

CHAPTER - I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SATARA

Chhatrapati Pratapsinh of Satara (1808-1839) was one of the leading figures in Maratha History. Though installed on the throne of Satara by the British rulers, Pratapsinh did not want to remain only as a titular head. He tried to run his state as independently as possible. He wanted to leave his own mark on the administration of the State. His desire was to revive the legacy of the Chhatrapatis in the field of administration of the State. When British Government in India tried to dethrone him, he insisted on asserting his claims and made efforts to seek a fair trial. So B.D.Basu remarked,

" Pratapsinh the descendant of the Great Shivaji fell a martyr to truth, and he stood high in the estimation of all those who had the privilege and honour of knowing him. The story of the life of such a great soul is invested with interest not only for the Marathas, but Indians of all castes, creeds and colours".¹

The idea of constitutional agitation was imparted to the people of this country at his expense. He was also indirectly responsible to some extent for the uprising of 1857. Rango Bapuji, who unsuccessfully fought the case of Pratapsinh with British Government played a prominent role in the uprising.

However the events of history or the career of any great person cannot be studied in isolation. Moreover Chhatrapati Pratapsinh of Satara was the descendant of both Chhatrapati Shivaji the founder of Maratha power and Chhatrapati Shahu who set up the Maratha capital at Satara. So naturally in order to understand, comprehend and appreciate in right perspective the life and career of Pratapsinh Maharaj we have to study in brief, the historical background of Maharashtra in general and of Satara in particular.

Satara state which was ruled by Raja Pratapsinh was very small. The boundaries of the State were fixed by Mountstuart Elphinstone in 1818. The territories which the British conquered from Peshwa Bajirao II actually belonged to the Chhatrapati, but the British assigned to the Chhatrapati a very small portion of the territory lying between the rivers Nira and Warana. The boundaries of the new state were fixed at Sahyadri hills or Ghats on the West, river Nira and Bhima on the north, Nizam's frontier on the east and Krishna and Warana on the South. It comprised the eleven districts of Satara, Targaon, Kurar, Walwey, Jawali, Wai, Koregaon, Khanapur, Khatav, Pandharpur and Beejapur.² It was estimated in 1821 that the Raja's annual revenues would be little short of 15 lakhs of rupees.³

In 17th century Chhatrapati Shivaji successfully founded an independent Maratha State. The establishment of the independent Maratha Raj in the 17th century Deccan was

a significant event. According to Justice Ranade the rise of Maratha power was the first beginnings of what was known as the process of nation making. To him it was not the outcome of the successful enterprise of any individual adventurer. It was the upheaval of the whole population.⁴ But the greatness and insight of Shivaji the Great also cannot be denied. It was he who infused the spirit of freedom in the Maratha people, and taught them to fight for preservation of their self-respect, land and religion. The imperishable achievement of his life was the raising of the Marathas into an independent, self-reliant people, conscious of their oneness and high destiny, and his most precious legacy was the spirit that he breathed into his race. The greatness of Shivaji consists in his having transformed the mentality of Maratha nation whom by means of his unequal leadership, he enabled to attain to the foremost place among the various races of India.⁵

After the death of Shivaji his elder son Sambhaji became the ruler of Maratha kingdom. During his nine years rule Sambhaji bravely fought against Aurangzeb and his vast Mughal army. But in the year 1689 the Mughal army succeeded in capturing the Maratha King and he was cruelly put to death by Aurangzeb.

With the death of Sambhaji it seemed in the beginning that it was almost all over, so far as, the existence of the Maratha State was concerned. The emperor regarded the conquest of Deccan as all completed, but it was not to be.

The Maratha people, though for the last three years much estranged from him, heard of murder of the son of Shivaji with indignation and the cruel execution meant to strike the leaders with terror, aroused their vengeance without alarming their fears.⁶

With the martyrdom of Sambhaji the war of Maratha Independence began. Marathas under the leadership of Chhatrapati Rajaram resolved to fight against the invaders. In the beginning the Marathas could not withhold the Mughal Offensive. They were compelled to give up many of their important forts. Even Chhatrapati Rajaram, their chief, was compelled to leave the country, and seek resort in the fort at Jinji. Under these adverse circumstances the leaderless Marathas without capital, without regular army and treasury resolved to fight the enemy and succeeded to a large extent in achieving their aim. At the time when the war of independence was at its peak, Rajaram died in 1700 A.D. at Sinhagad. After the death of Rajaram Tarabai his widow immediately declared her four year old son Shivaji as the successor of Rajaram and she herself acted as a regent till 1707.

Tarabai had inherited the military talents and capabilities of her father Hambirrao Mhite. With the tireless vigour with which Hera strove to rouse against Priam the princes of Hellas, the Maratha queen flew from camp to camp and fortress to fortress, living the life of a common trooper, exposed to the sun, sleeping on the ground.

