

**FORTS OF MAHARASHTRA: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE
ASPECTS IN THE 17TH CENTURY**

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Dated: 17.7.17.

DECLARATION

I, declare that the dissertation entitled "*Forts of Maharashtra: Socio-Economic and Administrative Aspects in the 17th Century*" submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other University.

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Introduction

In the 17th century history, forts played very dominant role, particularly in Maratha history. All the powers which were ruling in Deccan were getting forts built such as Bijapur, Golkunda, Ahmadnagar and Maratha kingdom, particularly Shivaji. The foundation, the expansion and the preservation of Maratha power- all these phases of Maratha history could be better understood, only if one knows the significance of forts in the history of this region. The present research tries to examine the relevance of forts in the socio-economic and administrative spheres in the 17th century Maharashtra. The work related to forts which have been done earlier are mostly confined to military aspect and about its architecture. The forts of Maharashtra has not got proper attention from the academic circle. So my concern is to understand socio, economic and administrative perspective, therefore I am using fort as a tool to study it.

Review of Literature

The historiography of the Maratha polity shows a constant evolution from the early attempts by Grant Duff and others to some of the latest works which show an awareness of the myriad complexities and aspects of the polity as also some of the social, economic and cultural strands which have gone into its shaping. The first historical writing on the Marathas was Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas*¹ which set the tone for much of the later historiography by presenting a blood-thirsty and war-mongering image of the Marathas, maligning them as a race and emphasizing the personal weakness and failings of the principal leaders. Indignant Maratha scholars tried to find evidence to refute Duff, and thus started the movement by V. K. Rajwade, K. N. Sane, V. V. Khare, D. B. Parasnis. To search for and publish historical documents. M. G. Ranade's *Rise of the Maratha Power*² challenged Duff's assumptions and portrayed a different view. The Nationalist school of Maratha history was best represented by Govind Sakharam Sardesai whose *Marathi Riyasat*³ is an exhaustive political history of the Maratha polity from a sympathetic and national point of view. S. N. Sen pioneered the study of Maratha

¹ Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, London, 1921.

² M. G. Ranade, *Rise of Maratha power*, Punalekar and Company, Bombay, 1900, Reprint, 1999.

³ G. S. Sardesai, *Marathi Riyasat*, part I & II, Bombay, 1927.

institutions in his *Administrative System of the Marathas*⁴ (Calcutta, 1925) and *Military System of the Marathas*⁵ (Calcutta, 1928). In the past few decades, many scholars have focused on the socio-economic aspects of the Maratha polity, A. R. Kulkarni's *Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji* (Pune, 1969), his more recent *The Marathas*⁶, as well as the two volumes, *Medieval Maharashtra* and *Medieval Maratha Country*, the last two containing a series of excellent essays on the cultural, social, religious and economic history of Maharashtra, with subjects as varied as nature of land rights, trade etc. Satish Chandra's essays on the nature and development of the Maratha polity, Shivaji's relationship with the big and small landed elements and the latter's role in the rise of the Marathas, as also the social background of this rise, incorporated in his *Medieval India-Society, the Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*,⁷ (New Delhi, 1982) are also important contributions to Maratha historiography, throwing new light on the role of the landed elements in the Maratha struggle under Shivaji and the latter's relationship with the big and small *zamindars*.

Andre Wink⁸ and Stewart Gordon too, have made valuable contributions, exploring various social, economic and other themes interwoven in the political history of the region. Wink in his book *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth Century Maratha Swarajya* (Cambridge, 1986), has discussed the nature of the Maratha polity in the context of Mughal political sovereignty, the relationships between the different sections that make up the Maratha polity and the pattern of tensions and conflicts between these sections. Gordon also talks about various economic, social, cultural and religious themes within the framework of political history, in his *The Marathas (1600-1800)*⁹ and his collection of essays *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century India*¹⁰ which deal with Maratha expansion in

⁴ Surendranath Sen, *Administrative system of the Marathas*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1925.

⁵ Surendranath Sen, *Military system of the Marathas*, the Book Company Ltd., Calcutta, 1928.

