

CHAPTER-III

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF JAIN MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT

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The Jaina community was well organized movement which spread throughout the length and *breadth* of Maharashtra and in the neighbouring area of Maharashtra and other provinces. Monastic institutions called Mathas were established on a large scale for the propogation and popularizing the tenets of Jaina faith. In Kolhapur District there are two famous Jaina Mathas- 1)Jinasena Matha at Nandani-Kolhapur and

2)Laxmisena Matha in Kolhapur.

Though religious in character these Mathas largely contributed to the promotion of learning and education secular as well as sacred. Every Mathas was presided over by a Bhattarakas or a teacher who was pious and well read. The Mathas are also noted for their humanitarian service like giving free food and shelter to the travelers and the poor and needy people. These religious institutions have been rendering great service till the present day in educating the masses,

Matha:

The monastery is a large building of stone or burnt brick, an open quadrangle generally shaded with trees. There is a close relationship

between Jaina community and their monasteries. It has an important and significant place in Jain religion. Monastries are religious and social institutions of Jainas. They are established to spread and preach Jaina religion. Every Monastery(Mathas) has its own tradition.

Bhattarakas of Kolhapur and Nandani:

Kolhapur is not only famous for the goddess Mahalaxmi temple but it is also the seat of two Bhattaraka i.e. Laxmisen and Jinasena. Fortuantely we have ample records available regarding the tradition of Bhattarakas of Kolhapur and Nandani, Since many centuries, even today there are very learned and cultured Bhattarakas.

The Laxmisen Maharaj is head of Kolhapur Matha which is the centre for religious education and under the guidance of present (Laxmisen Maharaj) Mathadhipati-Kolhapur Matha is making progress in Jaina study.

But who is this Bhattaraka? How this tradition came into existence? What are their duties? To find the answers of these questions is interesting and fascinating one. Therefore at the beginning it is essential to see some information about this institution and afterwards we will narrate the History of Kolhapur & Nandani Bhattarakas.

The Term-Bhattaraka:

Bhattaraka is a term applied to a particular type of Jaina ascetics. Unlike a Muni or yati, these ascetics assumed the position of a religious ruler. They managed large estates donated to some temple and engaged Supreme authority in religious matters. Their tradition is very much similar to that of Sankaracharyas.¹

Extent of the Subject:

Bhattaraka tradition is found in both Digambara and Svetambara seats. Twenty two seats of Digambara Bhattarakas are known today out of these are seat of Senagana existed at Karanja(Dist-Akola, Berar), ten seats of Bhattaraka Gana existed at Jaipur, Nagore, Ater, Ider, Bhanpur, Surat, Jerhat, Karanja, Latur and Malkhed and four seats of Kasthasangha existed at Hisar, Surat, Gwalior and Karanja. Remaining seats of Digambara Bhattarakas are situated at Kolhapur, MudaBidri, Karkal, Humbuch, Sravanabelgol and Nandani.²

Age of the traditions:

Traditions embodied in the Dhavala, Harivansapurana etc. are unanimous about the line of pontiffs that existed during the first seven centuries after Mahavira Bhadrabahu II and Loharya II were the last two

pontiffs in this line. Traditional Pattavalis of various seats of Bhattarakas generally begin with either of these two.³

Institution of Bhattaraka:

It is said that the institutions of Bhattaraka was started by Digambara Jainas as measure against their continuous religious and social disintegration during the medieval period. As the practice of asceticism, according to the Digambara code of asceticism was declining, it was necessary that an intermediate authority between the ascetics and lay followers should be instituted to look after the religious and social needs of the people. Accordingly the system of Bhattarakas was constituted for mainly the religious divisions of the society like Sangha, gana or Gachchha. It seems that among the Digambara Jainas also all castes do not necessarily have Bhattarakas of their own.⁴

Duties of Bhattaraka:

The Principal duty of a Bhattaraka is Dharmaraksha that is protection of religion. The protection is to be achieved by repulsing the attacks of other religionists and making his people more religious minded by means of preaching and educating the people. Along with the religious duty he has to perform a social duty also. The social duty consists in looking after the interests of his caste members. He has to help them in social matters by

giving them advice or by cementing their quarrel or by regulating social relations, institution, customs and manners according to the rules of conduct prescribed by the Jaina Books from time to time. Thus the nature of his duties is spiritual as well as temporal.