Tarabai was everywhere encouraging her officers, planning campaigns, organizing victories. Nor did the soldiers resent her interference. So clear was her vision, so unerring her judgement, that she was equally welcome on the battle field and in the council chamber; and in a short time the Maratha counter offensive, at first halting and ineffective, began to threaten the very heart of the Moghal Empire.⁷

Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor died in 1707 at the age of eightynine. His son and successor Muazzam, alias Bahadurshaha I adopted a very shrewd policy to divide and destroy the Maratha forces. Accordingly Sambhaji's son Shivaji alias Shahu, was released by him on condition that the latter should claim and demand from Tarabai the throne of Chhatrapati for himself as being the legitimate heir.⁸ As a result of this move the Maratha history witnessed for some time a civil war between the forces of Shahu and those of Tarabai.

History of Satara State :

Historian V.K.Rajawade suggests that the word 'Satara' is derived from the Persian word 'Sitara'(meaning high). There are some who believe that the name Satara must be the perverted form of pronunciation of 'Saptarshi', the deity on the hill fort. The town is supposed to have derived its name Satara from the fact of there having been seven dales or valleys (Sat-dara in Marathi) round the hill, below which the town is situated.⁹ The town of Satara is

situated at the foot of a hill, which is surmounted by a fort called 'Azimtara'. In fact the people in early times lived in the fort, and later on in the valley below. Satara is situated in such a tract of land which forms the link between Konkan and Desh.¹⁰

The fort measures about 33000' from east to west and 18000' from north to south, the summit being more or less triangular in shape. The natural defences consist of a steep precipice of black rock about 40' high and the artificial ones of a masonry stone-wall and loop holed breast-works surmounting the rock. There are only two entrances- one, the principal gateway, to the north and the other, a mere sally port, to the south, the latter being almost inaccessible. The approach to the main gateway is by a fine road from the station, about 8' wide and 2 miles long. The gateway is commanded by two bastions. There are some other old paths connecting the town with the fort, but they are very steep and zigzag. The walls are built of various materials, right from the huge boulders of the pre-Mohammedan days to the small masonry of the later Maratha period. The walls an average thickness of 10' and they have a parapet 2 or 3 feet thick and of the same height at the walls.¹¹

The remains on the fort Ajinkyatara consist of 9 ponds, a palace built by the last Peshwa Bajirao II and some other buildings. In the North-East corner of the fort is a temple of Manglai Devi. Of the ponds the largest two are of masonry built measuring 240' by 180' and 20' deep and 120' by

180' and 30' deep. There are two rock-cut ponds, one of them nearly of the same size as the above. All have plenty of water and fishes. The palace is an insignificant two storeyed oblong building.¹²

The original fort is said to have been built by king Bhoja II of Panhala in about 1150 A.D. Later it was with the Bijapur Kings, who repaired and kept it in excellent order, and used as a State prison. Here for instance was imprisoned Chandbibi widow of Adilsah I, in 1580. In 1673 Shivaji captured it after three months siege. In 1700 it was taken by Aurangzeb after five months siege. In 1706 it was again taken back by the Marathas. Since 1749, it began to be used as a prison for the Rajas of Satara. In 1789 the then Raja rose in revolt and used the fort as his stronghold, but having no provision he had to surrender it after some struggle. In 1818 the fort fell to Gen. Smith.¹³

In the medieval period the major area of Satara district was under Bahamani rule. After the division of Bahamani Kingdom into five independent segments this portion came under the control of the Adilshahas of Bijapur. The town Satara was under the domination of the Bijapur kings for nearly three centuries (A.D.1358 to A.D.1613)¹⁴. Though the chief power in the country was of the Mohammedans, Hindus were largely employed in the services of the State. Number of Hindus were employed in the Bijapur armies and those who rendered distinguished services were rewarded with the Hindu titles of Raja, Naik and Rao. The principle Maharatha chiefs

in Satara territory under the Bijapur government were Chandrarao More of Javali, Rao Naik Nimbalkar of Phaltan, Jhunjarrao Ghatge of Malwadi, Dafale of Jath and Mane of Mhaswad.

In 17th century Chhatrapati Shivaji expanded his Maratha kingdom in these parts after his victories first over the Mores of Javali in 1656 and then over the Bijapur troops under Afzalkhan in 1659. Thereafter this region became the part of Maratha kingdom. During the period of Maratha war of independence Ramchandrapant Amatya conducted the administration of Maratha State from Satara for nearly 20 years.¹⁵ In 1698 Chhatrapati Rajaram established his capital at Satara for a brief period. In 1700 the Mughals captured the fort of Satara from the Marathas. At that time the Maratha garrison of the fort under Prayagji Prabhu offered a very brave resistance but due to Rajaram's death they surrendered. But the Marathas succeeded in recapturing it from the Mughals in 1706.¹⁶

Chhatrapatis of Satara :

