

PREFACE

Period from 1750 A.D. to 1850 A.D. is considered to be the most crucial phase of the history of India. It was the period of transition both from the point of view of power politics and economy. This period is more significant for the history of Gujarat and specifically of Ahmedabad because pre-colonial and colonial forces were all at work at the same time. Mughal power had dismembered for all practical purposes by 1758 A.D. Marathas had established their sway in Ahmedabad and other parts of North Gujarat and British too had become a power to reckon. Political transition led to various changes in the economy and social structure. Owing to its historical, political, strategic and economic importance, Ahmedabad district provides greatest scope for the study of such changes.

An attempt has been made here to study some of the intriguing problems as to how far the collapse of the empire arrested or even reversed the process of economic development at work, during the seventeenth century; what was structure of rural and urban economies and what kind of relationship did develop between the rural areas with the cities. Magnitude and effect of the penetration of the political elites and merchants into the agrarian society has also been discussed at great length. An attempt has also been made to illustrate the changes that took place during the Maratha and British regimes.

Although, all the parganas forming Ahmedabad Collectorate have been given due importance, yet Ahmedabad city, being the capital of Gujarat since it was an independent Kingdom, has been a focal

point of this study. Here was a city which was not a creation of the British but had adapted to the new industrial age, carrying over commercial and industrial skills and patterns of traditional social organization. In no great city of India can the continuity of past and present be seen as clearly as in Ahmedabad. So, special attention has been given to the process of urban growth and development of this city in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Problem wise this study has been chapterized as detailed below.

Geo Political formation of the district covers the first Chapter. First part of this chapter relates to the formation of the Ahmedabad Collectorate comprising of seven administrative divisions, viz, Ahmedabad Daskrohi (inclusive of city) Daskrohi Jetalpur, Parantij, Veeramgam, Dholka, Dhandhuka and Gogha. Nature of soil, area under cultivation, pattern of crop, implements of cultivation used etc. have been discussed here. Second part, basically relates to the political background. All the political events which shaped the destiny of this region, down from the Mughal-Maratha conflict to the supremacy of British in this district have been detailed.

Nature of tenures has always been an intriguing yet interesting aspect. Two types of tenures prevailed in this region- firstly those lands which were held under the control of the Government i.e. Khalisa or Talpat and secondly, those which were alienated. Alienated lands occupied astonishingly high ratio in comparison to Khalisa. About 54 per cent of the total land of the Collectorate was alienated. About 37.87 per cent of the land was under the hold of Taluqadars, Grassias, Mewasis and other

such independent petty chiefs. An attempt has been made to study the nature of rights and privileges of these different classes of tenure holders.

Land revenue formed the major source of finance for the State in those days. It consisted of Ain Jama, Siwai Jama and various Veras or Babtees i.e. extra cesses. Modes of assessment and collection, officers involved therein have been discussed in third chapter. Different settlements worked out by the British to settle the revenue for various independent chiefs and various plans evolved to systematize the system of assessment and the success achieved there in has also been discussed.

Much related to the land tenures and land revenue is the structure of Indian village society. Nature of rights and privileges of different categories of ryots viz. Pateedars or Mirasdars and Uparwaris has been discussed in the fourth chapter. Privileges and duties of various village officials from Patel down to the Wuswaya and their social standings viz. a viz. each other has also been discussed. Agricultural classes viz. Kunbees, Kolis, Rajputs etc. are also focal point of this chapter. An attempt has been made to show that village in that period was not isolated, self sufficient unit rather, it was part and parcel of the economy of the region. Unexploitive Urban hinterland relationship was infact a very important aspect.

Urban economic structure, its various constituents, the pattern of market etc., other such problems have recently caught attention of many historians like Bayly, Foster, etc. No such study however, has been undertaken so far to study the urban structure of cities and qasbahs of this region . So in this

chapter attempt has been made to study the working of various Mandis, Nakas etc. of the Ahmedabad city and various qasbahs of Dholka, Parantij, Viramgam etc. Kind of economic and trading activities going on, nature and magnitude of Sair taxes in the city and important qasbahs has also been taken note of. Growth of Ahmedabad city as an urban centre, ups and downs witnessed by it under the Marathas and the British, also forms an important part of discussion in this chapter. Some important urban institutions like the Municipality, Schools etc. have also been discussed.