In connection with the question of appointing a Bhattaraka there seems to be no fixed rule, in general the procedure is that of Sishya-Parampara in which the existing Bhattaraka always selects his successor from his disciples. When the predecessor nominates his successor, the latter has to be installed by the people of the caste concerned.

A Bhattaraka is not required to lead the life of a strict ascetic. Though he has to remain celibate throughout his life and to live according to the religious principles, he has been allowed to possess property and utilizes it according to his own will. The property consists of contributions and gifts from his followers and sympathizers and grants from the state.

Social Activities:

By virtue of their position as a religious teacher Bhattarakas were above the level of caste distinctions. But this aspect of Hindu culture had so much influence on Jaina society that it could not be ignore. Every seat of Bhattarakas was generally associated with one particular caste. Bhattarakas

often arranged long pilgrimages with a large number of followers. Many times non-Jain students came to receive in learning from Bhattarakas.

The Mathas of Bhattarakas were centres of various social functions. This provided an occasion for preservation of various arts. Many references are found to music, painting, sculpture, dancing and other arts.⁵

According to the Joharpurkar the institution of Bhattaraka came into existence from second century A.D. but in medieval period, this institution acquired importance. Because in ancient period some royal dynasties like Gangas, Rashtrakutas, Shilaharas of Kolhapur patronage Jainism. But during medieval period there was decline of Hindu dynasty and all Indian sub-continent was over powered by iconoclast Muslim rulers. Therefore there was decline of Jaina religion also and at this critical juncture to protect and to spread Jaina religion, the institution of Bhattaraka laid and played vital role. Thus it would be clear that the Bhattaraka tradition played an important part in the history of medieval Jaina society.

The Chief Mathas and Bhattarakas in Kolhapur District:

The principal seats of the Jaina faith in Kolhapur District now are at Kolhapur and at Nandani. The seat of Laxmisena Bhattaraka Maharaja is at Kolhapur and its branches are spread all over India. The another seat of Jinasena Bhattarak is at Nandani and Kolhapur itself. Both these

Bhattarakas are playing important role to preserve and to spread *sraman* culture in this District as well as south India. Therefore it is essential to see here the history of these two Bhattarak Peethas.

Laxmisen Bhattaraka Peeth of Kolhapur:

Laxmisen Matha is one of the oldest Jain historical monument and is located at Shukravar Peth, Kolhapur. This math has a spacious and grand building with Maha darwaja. In the Math complex, there is a residence of Laxmisen Maharaja. Again in the present of Matha there is high statue of Bhagwan Adinath and beautiful Jain temple which control by the Matha.⁶

Again this Matha has a very good Library in which old manuscript of Jaina works, other books are available. It is also said that the building of this Laxmisen Matha is contemporary to Mahalaxmi temple.⁷

The title of Kolhapur Bhattarak is "Om Swast Srimant Rairajguru Bhumandalacharya Mahavadvadishwar-Rajwadi, Pitamaha Sakalvidvajjan Sarvabhaumadi Virajman- Nighatikasthan, Delhi, Kolhapur, Jinkanchi, Pingondi, ChattuSiddha Sinhasanadhiswar Srimat Abhinav Shri. Laxmisen Bhattarak Pattacharya Mahaswami Sansthan Matha Kolhapur, Raibag and Hosur. This Laxmisen Bhattarak Peeth is one of the Ancient and oldest Dharmapeeth of Jainas in south India ⁸and till it is working in good condition.



Branches of Laxmisen math:

Being a old Matha, the branches of Laxmisen math are located in Delhi(North India); Kolhapur(West India);Jinakanchi(Tamilnadu), Pingondi(Andhra). This shows that the work of Laxmisen Matha has been spreading throughout India. But unfortunately Laxmisen math in Delhi is not existed today but the work of Laxmisen math at Kolhapur is going on since ancient period to present day in full swing.

Tradition of Laxmisen Math:

This Karveer peeth of Laxmisen started valuable work in the field of religious cultural, social, educational, literary and moral since long period and created a glorious tradition to follow others.