During the last phase of his career emperor Aurangzeb tried his best to bring about defeat of the Marathas. The Emperor spent full twentyfive years of his long reign and the vast resources of his extensive dominions in a vain attempt to subdue the Marathas.¹⁷ He made his last and final attempt to gain the control of the Deccan, but he was not fortunate enough to see his dreams being fulfilled. At last he decided

to retreat and in 1707 he came to Ahmadnagar. Twentyone years before he had camped there confident that in a few months time he would, like Ala-ud-din, have added the entire southern India to his dominion. He reached it now in January 1707, bankrupt in hopes and power, his army shattered, his treasury empty, conscious that his sons were but waiting for his death to begin a new struggle for the Delhi throne.¹⁸ In such a desperate condition he died in the fort of Ahmednagar on 20th February 1707.

Release of Shahu :

Aurangzeb was succeeded by his son Muazzam alias Bahadurshaha I. He was advised to adopt a shrewd policy of 'divide and destroy the Maratha forces'. Accordingly he released Sambhaji's son Shahu from his confinement. Muazzam hoped that Shahu's release would create confusion in Maratha camp and the Maratha army would get divided between the Shahu and the Tarabai factions.

Shahu left the Mughal camp on May 8, 1707. He was released at Doraha near about 20 miles north west of Bhopal.¹⁹ Shahu took the shortest route to Bijagad and Sultanpura in Western Khandesh and crossed Narmada. He entered the south and sent letters to the chief Maratha leaders appealing to their loyalty. Many of the Maratha chiefs reacted favourably to his appeal and they joined his camp. Shahu arrived at Bijagad about thirty miles south of the Narmada and there he was joined by its ruler Mohansinh Rawal. He received him with open arms. He helped Shahu with money and troops. On Tapi

river Amba Pandya joined Shahu. He addressed many Maratha chiefs announcing his arrival and asking them to join him. Shahu stayed at Lambkarni, 15 miles north west of Dhulia. Bapuji Sonadev Pingle and Parsoji Bhosale were the earliest among those who joined Shahu. Shahu got additional support from such important personages as Haibatrao Nimbalkar. Nemaaji Shinde and Chimanaji Damodar and had sufficiently strengthened his position.²⁰ He marched to Ahmednagar and prepared for coming struggle against Tarabai.

Struggle between Shahu and Tarabai :

Arrival of Shahu in Maharashtra proved to be an invitation for civil war between Tarabai and Shahu. Tarabai declared Shahu as an imposter²¹ for getting her own position consolidated and making it safer. Shahu tried to avoid conflict against Tarabai, but Tarabai refused to comply. Shahu marched towards Poona. Tarabai's forces were already on march against him. Tarabai and Shahu met as enemies at Khed and battle of Khed took place on October 12, 1707. Shahu had no capable leader to lead his troops. So he resorted to diplomacy to win Dhanaji Jadhav to his side. Consequently Dhanaji Jadhav deserted Tarabai and joined Shahu because of which Shahu could win the battle of Khed. After the battle of Khed Shahu assumed the Royal title 'Kshtriya Kulavatamsa Shri Raja Shahu Chhatrapati'.

After this first success Shahu lost no time in marching on Satara, halting a short while at Shirwal, near

which another faithful adherent of Tarabai, the redoubtable Sachiv Shankarji Narayan had his official residence in fort Rohida near Bhor. Shahu called upon him either to surrender or face the consequences of refusal. The Sachiv confounded by this peremptory summons, put an end to his life by swallowing poison on 27th October 1707. At that time the death of Shankaraji Narayan Sachiv, unexpectedly placed all the fortresses under him in Shahu's hands. Thus the whole country at the north of Nira came in his possession. The finishing touch to these acquisitions was given when Chandan-Wandan opened its gates and his conquest of the northern Maharashtra was completed.²²

Shahu then made up his mind to take Satara, the seat of Tarabai's Government. The Havaladar of Satara was Shaikh-Mira under the command of Pratinidhi. Shahu planned to capture his family living at Wai and bring them to Satara, Shahu sent his message to Shaikh Mira that if the fort was not surrendered within 8 days, his family will be executed. In his desperation Shaikh Mira opened the gates of Ajinkyatarata fort for Shahu. Shahu entered the capital on Saturday in December 1707, within seven months of his leaving the Mughal camp.²³ Accordingly Shahu succeeded in his attempts to get hold of much of Maratha territory, and Tarabai was compelled to retreat to the southern region. And later on she established her independent seat of power at Kolhapur.

Thereafter Satara became the seat of Maratha Government in 1708 and Shahu decided to get himself coronated.

He selected Satara as a capital place of his kingdom. So on January 12, 1708 he ascended the throne with all the ceremonial adopted by the great Shivaji.²⁴ After his coronation he appointed a council of ministers for helping him in carrying on the administration of his State.²⁵ Following were the members of council of ministers holding different portfolios.

