

## PREFACE

So far, enough has been written on the political history of the Marathas including the House of Chhatrapatis and also the House of Peshwas. Very scholarly monographs on each Peshwa and also on Shivaji, Sambhaji and Rajaram have been contributed by the renowned scholars in the field of Maratha history. After Rajaram's return from Jinji he made Satara the seat of power of the Maratha Chhatrapati. Since then Satara assumed importance as the Maratha capital, especially as seat of power of the Chhatrapatis.

Shahu, who returned from the Mughal camp in 1707, won his day against Tarabai and coronated himself on <sup>Jan.</sup> 12 May 1708 in the fort of Satara and made Satara permanently the seat of power of Chhatrapati. During Shahu's period from 1708-1749 Satara was not only the important centre of Maratha politics, but also controlled the political affairs of the whole country in some measure. Shahu though a weak soldier, was a very shrewd judge of men. He also did not lack in skill of political diplomacy. Therefore, through various means like appointing proper men for proper task, resorting sometimes to diplomacy and some times to war he successfully met with the opposition from the Nizam, Sambhaji of Kolhapur and also from the Mughal subhedars in the north. He secured the 'Sanad' of Chouth and Sardeshmukhi for six subhas of Deccan from the weak Mughal rulers and paved

the way for the rise of various Maratha saranjandars of military ability. Marathas made the inroads in Gujarath, Malwa, eastern India and slowly turned their spheres of influence into spheres of political power both in the north and south. During his regime his minister Peshwa rose up and his office became hereditary. Military ability of Bajirao I added luster and prestige to the office of Peshwa further and after the death of Shahu in 1749 it appeared almost certain for the power slipping from the hands of Chhatrapati into the hands of Peshwa. Taking advantage of the confusion that was created over the issue of succession after the death of Shahu and the type of role that Tarabai played in case of Ramraja who succeeded Shahu, Peshwa became almost independent and he shifted his seat of power from Satara to Poona and emerged as a de facto ruler of Maratha state after getting Sangola agreement signed by the Chhatrapati. Thus, from Ramraja to restoration of Chhatrapati by the British in 1818 the Chhatrapatis Ramraja, Shahu II and Pratapsinh upto 1818 remained in oblivion. They were rulers de jure but the de facto power was assumed by the Peshwa.

The scholars have explored many of the unexplored fields in the Maratha History but the study of Chhatrapatis of Satara were left unattended to by the scholars. An attempt to fulfil this need has been made in this M.Phil. dissertation though yet there is scope to make advanced study in this area.

As far as possible an attempt is made to base this work on original sources and only occasionally secondary sources were considered useful for the work. The sources both original and secondary consulted for this work are given in the bibliography. I cannot close this preface without recording my thanks and gratitude to some of the institutions and persons who helped me from time to time. I express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. B.R. Kamble who guided me at every stage of this work until its completion. The Librarian of Nagar Vashanalaya, Satara, Arts and Commerce College, Satara, Shivaji University Library, Kolhapur, Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Pune, were prompt in giving me books and relevant source material. I thank them sincerely. I record my gratitude to Satara Maratha Vidya Prasarak Samaj, Satara which wholeheartedly helped me in giving some rare source material. It is but due to the continuous insistence and help in getting the thesis meticulously done by Shri S.V. Kadam that I could complete this work with speed. I record my thanks to him. Last but not the least I thank Shri V.G. Chopade for typing this thesis meticulously.

Kolhapur

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