Swastishri Laxmisen Bhattarak(1896-1965):

The late Bhattaraka Laxmisen Maharaja(1896 to 1965) rendered great service to revive the sraman culture in this area. He is instrumental to establish Dakshin Maharashtra Jain Sabha on 3rd April 1899 which is now one of leading Jaina Institution, working for the upliftment of Jaina society in south India.⁹

During his tenure of Mathadipathi more that 59 big images of Jain Tirthankaras were installed at various places in Kolhapur Dist.. and other parts of India. It is supposed that installing an images of Tirthankaras and

arranging Panchakalyan Puja are a pious duty of Jaina Sravaka. Laxmisen Bhattaraka is religious head of Jaina community and at his instance this religious function even today are taking place. He remained present there.

Moreover this late Laxmisen Bhattaraka installed 28 feet image of Adinatha Tirthankar in the 1962 in the premise of math. The installation ceremony of this image was memorable in the history of Kolhapur.

Besides religious field, he also guided Jaina community of Kolhapur District in the social and educational field. At the instance of this Bhattarakacharyaratn Deshbhushan Shikshan Prasarak Mandal was founded in 1963 and its first meeting was held in the Laxmisen Math itself. Not only this but at initial stage late Laxmisen Maharaj extended all type of help to this educational institution which is now running some Highschools and Mahaveer College Kolhapur.¹⁰

Abhinav Bhattarakratna Shri. Laxmisen Maharaj(b.2nd August 1942):

The present Laxmisen Bhattarak Maharaj was born on 2nd August 1942 at Gudloor(Tamilnadu). His parents were Adinath Nainar(father) and Vasundaradevi(Mother). His father Adinatha Nainar was one of the high Sravaka of Jinakanchi Math. The present Laxmisen Bhattarakas previous name was Chandrakirti. He received his primary education through Tamil

language. Once late Laxmisen Bhattarak went to Gudlur (Tamilnadu) and he saw child Chandrakirti.

After seeing the good signs in Chandrakirti, he persuaded the parents and late Laxmisen took child Chandrakirti along with him to Raibag.(Karnatak state), where another math of Bhattaraka has been working very well. At Raibag, child Chandrakirti received his early religious education in the Pathshala. After spending two years at Raibag child Chandrakirti came to Kolhapur (1953) and in the Kolhapur Math he received the best education in the company of learned Jaina scholars and Pandit¹¹. The late Laxmisen maharajas health was little deteriorating and therefore he appointed Chandrakirti as his successor on the Bhattaraka Peeth of Kolhapur, Raibag etc. and became Laxmisen Bhattaraka Maharaj on 2nd August 1965.¹² Thus he received the Diksha of Bhattaraka peeth and on 18th December 1965 he became the Mathadhipati. At the time of Diksha he was only 22 years old.

The present Bhattarak Laxmisen Maharaj is well cultured, well educated. He is B.A., Kavyatirth and speaks many languages(multi-lingual). He knew well Sanskrit, Ardhamagadhi, Tamil, Hindi, English languages. He led the math very well since 1965 and rendered great service to Jaina community in the Kolhapur district. Therefore Jaina community of this area

conferred on him the title of '*Bhattarak Ratna*', Dharma Diwakar, Sanhitasuri etc.¹³

The present Laxmisen Maharaj is associated with many religious and social works since last 38 years. (i.e. since 1965) and achieved great success in every field. He completed the work at Chandraprabhu Jain temple in the premise of Math in the year 1969 and celebrated Panchkalyan Puja. In the year 1979 he convened meeting at all Bhattarakas from all over India and formed an association of Bhattarakas called Bhattaraka Samelan which became the new representative body of Bhattarakas to redress some of their grievances.

Moreover one important step he took to spread Jaina culture was the starting '*Ratnatraya*' monthly since 1972 and he published some special issues on the subject like '*Sapurna Puran Ank*', Annual Calender Issue, Sheel Purana issue, Guru Smriti issue, Shikharaji issue, Vegetarian issue etc. for the use of Jaina Shravakas. Thus he started healthy tradition and created the class of new writers. Again to supplement Ratnatraya monthly he started two other monthlies '*Dharma-Prabhavana*' (Marathi) and '*Ashirvad*' (Kannad).¹⁴

He also did a lot of work in the field of education also. He established '*Laxmisen Education Society*' at Raibag in 1975 and started