1)	Peshwa	-	Bahiro Moreshwar
2)	Senapati	-	Dhanaji Jadhav
3)	Sachiv	-	Naro Shankar
4)	Amatya	-	Balkrishna Vasudeo
5)	Sumant	-	Gadadhar Mahadji
6)	Mantri	-	Rameshwar Pande
7)	Nyayadnis	-	Honaji Anant
8)	Panditrao	-	Mudgal Bhat
9)	Pratinidhi	-	Gudadhar Pralhad

The new king next proceeded to make fresh appointments to the various ministerial offices for administration. He did not forget, in the hour of his glory, those to whom he owed his success. Parasoji Bhosale was given the title of Sena-Sahib-Subha and a sumptuous jahagir to maintain his rank. Balaji Vishvanath was appointed Mutaliq to the Amatya Ambarao Hanmante.²⁶ In 1713 Shahu remembering the services of Balaji Vishwanath, appointed Balaji as Peshwa. Balaji not only practised the feudatory system but also made the offices hereditary. Balaji made the Peshwa the most important minister

in the Maratha State. But due to his attempt to consolidate the system and his post the position of the king was considerably weakened.

Balaji Vishwanatha became Peshwa and it marked the beginning of the transfer of power from Chhatrapati to Peshwa. Peshwa by his ability and statesmanship made his office hereditary in his family. His son Bajirao I made the position of the Peshwas superior. The Peshwas became in course of time head of the Maratha Empire. While commenting upon this transition S.N.Sen writes,

"The usurpation of the Peshwas neither attracted observation nor excited surprise. Indeed the transition was easy, natural and progressive."²⁷

Shahu ruled over the Maratha State from 1708 to 1749 A.D. It was true that he was not a great ruler like his grand father. It was also true that he was responsible for allowing the Peshwas to become predominant in the administration of the State. But at the same time it cannot be denied that he was the only Maratha king who enjoyed power for such a long time. We cannot withhold our admiration when we consider the difference between the Maratha power as he found it and as he left it. When he ascended the throne his kingdom was a mere strip of land round Satara fort. When he left it, it completely overshadowed the Mughal Empire. If he had no great talents, he possessed sound common sense. He had a kindly nature and a placable temper. He had the wisdom to



employ great men and the greater wisdom to give them his entire support.²⁸ In the forty years of rule enjoyed by Shahu, he was not merely a titular head of the Maratha Government, but he directed all operations, ordered and recalled commanders and exercised a great controlling power on the chiefs though he led no armies in the field.²⁹

The credit of establishing Satara city definitely goes to Chhatrapati Shahu I. Formerly Satara was the name of a fort which is now recognised as Ajinkya-Tara (Azim Tara ?). Shahu sometime in the year 1721 established a city at the foot of the fort and named it as Shahunagar. He built up different places in the city.³⁰ Thus the present Satara city has been developed from the former Shahunagar. Shahu built up the Adalt-Wada in Satara. Yavateshwar water supply scheme was first started by Shahu Maharaja.³¹ It was his design to develop Shahunagar as capital of the Maratha Kingdom. Therefore, he encouraged the professional money-lenders of the city and also invited money-lenders from outside to come and settle down permanently at Satara.³²

Ramraja (1750-1777) :

After Chhatrapati Shahu's death in 1749, Chhatrapati at Satara not only became a nonentity in Maratha politics, but was also gradually reduced to the position of a prisoner in the hands of the Peshwa, being securely guarded in the fort of Satara.³³ After the death of Shahu I Tarabai's grandson Ramraja was crowned as a king. Ramraja was the son

of Shivaji II (Son of Tarabai) who died of small-pox in 1723 at Panhala and his wife Bhavanibai gave birth to a son three months after the death of her husband.³⁴ After Shahu's death on December 15, 1749, his Peshwa Balaji Bajirao managed to install Ramraja on the throne of Satara on 4th January 1750. Thus the Peshwa settled the issue of succession of the Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati Ramraja had the ambition to make an independent mark of career for himself and wanted to rule the State with the help of the Peshwa. He had desire to rule with other nobles who enjoyed the confidence of the later ruler.³⁵ Though he wanted to co-operate with both the Peshwa and Tarabai he had no desire to submit to the dictation of either. But this co-operation with both could not be possible, because Tarabai got him into the throne to gain all power into her own hands and the Peshwa was antithetic to her plan. Tarabai actually began her hostile activities soon after the last rites of Shahu were over. She administered the most solemn oaths to the commander of the fort, Prayagji Baba and prepared a party to oppose the Peshwa. She made an attempt to win over Malharrao Holkar to her side and renewed her contacts with the Nizam by helping him against the Peshwa.³⁶ She severely controlled Ramraja's actions, stopped him from associating with the Peshwa with a view to maintaining her own importance in the administration.