⁶ A. R. Kulkarni, *the Marathas*, Books & Books Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 1996.

⁷ Satish Chandra, *Medieval India, society, the Jagirdari crisis and the village*, New Delhi, 1982.

⁸ Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the eighteenth century Maratha Swarajya*, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

⁹ Stewart Gordon, *the Marathas 1600-1800*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2000.

¹⁰ Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1994.

central India. Gordon mainly shows the extent of systematization and regularization of the administration, especially revenue collection, in the areas under Maratha control. Recently, V.S. Kadam's *Maratha Confederacy: A Study in Its Origin and Development*¹¹ (Delhi, 1993) has also discussed Maratha expansion in the outlying areas, highlighting the process of transformation of the Maratha polity from a kingdom to a loosely knit 'confederacy'.

B. K. Apte was one of the pioneers in presenting the naval history of the Marathas. In his book *A History of the Maratha Navy and Merchantships*, the author talks about the Maratha naval activities from the ancient to the medieval periods. The author also provides with a detailed geographical background. The author also talks about the influence of Portuguese and later on of the English on the Konkan Coast. A detailed account of Maratha warships, merchantships, and naval war tactics. He also discussed at length the shortcomings which the Marathas has to face from the Europeans in the field of science and technology. Marathas borrowed scientific equipment from the Europeans. Equipment's such as good guns, compass, telescope (*nali*), and *Topikar* wheel for loading and unloading of goods from the ships. In spite of their drawbacks the Marathas established their supremacy on the Konkan Coast challenging the Portuguese, the English and the Siddis. They had their strongholds at Bassein, Kolaba, Suvarnadurg, Vijaydurg, and Sindhudurg.

Surendranath Sen in his books *The Administrative System of the Marathas States* that Shivaji aimed at the efficiency of his army which are numerically less so Shivaji tried to compensate this deficiency by quality of the soldiers. He appointed the hardy hill-men from Mawali race, who were loyal to him. For administrative purpose in the fort Shivaji appointed three officers. They were *Havaladar*, a *Sabnis* and a *Sarnobat* and these three officers are of the same rank. No single officer was entrusted with the sole charge of the fort, it was therefore impossible for any single officer to betray it.¹² The chief of the three officers is the *Havaladar*, who was entrusted with the keys of the fort, *Sabnis*, was in charge of the accounts, and the *Karkhanis* was responsible for commissariat work.¹³ The *Sabnis* was in charge of accounts, and he was to put his signature on every order under the

¹¹ V. S. Kadam, *Maratha confederacy*, New Delhi, 1993.

¹² Surendranath Sen, *the Military System of the Marathas*, the Book Company LTD, Calcutta, 1928, p. 96.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 96.

Karkhanis's seal. All orders involving expenditure were issued by the *Sabnis*, but they were not valid without the signature of the *Havaladar* and the sign of approval of the *Karkhanis*.¹⁴ Their work is somewhat interlinked and interdependent. In any case no work is approved by any one or two officers. The work has to be passed in front of all of them. Thus the three officers co-operated and serve as check to one another.¹⁵

The work of Surendranath Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas* is related to the regional military history of the Marathas. The author talks about the conventional kind of military history whereby he starts with Shivaji and ends with the Maratha subordination to the English. The author divides his work into different chapters dealing with different aspects of military techniques and technologies. The author gives a detailed study of the rise of the Maratha power in the 18th century and about the followers of Shivaji, although a halt was witnessed by the Marathas in the third battle of Panipat. The forts played a pivotal role in the rise of the Marathas, and the shifts in the military architecture of these forts can help us know what were the changes which were coming in its form and why? The author also mentions about the social background of the Maratha soldiers, many of them being peasants.