‘Mahaveer English Medium School’ and ‘New English School’. Not only this but he opened free Boarding house for boys at Raibag. Again in 1977 he established ‘Laxmisen Vidyapeeth’ at Kolhapur and Govt. recognized this institution. Laxmisen Vidyapeeth runs Pathshala, Balawadi and Kanya Kumar primary school in Kolhapur.¹⁵

Under his guidance a number of Panchakalyan Puja were celebrated by the Jainas in the Kolhapur Dist. as well as outside. He also celebrated 1000th Mahamastakabhishek of Bahubali image at large scale on 26th Feb. 1981. He also erected beautiful Manastambha in front of Chandraprabhu Temple in the premise of Math in 1983 and a special inauguration function was arranged at auspicious hands of Elacharya Muni Vidhyananda Maharaj at Kolhapur on 24th March 1983. Kolhapur Jain community conferred the prestigious title of ‘Bhattaraka Ratna’ on present Laxmisen Maharaj.

The present Laxmisen Maharaj also doing a good social work. He has a good contact with Jain community and its leaders. He started the title of ‘Samaj Bhushan’ for good social worker belonging to Jain community. More than 600 social Jain workers received this title of Samaj Bhushan now.¹⁶

The Laxmisen Math also started ‘Shri Laxmisen Digambar Jain Granthmala’ in 1937 but previously only 4 books were published through this granthmala. After becoming Mathadhipati, the present Laxmisen

Maharaj (after 1965) published 63 more important books like 'Yogvichar', 'Updesh', 'Ratnamala', 'Kunthalgiri Mahatmya', 'Sravakacharya', 'Purushartha', 'Shidhaynpaya' etc.

He established Maharashtra Jain Sahitya Parishad on 10th June 1984 in Kolhapur Math. Under his guidance the first session of Marathi Jaina Sahitya Samelan was held in Kolhapur Laxmisen Math on 12th and 13th June 1986. The second Samelan of Marathi Jaina Sahitya Parishad was held at Solapur in 1987, third session held in Poona in the year 1988 and the forth session arranged at Nipani in 1989. the 14th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Jaina Sahitya Samelan was held at Miraj on 20th and 21st April 2002. All these sessions were encouraged and helped by the present Laxmisen Maharaj.¹⁷

To sum up the present Maharaj is carrying out very important duties to preserve and spread Jaina religion in this area.

Jinasen Bhattarak Maharaj at Nandani:

Nandani math is another old Jaina Math in Kolhapur Dist. and is one of the cultural centre of Jaina community. Nandani Math has another branch in the Bhende Lane in Kolhapur city itself. Like Laxmisen Matha, this Jinsen Math and its Bhattaraka supervise the activities of Jaina community especially Chaturth Jainas .

Nandani Math has a spacious old buildings at Nandani and Kolhapur city itself. It is said that Nandani Matha came into existence in the 7th century A.D. and some inscriptions especially Silahara period(10th to 12th century A.D.) are found in the Nandani Math.¹⁸ Some copper plates are there . Nandani math has also other branches at Kolhapur, Terdal, Belgaon. The main office is at Kolhapur(Bhende Galli). The Mathadhipati is called as Jinasena Bhattarak Pattacharya Kshuluka. This is known as Nandani Sansthan and has a large landed estate.

‘Swastishri Jinasen Bhattarak Math Sansthans head office in Kolhapur and its branches spread at Kolhapur, nandani, Terdal and Belgaum. But the Mathadhipati generally stays at Nandani Math.¹⁹

It is said that previously the Mathadhipati was naked but that practice was discarded in Medieval time and now the Jinasen maharaja wear cloth.

There is a old Jain Math at Nandani and in this Math old Jain temple of 1300 years old is in existence. In this Jain temple there is old Kannad inscription is available which speaks about the history development of Nandani Math.²⁰ According to this inscription this old temple was built in the year 857A.D..²¹ This inscription contains 38 lines and gives information regarding the background of Nandani village, the work of Nandani math, worship of Jain Arihant, Description of Panchakalyan mahotsava, and

tradition of Bhattarakas. It is said that Nandani Math is the religious capital of Jain Chaturth community. The building of Math is old, spacious and stood on 300 wooden pillar. There is boarding and lodging arrangement in this Math.