The Peshwa watched the situation quietly and soon made up his mind to transfer his office of administration to Poona, leaving the Chhatrapati and his grandmother free to do what they liked at Satara. Chimanaji Narayan Sachiv and the Pratinidhi's Mutalik Yamaji Shivdev were Tarabai's chief supporters and they obstructed any move on the part of the Peshwa. The Peshwa stayed at Satara from 26th December to 18th April 1750 and doing his utmost to sustain the new Chhatrapati's power and get him into a proper trim to carry out his duties. During this period the minister found himself very much entangled in the domestic concerns of the royal house. Peshwa, therefore, sent his trusted agent Vyankatrao Moreshwar³⁷ to Raghujji Bhosale and invited him to Satara for handling the situation.

As soon as Peshwa Balaji Bajirao left Satara, Tarabai attempted to bring Raghujji Bhosale into her fold, but he too refused to oblige her.³⁸ Tarabai wanted Ramraja to free himself from dependence on the Peshwa in the state affairs and rule the kingdom on her advice only. Thus an impasse arose in the affairs of the Chhatrapati at Satara. When Tarabai found that Ramraja was not amenable to her control and was not prepared to do away with her political rival the Peshwa she began to denounce Ramraja as an imposter and not a true son of her son Shivaji II. This placed Ramraja in a very awkward position and also brought about a social crisis at Satara.

Peshwa watched the situation from Poona, but when the things came to ahead in the month of June 1750, he suggested Purandare to bring about the removal of Tarabai from Satara. Tarabai also was not slow to act and did not spare any efforts to throw Ramraja overboard. Govindrao Moreshwar wrote to the Peshwa about Tarabai's plans for the removal of Ramraja from power.³⁹ In that critical position the weak Ramraja couldnot hold out for long, and want of funds soon brought him to his knees. Raghuji and other partisans of the Peshwa advised Ramraja to make up his differences with Peshwa Balaji Bajirao.

Poona Conference of 1750 :

When the Peshwa left Satara for Poona he had a double purpose. The thread ceremony of his son Vishvasrao and marriage ceremony of Sadashivrao who had then recently lost his first wife were the immediate causes of his departure to Poona. Invitations had been sent to all the Maratha nobles, to the king and to Tarabai. The Peshwa then made a pressing request to Tarabai to visit Poona. Ramraja accepted that invitation and left for Poona in August 1750 along with Raghuji Bhosale. Sarlashkar Somavanshi was there, as also Sindia and Holkar from the north. The aim of Balaji Bajirao in assembling all those who counted in the politics of Maharashtra was to discuss with them the political situation that had grown critical then.

In the Poona conference, which was indeed unique in Maratha history both in weight and variety of views, Sadasshivrao Bhau, Ramchandra Bawa, Mahadoba Purandare, Sakharam Bapu then a rising diplomat of the Peshwa's party had assembled for that conference. But soon the spell of festivity ended. Tarabai did not attend. She came down from the fort of Sinhagad and halted at Shivapur. Peshwa's brother Raghunathrao went to Shivapur to escort her to Poona. She was lodged in the house of Babuji Naik and the Peshwa made her a nazar of five thousand rupees.⁴⁰ Ramraja was accorded a grand reception by the Peshwa and was lodged in the seven storeyed mansion of Ramchandra Bawa.⁴¹

In the Poona conference Peshwa Balaji Bajirao made up his mind, to make some changes in the administrative set up of the growing state. The Peshwa tried his best to come to a kind of working compromise, so that the administration could run smoothly and a rapid expansion of the Maratha Power could be accomplished. The most prominent Maratha nobles sat together for days and weeks and had heart to heart talks. The Peshwa took the final decision and king passed the orders.⁴² The decisions taken there were as follows :

- 1) The political atmosphere of Satara had become too uneasy for the administration. So the official work and administration of the state be concentrated at Poona under the direct supervision of the Peshwa. Chhatrapati along with Tarabai should have his residence at Satara. Thus Poona became the defacto capital of the Maratha State.

2) The Peshwa should have final and last authority in the administration. The Pratinidhi, the Sachiv and the Senapati were the only members of Ashtapradhan council having some administrative functions. Other members of the Ashtapradhan council now being good for nothing would not make any interference in the administration.

3) Each Maratha noble was to enjoy an exclusively independent sphere of influence for the system of checks and balances and mutual interdependence. This was first introduced by Balaji Vishvanath but he had failed in as much as it had led to quarrels among the Maratha Sardars acting in the same region. So Balaji Bajirao Peshwa made certain change in the policy.

