowrah and waited upon strangers; in some villages he was of great use to the village accountant in calling cultivators who might be required and also assisted to measure land for determining the assesement on irrigated crops.

Havildar - The village Havildar was not an inhabitant of the village he officiated in, but was appointed annually by the Mamlatdar. The Havildar was always paid in cash and his pay was generally three sikka rupees a month. <sup>100</sup> He was some times entertained only so long as the crops were on the ground in any particular village. His duties were like that of peon. He assisted the village accountant in all revenue matters and the police patel in magisterial ones and was all together a very useful official. In some cases one Havildar was appointed to two villages if they were small and adjoined each other. They received about four rupees per mensem.

Jewaeedars or Rawanias - Their duties were to assist the village accountant and Patels in all revenue business to run errands, escort travellers and treasure and act the part of village watchmen. In the absence of modern means of communication

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100. Ahmedabad Volume., 27, p.19.



and postal system. Rawanias were also found reliable and zealous servants who could be entrusted with the work of conveying <sup>101</sup> dawk and even small cash from one village to another. They were usually Kolis and Rajputs. They were not in all instances inhabitants of the villages they were employed in and they were paid sometimes by grain or rent free lands and sometimes in <sup>102</sup> cash.

Among other village servants whose names do not generally occur on the rolls were the Brahmins or the village priest, the Simaree who attended upon strangers in the same way as the hajjam or Kotwal; the Bhurwars - they were found exclusively in <sup>103</sup> Taluqadari villages that had become Khalisa. They were supposed to take care of horses or cattle sent by the Taluqadar to graze in their villages during the monsoons.

When British undertook the task of settling the hags and other perquisites of various officials and haqdars or inamdars they were confronted with the problem of settling the claims of these petty officials too. As has been mentioned earlier in lieu of the services discharged they were remunerated by a small piece of land or small cash allowances. At the outset British felt that the whole of the village establishment was too big for the current needs. -So it was proposed to abolish the office of such officials as were useless and could not perform any duty and their <sup>103a</sup> lands were to be resumed. It was believed that the village

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101. R.D.D., 1816, NO.108, P.1539.

102. Vaze's Manual, Section IV, Part II, 5211.

103. Vaze's Manual, Section IV, Part II.

103a. R.D.V., 1821-22, No.21/45, p.664.

officials were not government servants, they performed service for the village only and not for the state. The course to be observed with regard to officials of this class as were useful to the society, was to subject them to one fourth and one half deduction depending upon their usefulness. Kumbhar, Hajjam, Suthar and Lohar were charged 1/4th whereas Chamar and Darji 1/2. A fixed scale of salary was also proposed for petty officials where the revenue of the village was upto 500 Rs., allowances<sup>104</sup> for village servants were to be Rs.25. Therefore

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Allowances</u>
upto 500 Rs.	Rs.25
500-1000	Rs.40
1000-2000	Rs.60
2000-4000	Rs.80
4000-5000	Rs.100
5000-6000	Rs.120
6000-7000	Rs.140
7000-8000	Rs.160
8000-9000	Rs.180

Regarding the allowances of useless servants, they were to be brought up at ten times the amount in case where they fell below rupees one and at twenty times in cases where the fall was<sup>105</sup> below one rupee after being halved.

Bhats : Apart from the above mentioned classes another important constituents of the village community were the Bards, Bhats and Charans. Of their origin nothing is known but they asserted themselves to have sprung from Mahadev or Shiva. They were in some places cultivators, in others bankers but their more legitimate occupation was that of acting as security for the

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104. Ibid, p.5216

105. Ibid, p.5301.

performance of engagements and of recording the genealogies of their Rajput clients. Security of bard was much valued and acceptable to all parties.<sup>106</sup> It was considered as one of the few available means of ensuring the performance of both political engagements and private agreements and of providing for the safe transaction of commercial operations. Bhats had at their command means of extorting compliance with his demands which were seldom used in vain. These were the rites of Traga and Dharna,<sup>107</sup> which have been discussed earlier in Chapter III.

Village Bania : Another very important constituent of the village society which cannot be just by passed was the village Bania.<sup>108</sup> Although at first sight this person appears 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 he proved to be the most useful and valuable member of the community without whose assistance the cultivators would often be reduced to the greatest distress for want of means and timely aid. Village banias were not foreigners to the village but had lived in their villages for generation and were sometimes intimately concerned with its welfare and prosperity. It is important to note the difference in the dealings of the village Bania and sahuakar of large towns. The former accomodated the ryots of their village by purchasing their grain in advance, often it is true at a high price, but still within their means to pay it,

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106. J.D.D., 1816, No.84, p.1983.