The Geneology of Mathadhipati Jinsen Maharaj:

There is not available detailed geneology of the Jinsen Math who occupied the Gadi of Math but recently the following list of Bhattaraka is published by Nandani Math.²²

Sr.No	Name	Years
1	Acharya Jinsen	701(known year)
2	Shri Vidyasagar Muni	1677 to 1818 A.D.
3	Shri. Nemagonda Patil-Swami	1818 to 1822 A.D.
4	Shri. Satgonda Nemgonda Patil-Swami	10-12-1820 to 7-3-1854
5	Shri. Raghoba Jayappa Swami	15-1-1854(Nandani) 29-11-1868(Karveer)
6	Narsappa Lagmana Upadhye-Kognoli Swam	29-11-1868(Kognoli) 28-6-1878 (Belgaum)
7	Sayapa Narsappa Upadhye-Swami Haroli-	28-6-1878(Nandani)

	Karveer	1-4-1879(Karveer)
8	Shri. Anna Chandapa Upadhye Swami Nandani-Karveer	1-4-1879 (Nandani) 28-2-1884(Karveer)
9	Parish Govinda Birnale-Swami Digraj-Sangli	28-2-1884 (Digraj) 6-12-1888 (Sangli)
10	Anna Lagmoji Patil-Swami Nandre-Sangli	5-12-1888(Nandani) 8-7-1891(Karveer)
11	Dada Payapa Upadhye-swami Nandani- Karveer	8-7-1891(Nandani) 13-3-1904(Karveer)
12	Shri. Bhujgonda Narasgonda patil Swami- Hasur-Karveer	26-02-1904 (Karveer) 11-10-1939(Kolhapur)
13	Tatya Nemgonda Patil-Mysal(Sangli)	1-6-1936(Terdal) 7-12-1970
14	Jangonda Dada Patil-Nandre Dist. Sangli alias-Kshulak Shri. Vasupujya Sagar Maharaj	7-12-1970(Nandani) 7-3-1991
15	Jangonda Vithgonda Patil(Nimshirgaon) alias Chandrabhushan Maharaj	1991-present

Bhattarak Vasupuja Sagar Maharaj(1970-1991A.D.):

He ascended the throne of Jinasen Bhattarak Math-Nandani-Kolhapur. Terdal and Belgaum on 7th December 1970.²³ Due to internal quarrel, the decline of Math Institution was going on when he installed as Jinasen Bhattarak. Subsequently he tried hard for restoring the lost prestige of Nandani Matha and many Jain Sravakas again visited this Matha as well as extended monetary help.

His previous name was Jangonda Dada Patil who later on became Shri. 105 Kshullak Vasupuja Sagar Maharaj(At Nandre-Dist-Sangli.) He was a disciple of Acharya Deshbhushan Maharaj. When he assumed the power of Bhattarakas the condition of Nandani Matha was very deplorable. The large land of the Math was possessed by private persons and they did not co-operate or give income to Math. He acquired 560 acre land and established his control over that land. He repaired the building of Nandani Math. He restored the Kolhapur Math building which was earlier possessed by Deshbhushan Education Society. He frequently visited Nandani, Kolhapur, Belgaum, Terdal Math and took keen interest to develop this religious institutions.

He started 'balwadi' for boys in 1971 and the inauguration of this school took place by the auspicious hands of Acharya Subbalsagar Maharaj.²⁴ Every year 100 students were taking education. For this purpose he appointed two lady teachers. Due to this some good sanskars were imposed on young children.

To spread the tenets of Jainism and gospel of Mahaveer and after tirthankars he started 'Sarvadharm' monthly in 1970 from Kolhapur Math.²⁵ In this monthly there was a special section called 'Dharmpatha'. This Sarvadharm is regularly publishing even now. Some special issues of 'Sarvadharm' are published from time to time.

He published the following sacred books for the use of Jain Sravak-Sravikas.²⁶

1. Pratishtakalpa.
2. Sahastra Nam.
3. Updesh Ratnamala.
4. Kalikud Vidhan.
5. Yadhnapavit Sanskar.
6. Namokar mantra.
7. Shodashkaran Bhavana.
8. Mahanama Shantipuja.