Thus the Poona conference which was convened with some ulterior intentions, made Peshwa all powerful in the Maratha administration. Chhatrapati tried to win over to his side all the Maratha nobles, but failed in his endeavours due to the strange political situation. Shahu I had given two important orders of collecting Chouth and Sardeshmukhi to Peshwa which made the position of the Peshwas superior. Consequently Chhatrapati became a nominal head of the Maratha administration. Even if willing or not the Chhatrapati had to sign the orders delivered to him by Peshwa. After this Raja rarely figured in the administration and lived helplessly at Satara and Peshwa made himself the last and the highest authority of the Maratha State.

After the conclusion of Poona Conference Peshwa despatched Sadashivrao Bhahu and Ramchandra Bawa with an adequate armed forces to Sangola. Ramraja was also requested to proceed to Sangola for taking possession of that place from Yamaji Shivdev. Yamaji Shivdev's opposition lasted only for two weeks in the face of Bawa's artillery and Sangola was surrendered to the Peshwa forces on September 25, 1750. Ramraja himself had ordered ammunitions for the bombardment of the fort of Sangola.⁴³ Yamaji Shivadev and Dadoba Pratinidhi were specially brought to Sangola from Purandar to confirm the surrender.

At Sangola the new administrative set up of the Maratha State was announced by Ramraja. The new settlement of the Maratha territories was as follows :

1) Out of nine ministers including the Pratinidhi in the Central Government four had already been relegated to the background. Only three, the Pratinidhi, the Sachiv and the Senapati were active rivals of the Peshwa. The oppositions of Sachiv had been disarmed at Poona. The sulking Dadoba Pratinidhi and his hostile deputy Yamaji Shivadev were dismissed by the Chhatrapati from their offices. These were given to Bhavanrao and Vasudev Anant Yamaji Shivadev's nephew who were the partisans of the Peshwa.

2) The Senapati Yashwantrao Dabhade had proved incompetent on account of his incurable vices. So he was given a cash allowance for maintenance and the

Subha of Gujarat was divided equally between Gaikwad and the Peshwa.⁴⁴ Trimbakrao Dabhade was appointed as Senapati.

Besides that Mantri Ghanshayam Narayan, Sumant Vithal Anandrao, Nyayadhis Khanderrao Kashi, Panditrao Dhondobhat Upadhye were confirmed as before.⁴⁵ But their positions were in fact less important.

3) Daryabai, the sister of Chhatrapati had been moving heaven and earth to have her reward for helping Ramraja to get the throne. Her husband Babaji Naik was formally appointed to the office of Sarlashkar. Babaji Naik's pretensions in the Karnatak were finally rejected and the province was assigned to the Peshwa.⁴⁶

4) Ramraja's position at Satara was also defined. Appointments were made for the personal staff of the Chhatrapati at Satara. Govindrao Chitnis was made the Maharaja's principal manager, with his nephew Bapuji Khanderao as the military captain and Trimbakrao Sadashiv alias Nana Purandare as the Peshwa's representative helping him in keeping order. Yashwantrao Potnis and Devrao Apate were to be the Chhatrapati's personal companions and advisors. The expenses of the court of Satara were to be borne by the individual Sardars in fixed proportions as used to be done formerly. Trimbak Hari Patwardhan, one of the Peshwa's trusted dependants was appointed as the principal manager of Fatesinh Bhosale at Akkalkot.

5) In Konkan the provinces were divided among Tulaji Angre Sarkhel, Rajadnya Bhavanishankar, Vajratnab Manaji Angre etc. The officers were appointed for the forts at Wai, Satara, Javali, Indapur etc.⁴⁷

The Sangola agreement proved to be a turning point in the history of the Marathas. These changes brought about silent but significant revolution in the constitution of the Maratha State. According to that agreement Peshwa was to be the supreme authority in the Maratha administration with his de facto capital at Poona. Peshwa brought about that revolution with the help of Ramraja. Chhatrapati's position became worse and he had to act only as the nominal head and the Peshwa became his active rival for power. Within nine months of Shahu's death the Chhatrapati became a poor creature in the hands of the Peshwas.

Peshwa Balaji Bajirao made every effort to concentrate power of the Maratha State into his own hands. The only function that was left to the Chhatrapati was to bestow the official robes of Peshwaship whenever a new Peshwa succeeded.⁴⁸ The Peshwa making Ramraja's inexperience an excuse and relying on the late Chhatrapati Shahu's deeds informed the young king that he would himself conduct the administration with Tarabai's help. Ramraja offered no objection. He was allowed full freedom of movement in the town of Satara and received a yearly revenue of sixty-five lacks for his maintenance and establishment.⁴⁹ Thus during the

reign of Chhatrapati Ramraja Peshwa became all powerful and the actual administration of the State remained in the hands of Peshwa. Consequently the Chhatrapati was reduced to the position of a titular head of the State. With the confinement of Ramraja the epic of the Bhosales ended and that of the Chitpavans began. Ramraja died in 1777 and he was succeeded by Shahu II.