107. Rasmala II, p.558.

108. R.D.V., 1840, No.107/1664, p.227.

while the Sahukars took advantage of the necessities of individuals to advance them small sums on promisory notes (the contents of which they are ignorant of). Taking there by advantage of this ignorance far beyond all calculations.

Going by the statistics of population for different parganas given in table III, it clearly emerges out that basically Kunbis predominated other castes. For example we can take up Dholka Paragana. There Kunbis predominated other castes. They were nearly equally divided between the Kurwa and Lewa sects. More than half of whole body ranked as Pateedars and the remainder were simple Kheruts.<sup>109</sup> The population of these paragana stood proportionately to each other in twenty parts as follows - Kunbis  $3\frac{3}{4}$ , Kolis  $2\frac{1}{4}$ , Rajputs  $\frac{1}{20}$ , Brahmins  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , Bhats  $\frac{3}{4}$ , Bantias 2, Artisans 2, Dhers  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , Muslims  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , Slaves  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and other castes  $1\frac{1}{4}$ . The males exceeded the females in the rate of about 6 to 5.<sup>110</sup>

However, the population pattern was quite different in the northern districts of Parantij, Hursol, Modasa, and Bayar. In these parganas Bheels preponderated very greatly over every other caste. If whole population be divided into twentieth parts, they will comprise  $5\frac{1}{4}$  of such parts; the Kunbis will comprise  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , the Musalmans  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , the Bantias  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , the Artisans  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , the Anjna Kunbis  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , Brahmans  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , the Dhers  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , the Bhats  $\frac{1}{2}$ , the Rajputs  $\frac{1}{4}$  and slaves  $\frac{1}{4}$ .<sup>111</sup>

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109. S.R.B.G., XI, P.32.

110. Ibid. For details see Table II & III.

111. R.D.V., 1827, NO.23/177, P.40.

In the end it would not be out of place to throw some light on the general living conditions of the rural masses. The dwellings of the Kunbis and Pateedars were generally uniformly substantial and sufficiently large according to their respective status in the society. 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, the slopes of which came down very low over the walls to prevent their being injured by the rain, but the dwelling was in consequence made uncomfortably dark.<sup>112</sup> At the outskirts of most of the villages there were a few huts on a inferior description such as the dwellings of Dhers, Chamars, and Bhungees.

People were generally well clothed even down to the lower classes. The common Kolis and poorer cultivators had a clothing of the usual form consisting of strong dungaree clothes. Their food was grain of various qualities from rice to bajri according to their means.

The paraganas of Viramgam and Parantij, however showed to less advantage than the rest. These contained a great portion of waste and land covered with jungle. Villages in these paraganas presented in general a very poor and miserable appearance. The want of tiled roofs and the combustibile nature of the thatch and Wattles which were materials of so large part of houses rendered them peculiarly liable to fire and accidents of this nature

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112. Ibid, p.84.

continually recurred.<sup>113</sup> But the loss on the other hand to the ryot was but trifling, as his rude hut could soon be rebuilt. Few of the villages had any defined street, but they were commonly so contrived as that the lines of huts formed a square or several small squares within the cattle were secured at night. They were frequently destitute of any hedge or other outward defence and sometime every hut was detached from the other, giving rather the appearance of the temporary encampment than a permanent village.

In general cultivators were the most industrious, economical<sup>114</sup> and indigenious set of men anywhere to be found. But they were greatly poverty stricken and had to labour day and night on small piece of land before the harvest. Much of their profit was consumed in laying taxes and veras and high interest to village banias from whom they usually borrowed for buying seeds, cattles etc. and also for non productive purposes like marriages, death ceremonies and other such personal expenditures. So they largely stayed at a mere subsistence level.

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113. Ibid. p.87.

114. R.D.V., 1840, NO.5/1089, P.44; J.D.V., 1850, NO.107, P.13.

## CHAPTER IV / TABLE NO. I

Statement of Charges incurred on the Talpat lands of the Amlara village of Dholka Pargana, yielding a revenue of Rupees 7,430 for 115 samvat 1877.