Apart from stored grains and provisions in large quantities in his fort for consumption during a siege, Shivaji also decided for a reserve fund to meet in case of extraordinary situation of siege. So Shivaji raised a sum of one lakh and twenty-five thousand *hons* and an additional sum of one lakh and seventy-five thousand *hons* for repairing his principal forts.¹⁶ There is also mention of rockets, musket-shots, bombs and stones. Besides the barracks for soldiers and officers, every fort has a *Darukhana* or powder house and an *Ambarkhana* or granary and store house for oil and *Ghi*. The *Ambarkhana* of Panhala has a holding capacity of 25,000 *Khandis* of grain.¹⁷ The water in the fort is made available with tanks, wells and cisterns. And rain water is also stored in the rock cut reservoirs as the Deccan region has a good rainy season.

Shivaji has developed a complicated system in the administration of forts which needed constant and vigilant supervision on the part of the king and this is not present in his

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 96, 97.

¹⁵ Surendranath Sen, *the Administrative system of the Marathas*, p. 136.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 137-138.

¹⁷ Surendranath Sen, *the Military System of the Marathas*, p. 94-95.

successors. And after his death the forts were under the custodians of chief officers who used forts for the residence of their families. And consequently the garrison was also replaced by foreigners, i.e. Arabs and non- Marathas. As the forts are not administered properly by the feudal lords and the *Peshwas*, in time of danger the forts could not offer any resistance and the Maratha - territories were finally conquered by the British.

Sidney Toy in *The Strongholds of India* talks about the striking features of the medieval Indian fortification, giving examples from whole of India. He states that the military architecture of medieval India is different from the contemporaries like that of Europe, China and Levant. As the design of the fort which is basically for the purpose of defence, it also impresses upon the observer its formidable aspect and the power and affluence of the ruler who possesses the fort. The typical characteristics of medieval forts were – the walls were of great thickness and height, strengthen at short intervals by massive towers, and the gateways though not nearly so well defended as those in the west, are of no less imposing appearance than the walls.¹⁸

Sidney Toy's another work *The Fortified Cities of India* is somewhat a continuation of his previous work *The Strongholds of India*. This book has mainly explored the forts which are present in Maharashtra region, namely- Panhala, Sholapur, Parenda, Purandhar, Junnar, and Shivneri.

J. N. Kamalapur in his *The Deccan Forts* has very systematically categorised the forts into three classes – hill forts, land- forts and sea forts depending on their nature and then each class is further divided into three sub-classes – major, medium and minor on the basis of size and importance of the fort. The author has also commented on the scarcity of source material for the research on Deccan region about the forts. The author states that the art of fortification goes back to the beginning of the 6th century A.D, giving examples of Ratnagiri and Aihole which are found in much dilapidated condition. Then the author gives a brief account of the history of Deccan dynasties from 3rd century up to the Marathas and the Peshwas in the 18th century. The Adil Shahi stands foremost in the matter of building activity apart from other rulers of the Deccan. They had built the beautiful city of Bijapur and some land forts and built a number of hill forts like that of Torna [first conquest of Shivaji in the year 1646], Panhala, Sinhgad, Lohgarh, Purandhar and sea forts like Suvarnadurg and Vijaydurg. The fort

¹⁸ Sidney Toy, *the Strongholds of India*, p. 1.

architecture of Deccan has a strong presence of foreign elements which are visible predominantly after the 14th century. Consequently there is a mix of Persian forms with that of Portuguese which in turn is combined with the ideas of the local masons. . The art and science of fortification is also mentioned in works like *Arthasastra*, *Manasara*, *Sukranitisara*, *Yuktikalpataru* and others.¹⁹

The author also states that Shivaji was the last great fort- builder who at the time of his death has 240 forts in his possession but later on non- of his successors and *Peshwas* built any fort except for the first *Peshwa* Balaji Vishwanath, who is said to have built a few forts like Visapur, Narayangaon etc.²⁰

Stewart Gordon, in his book *Marathas, Marauders, and State Formation in Eighteenth-Century India* compares and contrast the characteristic features of an ideal fort with reference to the *Ajanapatra* [A Royal Edict on the Principles of Maratha Policy] by Ramchandrapant Amatya. For actual administration of the Maratha fort Stewart Gordon has taken the example of Asir fort. Asir gives an edge to look into the compound structure between kingship, loyalty, relations to local population and forts outside the main Maratha land. Its topography is its strength. Asir hill is a steep, truncated cone which rises 900 feet from the surrounding plain and towers over the surrounding hills.²¹

Stewart Gordon argues that there were so many forts under the control of Shivaji, he captured dozens of forts from the enemies and the nobles of strong and influential. Maratha families and spent much of his finances on building new forts. One might have a question in spite there were forts existing in the region why Shivaji built so many of them. Shivaji was never sure of the loyalty of the existing fort commanders who often supported the opposing side. So only by building new forts and giving the administration of forts to the trusted troops of proven loyalty.