Shahu II (1777-1808) :

During Ramraja's reign Peshwa became the whole and sole authority in the administration of the Maratha State. The Maratha Chhatrapati of Satara could not take any significant decision on his own. Peshwa Madhavrao I (1761-1772) tried to restore the Chhatrapati. But after the death of this noble Peshwa the Barbhai council hatched a conspiracy in the Poona court. Raghunathrao tried to grab power with the help of the English, but he failed owing to the failure of Moroba Dada's plan. His hopes were again revived when Governor-General Warren Hastings himself earnestly renewed the war by sending troops against the Marathas. Mahadaji alone realised the importance of Hastings' moves and the implications of the Anglo-Maratha conflict in India.

Such was the situation when Shahu II was crowned as a new Chhatrapati thirteen days after the death of Chhatrapati Ramraja in 1777. Ramraja had no legitimate child, so he adopted Vithoji the eldest son of Trimbakji Bhosale of Wavi as his heir. After the adoption, Vithoji was renamed as

Shahu II. The Chhatrapati married Bhavanji Rajeshirke Deravankar's daughter named Anandibai in 1778. At the time of that marriage ceremony a horse was sent to Satara by the Peshwa as a present to the Chhatrapati.⁵⁰

The new Chhatrapati took to his high position in strong hopes of improving the lot of his family and serving the Maratha State, so far as it lay in his power. But within a short time he came to realize the real position of the Chhatrapati. He realized that the Chhatrapati was not allowed by the Peshwa to exercise much of his power. Raja Shahu II and his family lived at Satara fort under the control of Nana Phadnis. During the long and autocratic regime of Nana Phadnis the Raja of Satara led the life of captivity. They had no freedom to move beyond the limits of Satara town. They had to live a frugal life within the meager amount which the Poona Durbar used to pay them.⁵¹ The Peshwa Durbar went the extent of curtailing the allowances of Royal family. Naturally the Chhatrapati was made to depend for everything even for a new flag on Poona Durbar. For instance the private secretary to the Chhatrapati Shahu II of Satara wrote to Poona in 1794-95.

" There are no camels here for domestic work, they have died long back. We have to carry luggage on elephants back, but they too are tired and useless for transport. There are no camels in town."

"The Raja has no good steeds for riding. He is a good rider, but due to the want of good steeds at present, he has stopped riding. So please send some good horses".

"A flag which was made two years back out of the cloth sent from Poona is already torn. A new flag is necessary on the occasion of Dassara. Please send a piece of cloth enough for a flag and two patakas."

"The sons of Maharaja are fond of horses and elephants. But there are no ponies and elephants here which are useful for them. Please send ponies and elephants."⁵²

The requirements of the household of the Satara Raja were seldom met for such requests were made very often to the Poona Darbar by the Raja's family.⁵³

Chatursinh Bhosale :

In these pitiable condition of the Chhatrapati of Satara, attention must be focussed towards the attempts made by Chatursing Bhosale to revive the lost prestige of the Chhatrapati.

Chatursing Bhosale was the younger brother of Shahu II. It is not known when he was born. But according to the available sources it can be deduced that he was junior to his brother king Shahu II by eight years.⁵⁴ Chhatrapati

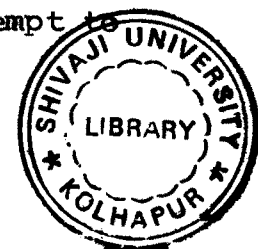
Shahu II was born in about 1763. Chaturising lived with his brother Shahu II at Satara and he carefully watched the prevailing conditions. He was a clever, brave and shrewd man. He wished to restore the prestige and sovereign power of the Chhatrapati. He thought that Chhatrapatis are the real masters of the Maratha kingdom and the Peshwas are the servants of Chhatrapati as the formers were appointed and given power by the latter. He firmly believed that the Peshwas had concentrated power in their hands by unlawful and immoral means. Naturally his mind was filled up with hatred towards the Peshwas. He represented in him the true spirit of Chhatrapati. So he could not bear the privating situation. Therefore, he tried his best to restore the sovereign power of the Chhatrapati. He collected a band of capable comrades like Vyasrao Gopal Dabir, Bapu Kanho Phadnis, Malhar Ramrao Chitnis, Mungikar Maloji Raje, Bhawanji Raje Shirke, Raghunathrao Gujar etc. They were even prepared to leave their households for the cause of Chhatrapati. It seems that they received the blessing of Chhatrapati Shahu II.⁵⁵

Chaturising Bhosale made every effort to achieve his objective. He established contacts with many of the Maratha Sardars. Such as Jagdevrao Jadhav, Raghuji Bhosale, Daulatrao Shinde, Sarjerao Ghatage, Yashwantrao Holkar etc. He joined hands with the Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur. He travelled all over northern India and even tried to make contacts with Raja Mansingh of Jodhapur, the Rana of Udaipur,