Lands assigned under the name of Passaita for the support of Pagoda or Devasthan :-

	Bighas	Rs.
Chakriat	2	3-
Amin	1-	8-2-
5 Jivaidars	55.5-	148-3-
Puggees	51.5-	96-3-
Darjee or Tailor	1.5-	2-1-
Sutar	1-	6-
Mali	2.5-	3.3
Hajjam	16.5-	50-
Bhangia	9-	12-
		-----
		327-3 330.3
Cash		
Dastur of Amin		40
Dastur of Muzmoondar		19
Dharmadaye	4.3	
Bhowaya	7-	11-3
3 Brahmins		
Devasthan		
Calleeka Mata	9-50	
Sitnath Mahadev	7-	
Thacore dwarah	6-	
Veglaetshah Peer	1-	23.50
Talatis pay		165-27
Stationary		14-
Kothli, Santh		
Nuthoobhai	31-	
Grassias	121	152
Havildars pay for 8 months		35
Kumbhar		4
Paid Amin deputed in the village to suprintend for 40 days		30
Paid Amin deputed in the village to accompany the Amin		2-2

Sundry Charges

Paid for measuring the fields of of sugarcane	2-50	
Paid for framing estimates of the Batty fields	9-	
Paid for setting brooti	3-	
Paid for Humelia on Tehsil	3-25	
Paid charges incurred by the Patels whilst detained at Ahmedabad for the settlement of Reveneus	13-	
Paid for repairing Chora	4-2	
Paid for irrigating the Veichan land on which Sircar collected bigoti	15-	
Mul Vera charges for provision supplied to travellers etc occa- sionally visiting Chorah	31-1	
Patels Sirpav	12-	
Raza Chithhi	2-	
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	589.3	330-3
	Rs. 920-2-52	

Statement of charges incurred on the Khoryur village of Duskrohi.  
Pargana yielding a revenue of Rupees 1286-2-50 for Samvat  
1877.

Lands assigned under the name of Passaita for the support of a  
Pagoda or Devasthan.

	Bigha	Rs.
Chakriat	8	18-
Puggies	31	62
Hajjam	4	8
Kumbhar	2	4
Bhangia	3	6
Cash		
Devasthan	5	
Dharmadaya	4	
Chakriat		
Desai Dastur	2	
Muzmundar Dastur	5	
Amin Sookri	10	
Giras	17	
Talati pay	46-1	
Stationary	5	
Kothli Santh	3	
Manoti charges	57-1-50	
Mull Vera or provisions supplied to the persons occasionally visitig the Chora	42	
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	294-2-50	
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Chapter IV / Table II

116

Table of alienated land found in possession of each class

	Parantij	Hursol	Modasa	Bayar
Held by				
Kunbis	1789-3-23	339-3-14	154-2-29	376-3-33
Banias	1087-2-0	14-0-38	35-1-17	109-3-27
Brahmans	2612-1-25	792-1-6	533-0-6	1053-2-17
Desai	1585-1-20	57-0-21	94-2-33	-
Rajputs	1343-3-39	9-2-23	298-2-18	47-1-12
Muslims	2851-0-34	448-1-19	1169-2-19	478-3-21
Gosains	608-3-38	-	149-2-29	491-3-37
Wasweeya	608-3-38	52-3-1	133-3-15	163-3-7
Bheel	431-0-13	453-1-39	802-1-18	683-2-37
Alienated	17310-3-17	2167-2-26	3411-3-28	3046-0-32
Government arable land	66599-2-8	12540-3-3	46500-3-2	24679-1-2
Unproductive Land	15459-2-3	3868-3-7	17168-0-34	4542-2-13
Total Area	99369-2-29	18577-1-37	67081-0-3	32628-0-3

TER IV TABLE NO. III

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## Population of Khalisa Village.

	DASKRO			DHOLKA			PARANTI			HARSOL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
is	9018	6759	15779	10195	8159	18354	-	-	-	-	-	-
is eva-Kadva)	10584	7640	18224	7800	6154	13954	2183	1446	3169	97	92	189
ia	-	-	-	-	-	-	157	128	285	110	69	179
uts	2431	1856	4287	5878	4692	10570	208	155	363	5	3	8
ls	-	-	-	-	-	-	3142	2406	5548	220	164	384
mans	-	-	-	3796	3275	7071	624	526	1150	178	151	329
s	1222	796	2018	1601	1259	2860	206	133	339	69	51	120
uns												
a	2333	1795	4128	4061	3457	7518	1141	994	2135	112	90	202
ans	3349	2673	6022	4794	4011	8805	1127	824	1951	114	85	199
s-Bhangees	3559	2740	6299	4419	3475	7894	683	501	1184	64	49	113
ous other c	2868	1946	4814	4431	3298	7729	368	244	612	32	14	46
l Hindus	38304	-	66828	46975	37780	84755	9839	7357	17196	1001	768	1769
ias	2037	-	3655	6227	5887	12114	968	873	1841	150	107	257
es	-	-	442	-	-	1324	-	-	153	-	-	18
l	-	-	70925	53202	43667	98193	10807	8230	19190	1158	875	2044