Shivaji also well understood that forts had important symbolic value. They were the physical manifestation of supra – local power, virtually the only one in Maharashtra.²²

¹⁹ J. N. Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 12.

²¹ Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders, and State Formation in Eighteenth century India*, Oxford University press, 2004, p. 88

²² Stewart Gordon, *The New Cambridge History of India*, Vol. II-4, [*The Marathas 1600-1800*], Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p. 82.

Gordon has suggested three distinct "zones of military entrepreneurship" for pre-colonial India, each with its own different military culture. For North India, he has noted the emergence of a shared Mughal-Rajput ethos, based on cavalry, plains warfare, and traditions of honourable personal service in return for rights to landed revenue. In Western India, the peasant-warrior armies of the Maratha kingdoms employed the superior mobility of lightly armed cavalry to attack slower moving imperial armies, using the forts and the rugged mountains of the Western Ghats as a refuge. The Nayaka ethos of Southern India, on the other hand, reflected the unreliable supply of suitable cavalry horses, relying on the fighting skills of a lightly armoured infantry using combinations of lance, sword, shield, and mace, and well-defended forts under the command of leading military families.²³

Asir is related to almost every ruling dynasty of this region [Khandesh], i.e. the fall of Asir is connected to the fall of ruling dynasty. In 1756 the fort of Asir has a population of 185 regular troops. Ten to fifteen men were under a leader, who was a Maratha or a Brahmin, the pay of soldiers on an average is 36 rupees [varied from 29 – 30 rupees].²⁴

In practice the personal supervision by the king was replaced by the *Kamavisdar* in case of the Asir fort, who was the direct representative of the *Peshwa*, who is the acting head of the Maratha state and sees into all the administrative matters related to the forts. Asir fort at this time was apparently quite understocked and understaffed.²⁵ Which is in contrast to the formal text *Ajanapatra* that proper stock for the garrison must be present in the fort. The art of fortification do not change over a period of fifty years of writing of *Ajanapatra* to the administrative records of the fort of Asir. The ideal hill fort as described in *Ajanapatra*, should be the highest point with no higher one nearby. The fort was to be protected by towers, doors, gateways and thickets of trees below the walls. Asir has all the physical features represented in the ideal text. It has internal arrangements for water supply, stocks for the staff and garrison and arms and ammunition for the safety of the fort. The Asir fort also had a *Sabnis*, a *Havaladar* for the maintenance and a Brahmin to take over the part of rituals and festivals. *Peshwa* was involved in the personal selection of the commander of the fort i.e. the *Havaladar* and other

²³ Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders, and State Formation in Eighteenth century India*, p. 182-208.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 90.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 91.

soldiers who in the course of time has replaced the line of *Chhatrapatis*. It was also not confirmed that all the qualities mentioned in the *Ajanapatra* were fulfilled or not in recruiting the staff of the fort, going through the details about the family background and assurance provided by Maratha noble families. Lack of royal - residency is the major discrepancy came out in the later period, in contrast to the text of *Ajanapatra*. Earlier the forts served the places for royal refuge in case of defence against the Mughals.

Jean Deloche in his *Four Forts of Deccan* presents four significant fortifications of South India, namely the fort of Daulatabad in Maharashtra, the fort of Mudugal in Karnataka, the fort of Gandikota and the fort of Gutti in Andhra Pradesh. Each of which furnishes evidence of the excellence of the military architecture developed in the Kingdoms of the Deccan Sultanate Between the thirteenth and the eighteenth centuries. The main purpose of this study is to analyse the building techniques in order to establish the typology of the works and to bring into focus a reliable method to identify and date them, an investigation which permits to show the evolution of military defence system in this part of the Indian Peninsular, considering their adaptations to the progress of artillery.