At his instance and order some 50 to 60 new Jain temples were built by his disciples, erected 100 to 125 manasthambas and organized Panchakalyan Puja of various places.²⁷

He also many times disposed some disputes occurred in Jain community. For Panchakalyan Puja, there was a need of an Elephant. Therefore he personally

went to Shimoga(Karnatak) and brought 1 ½ years elephant. For religious procession elephant has a special significance.

At Nandani, he erected 31 feet high statue of Adinath for the use of Jain community²⁸, and this was one of the pious work done by this Bhattaraka. The sad demise of this great Bhattaraka took place on 7th March 1991.²⁹

The Present Swastishri Jinasen Mahaswamiji- Chandrabhushan Maharaj(From 1991-onwards)

After the demise of Vasupuj Bhattarak Maharaj, Chandrabhushan Bhattarak Maharaj became the Bhattarak of Jinasen Math in 1991 and continued the incomplete work of his predecessors. The previous name of Chandrabhushan maharaj was Jangonda Vithgonda Patil.³⁰ He hailed from Nimshirganv Tal. Shirol Dist. Kolhapur. He was ardent disciple of previous Jinasen Bhattarak and Acharya Deshbhushan. He received Muni Diksha from Deshbhushan Maharaj.

He was born in the year 1940. His formal education is little less but due to hard work he learnt Sanskrit, studied stories of Jain religion and other Jain literature. In his childhood he was influenced by the teaching of Acharya Shantisagar and Acharya Nemisagar. He traveled throughout India and sometime he was joined in the Munisangha of Deshbhushan Maharaj. He undertook *vihar* and spent some days at Sravanbelgol in 1967. In 1970 he took *Kshulak* Diksha from Deshbhushan Maharaj at Stavanidhi and became 105 *Kshulak*

Chandrabhushan Maharaj. He stayed 12 years alongwith Mahaswami Deshbhushan Maharaj at Kuppanwadi-Kothali. Chandrabhushna Maharaj spent three *chaturmas* at Jaipur, two at Sravanbelgol, one at Bahubali and four in Delhi. Subsequently he became Mathadhipati of Nandani in the year 1991.³¹

After becoming Bhattarak, he encouraged the religious activities among his followers. He learnt Hindi, Prakrit, Gujrati, Kannad and Sanskrit language. Thus he studies many languages and became a polyglot.

He completed the unfinished dream of previous Bhattaraka. He created mini replica of Samedashikharaji at Rushabhachal area of Nandani. There are small temples of 24 Tirthankars along with their Charan Padukas.³²

The present Jinasen Mahaswami visited Indore, Jaipur, Delhi, ShravanBelgol, Kuchnur, Shamnewadi, Kothali, Bahubali, Jaysingpur and delivered religious discourses. At his instances, number of old Jain temples are repaired and new temples were built. Many Manasthambhas are erected in front of Jain temples. Thus the present Jinasena Bhattaraka Maharaj is doing his pious duty of protecting and spreading Jainism.

He has some future plans. He intended to start some religious educational Institution by which the true tenets of Jainism should be understood by new generation. He is thinking to start girls and boys(from Jain community) schools

to impart religious education. It is his desire that every village where Jains are surviving there should be Pathshala.³³

But to execute this plan he appealed to rich donors for financial help. He himself also extended monetary help to needy persons and boys. He also helped some authors to publish Jain religious books.

Thus this Bhattarak Institution is very important and need of Jain society.

Footnotes & References

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- 17.Ibid.
- 18.Booklet published by Nandani Math Sansthan.
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- 20.I personally visited Nandani, interviewed present Jinsen Bhattarak and saw Old Inscriptions.
- 21.Booklet published by Nandani, P.4.
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- 24.Nandani Math Record, P.105.
- 25.Ibid.
- 26.Ibid.
- 27.Nandani Math Record, P.106.
- 28.Ibid.
- 29.Hindi Booklet published by Nandani Math, P.8.
- 30.Personal interview with present Bhattarak of Nandani.
- 31.Ibid.

32. Personal visit to this place.

33. Booklet published by Nandani Math, P.12.

CHAPTER-IV
CO-OPERATIVE
ORGANIZATIONS OF
JAIN COMMUNITY IN
KULHAPUR DISTRICT