Jagatsing of Jaypur and various Jat leaders. But he did not receive necessary help from any one of them. King Shahu II died on 4th May 1808, Vaishakh Shuddha Navami⁵⁶ and was succeeded by his son Pratapsinh. Chatursing learnt at Ujjain the sad news of death of his brother Shahu II. Chatursing made up his mind to return to Maharashtra and try his fortune there. In July 1809 the party left Ujjain on their way back to Satara. At Dhar they were stranded for about two years due to the political turmoil. In the meantime Bajirao II had appointed his velet Trimbakji Dengala as the administrator of Satara. As his men were on the trail of Chatursing, they informed Trimbakji that he (Chatursing) along with his followers was on way to Satara. The perfidious Dengla anticipated troubles for his lord Bajirao II. He made a plan to trap Chatursing and accordingly sent a letter to him requesting him to come over to Satara. He promised him that Bajirao II was keen to accommodate him there. Without any suspicious Chatursing relied upon Dengla's promise. He arrived at Baroda in 1810, where he met Gangadhar Shastri, the Divan of Baroda. He discussed with him regarding Baroda's help. Shastri told him in unequivocal terms that the Darbar was not in a position to promise help to him without the consent of the British Resident at Baroda. Chatursing once again disappointed, left Baroda for Maharashtra. The treacherous Dengala was waiting for him at Nasik, where he received him with open arms. After the ceremony of Belbhandar, a dinner party was arranged by Trimbakji in the honour of Chatursing.

On the fateful night of February 2, 1811, Chatursing along with his followers arrived in the tent of Trimbakji Dengla on the banks of the river Girna. He was accompanied by Raje Raghunathrao Gujar, Babu Fadnis Apaji Ingle, Gopalrao Nyayadhis, Apabhat Puntambekar and his two brothers, Babaji Keshav Padlikar and Ladakhan Jamadar, in all eleven persons. Trimbakaji was to receive them at the gate of the camp. As soon as they saw the party they suddenly encircled them and took them prisoners.⁵⁷ When Bajirao II received the news of Chatursing's capture he made a trip to Nasik in May 1811, only to ascertain whether the captured man was Chatursing or not. When he was satisfied about the identity, he ordered that Chatursing be sent to the fort of Raigad. The other prisoners were sent to different forts. Thus ended the turbulent career of an intrepid and perseverant man, who waged a one man's war against the Peshwas to restore the sovereign rights of the Chhatrapati of Satara, and to avenge the insults and humiliations heaped upon him and his family. Chatursing died in the fort of Kangori on 15th April 1818. His ashes were sent to Banares by Raja Pratapsinh along with the ashes of his father the late Raja Shahu II.⁵⁸

Thus the possibility of free Chhatrapati ended due to the adverse circumstances. If Chatursing had been coronated as Chhatrapati instead of Shahu II, it was possible that Chhatrapati would have perhaps become a supreme authority of the Maratha Raj. Thus the Satara Chhatrapati's attempt to obtain his freedom failed.



Satara territory over which Raja Pratapsinh ruled from 1808 to 1839 possessed a glorious historical background. In the 17th century this region formed a part of the Swaraj founded by Chhatrapati Shivaji. Satara was an important theatre of war during the Maratha war of independence. Chhatrapati Shahu I the grandson of Shivaji set up his capital at Satara in 1708 A.D. During the regime of Shahu I Satara acquired prominence and grandeur of an imperial capital of the Marathas. In about the same period some significant constitutional changes were being silently brought about in the Maratha State. The process of transfer of power from Chhatrapati to Peshwa was initiated. Due to Shahu's difficulties and the inherent weakness of his personality the Peshwa gradually emerged powerful and at the same time the Chhatrapati tended to be a titular head of the Maratha State. The office of Peshwa became hereditary in Balaji Vishwanath's family. After Shahu's death in 1749 Peshwa became the supreme ruler of the Maratha empire. By the treaty of Sangola concluded in 1750 the Satara Chhatrapati was deprived of all his real power and consequently the Chhatrapatis became solely dependant upon the Peshwas thereafter. Chhatrapati Ramraja and Chhatrapati Shahu II virtually led the life of prisoners under the latter Peshwas. It was gallant Chaturising who waged a one man's war against the Peshwas to restore the sovereign rights of the Chhatrapati of Satara but unfortunately all his attempts failed. All the attempts on the part of Satara Chhatrapati to obtain freedom proved abortive. Chhatrapati became more and more

helpless and Peshwa Bajirao II emerged very powerful as a result of civil war of 1798 between Chhatrapati and Peshwa. However this Peshwa proved utterly incompetent and worthless and it was he who brought about the final and total ruin of the Maratha power. After the final defeat of the Maratha in the third Anglo-Maratha war the British carved out a small state of Satara in 1818 and installed Raja Pratapsinh on its throne. The chain of these colourful events of Maratha history forms the necessary background for the study of Raja Pratapsinh's career and administration.

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