J. Burton Page in his article *A Study of Fortification in the Indian Subcontinent from the Thirteenth to the Eighteenth Century A.D* throws light on the dearth of standard material on fortification in India and Pakistan. Though there are writings of authors like Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Percy Brown's *Indian Architecture*, but they all have certain limitations like the work of Fergusson is outdated and that of Percy Brown's he criticized as superficial. The author mentions about Fanshawe's *Delhi, Past and Present* which gives very less information about forts. Sidney Toy who is an authority on European military architecture whose work *The Strongholds of India* is analysed by the author. The author criticised Toy's work as it has focussed mainly on the most easily accessible forts, that too not more than two dozen. He did not included the details of military architecture like weapons used, missiles, siege engines associated with the forts. The author has opted for chapter wise criticism of the book.

Stewart Gordon, in the article *Forts and Social Control in the Maratha State* talks about the trend in research regarding the forts of Maharashtra. First approach was followed by Sidney Toy in his seminal work *The Strongholds of India* where the author analyse forts as an example of military architecture by comparing the structures of various forts. Secondly forts as

a place of heroic events. Both the approaches focus on some of the very large and famous forts of Maharashtra. Stewart Gordon gives an alternative to the above mentioned method, as to view forts from the internal administrative documents. They are of two types- normative text which describes about the physical arrangement Personnel, functions and important problems relating to maintenance of forts. Secondly there are actual accounts of the specific forts. For the Maratha State both are available and the author makes a comparison between the normative and the actual accounts of forts.

On the Nature and Language of sources: The sources of Maratha history are scattered in various languages of which Persian, Marathi and English are important. For the present work, the Persian sources prove useful for discussing the sieges. Marathi sources are mostly useful for describing the fort administration. However, both Marathi and Persian sources furnish little information about the fort architecture. Sanskrit sources like ‘Akasbhairavakalpa’ are of some importance in understanding the science of forts. English sources, particularly traveller’s accounts give substantial information in respect of some forts. A huge amount of published and unpublished archival sources in *Moodi* script is preserved in Mumbai Archives, Pune Archives and Bharat Itihasa Sanshodhaka Mandala that provide bulk of information related to Marathas and its society, economy, polity, culture, trade, commerce, administration, religion and about other neighbouring states from which Marathas fought and maintained friendly relations. This research uses unpublished and published primary sources that are in Marathi (Devanagari script) and English language. The Marathi Published sources are preserved in Mumbai Archive, Pune Archive, Bharat Itihasa Sanshodhaka Mandala (Pune), Maharashtra Granthaottejaka Sanstha (Deccan Vernacular Translation Society) (Pune) etc.

The following Marathi Published sources are:

This material may be broadly grouped under two head, chronicles and records. In the present work only published records have been consulted for describing the forts and activities associated with them.

Chronicles

Sabhasad Bakhar²⁶: The earliest life of Shivaji was written in the last decade of the 17th century by Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad, at the instances of Rajaram under the title of *Shiva Chhatrapatche Charitra*. It was probably started in 1694 and completed in 1697. From the point of view of the present work, this work is valuable as it gives a list of forts captured, built and repaired by Shivaji. Further it gives a general idea of fort administration laid down by Shivaji. However, we do not get much information about the siege operations of this period.

91 Qalmi Bakhar: The first narrative of Shivaji's life in Marathi was composed by Waqnis, official chronicler of Shivaji, probably written before 1685. But the original work is lost and later on the account is recomposed in 91 sections in 18th century. This bakhar also refers to the administration of forts in general.

Chitnis Bakhar²⁷: The work done by Malhar Ramrao Chitnis is known as '*Chhatrapatich Saptaprakarnatmak Charitra*'. This bakhar belongs to the later period, written in 1810. But it serves as a good tool for tracing the missing links. Like the earlier chronicles, this also helps us to know the names of forts in Maharashtra and their administration.