Trade and Commerce are infact the backbone of the economy of any region and are the main instruments for the growth of urbanization. Chief exports and imports of the region, policies adopted by Marathas and British regarding trade and commerce have been discussed in this Chapter. Great stress has also been laid on the chief items of import and export or the commodity composition of trade. Various modes of communication in use, types of currencies prevalent etc. have also been discussed.

Last chapter relates to the money lending and banking in that period. Finance is the fuel for any economy. Firstly, the role of money lender in the rural area has been focussed and later the role of big banking firms like Haribhakti Parekh, Ambaidas, Samal Bechur etc. in the economy of the region in their private capacity as bankers and in the capacity of State Potedars has been discussed. Their relationship with the money lenders at the rural areas has also been high-lighted.

A comprehensive study of the above mentioned problems will enable us to understand the pattern of continuity and change in the social and economic life and institutions in North Gujarat.

In the present study I have heavily relied upon the material from Modi (ancient marathi script) and English sources. Available Gujarati sources have also been made full use of. Bulk of the material was collected from the Pune Archives (or popularly known as Peshwa Daftar); Central Record office, Baroda; Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay; National Archives of India, New Delhi, B.J. Institute, Ahmedabad and Dept. of History, M.S. University Baroda.

As, for the most part of the period of our study, Marathas were in control of Ahmedabad city and various parganas forming the Collectorate, bulk of the information pertaining to that period has been obtained from Modi documents. These documents which are in the form of Rumals (i.e. bundles), are available at Pune Archives and Central Record Office, Baroda. Most of these sources comprise of Talebands, Zhadas, Ajmasi and Hisebi papers, Izmaili, Kanuzabtas, Rozkirds and Rozkhardas. These are documents related to various revenue matters. They furnish information regarding the revenue receipts from land, customs and other additional cesses. All the expenditures made by the Kamavisdars (district revenue officer cum farmer) on behalf of State, pargana or on account of collection of revenue are mentioned in these documents. Salaries of various revenue officials, pagadars, siledars etc. are also mentioned. Another category of documents consist of Kalambandis, Agnya Patras, Yaadis etc. They are related to the orders issued by the state or the state directives regarding the collection of revenue and management of land revenue administration.

Private collections of prominent banking family of

Haribhakti has also been explored for highlighting the role of bankers in the economy of the region.

For the first half of the nineteenth century and specially after 1818 most of the information derived is from English records which are available at the Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay and National Archives of India, New Delhi. Records used are various official Diaries and Volumes from Revenue Department, Judicial Department, General Department, Secret and Political Department and various Surat Factory Diaries. Various selections from the records by noted administrators like Col. Walker, M. Elphinston, E.G.Fawcett, Peile, Capt. Etheridge etc. have also been used. Various Parliamentary papers (Micro Films) at National Archives, also are valuable source of information.

Apart from Modi and English records some of the Gujarati sources have also been used. Worthy to mention are the various Khatpatras i.e. sale deeds of eighteenth and early nineteenth century. These sale deeds relate to the sale of houses and shops in various Chaklas and Poles of Ahmedabad city and are useful for understanding of the social composition of the city. Literary works of Shamal Bhat, Dalpat, Narmad have also been utilized. These Gujarati sources are available at B.J.Institute, Ahmedabad.

Apart from the above mentioned sources various published, contemporary and secondary sources on Gujarat and Ahmedabad have also been utilized. Most important of these are the works of James Forbes, Walter Hamilton, Monier William, A.K.Forbes, Mackay, Vakhatchand, Bhimrao Jote and K.A. Gollion. It has been my sincere attempt to utilize all the available source material in different languages and highlight some of the aspects of the

economy and society of this region, which have not been discussed so far.