Jedhe Shakavali²⁸: The Jedhe Shakavali is a chronological account of incidents from 1618 to 1697 with which the members of Jedhe family was familiar. This work is useful in fixing the chronology of important incidents. Several dates given in this work have been corroborated by the original documents and Persian texts. The siege tactics used by the Marathas as well as by the Mughals have been indicated whenever necessary.

Selections from the Satara Rajas' and The Peshwas' Diaries: it has 9 volumes published by Deccan Vernacular Translation Society. All the volumes are available at the Deccan Vernacular Translation Society. These volumes have been edited and prepared by

²⁶ Sabhasad, *Siva Chhatrapatinche Charitra*, (ed.) S. N. Joshi, Poona, 1960.

²⁷ Malhar Ramrao Chitnis, *Chhatrapatich Saptaprakarnatmak Charitra*, (ed.) R. V. Herwadkar, Poona, 1967.

²⁸ *Jedhe Shakavali*, English translation by Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji Souvenir*, Bombay, 1937.

G.C. Vad, D.B. Parasnis and others on the orders of Maharashtra state government. The special thing about these volumes is that the editors (D.B. Parasnis and others) and G.C. Vad who prepared these volumes included letters of each sphere. For instance, land revenue, its administration and officials, taxes, military administration, Navy administration, village administration, district administration, judicial administration, offences, treason, thefts, murder, forced marriage, adultery, witchcraft, cow-killing, slavery, forced labour, police, prisons, trade and commerce, postal service, mint, charity, pensions, public works, medical relief, religious and social matters, Peshwas' camps and Balutedars. Each theme is divided in specific section. Each letter in these volumes has been translated from *Moodi* script to Marathi language (*Devnagari* script) and summarized in English language as well.

***Selections from The Peshwa Daftar*²⁹**: it has more than 45 volumes edited and prepared by G.S. Sardesai and Published by Government Central Press (Bombay) on the orders of Maharashtra state government. All the volumes are available at Pune Archives and Mumbai Archive. This research uses volume number 3, 10, 23, 30, 39, 40, 45 which contains revenue related information about fort Purandhar, Singhgad, condition of Ratnagiri fort, *Chhatrapati* Shahu's letters against the Siddis of Janjira and Balaji Vishwanath's administration. Each letter of all volumes is in Marathi language and *Devnagari* script and has been summarized in English language as well by the editor.

Ramchandrapant Amatya in his *Ajanapatra* [A Royal Edict on the Principles of Maratha Policy] describes about the importance of forts, their organization and administration, and their construction. Ramchandrapant Amatya states that the essence of the whole kingdom is forts.³⁰ The author of the text describes about the characteristic features of the ideal fort. It is seen in the reign of Shivaji that in the construction of most of the forts, these ideals and rules were followed by him. He further mentions that the Deccan was not under the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb who has struggled hard against this kingdom for full thirty to thirty-two years.³¹ Aurangzeb was also successful in conquering the powerful states of

²⁹ G. S. Sardesai (ed.), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Bombay, 1930.

³⁰ A. R. Kulkarni (ed.), *Ajanapatra* by Ramchandrapant Amatya, p. 326.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 326.

Bijapur and Bhaganagar. But he was not able to conquer Deccan as its area is still protected by forts. He also advises the king to conquer the country of foreign rulers unprotected by forts by the construction of forts in his own boundary. And by this process he should bring under control the territories of adjoining rulers, and thus increase his kingdom. Therefore to create a kingdom the king should maintain forts and strongholds as they are the source of prosperity of the kingdom and protection of the life of people and the royal family.

The author also points out the very essential factor that as long as forts remain in the control of ruler it acts as safety house until due to any reason it passed into the hands of the enemy it acts in contrast to its nature of stipulated job. If the fort would pass to the enemies they will use it against them. So the work of protection of the forts and strongholds is very important.³² For these reasons, considering the safety and protection of the kingdom as the main object of the ruler, their administration and maintenance should not be allowed to be neglected even in the smallest degree.

Havaladar is the main administrative authority regarding the fort. He was chosen by the king and belongs to well-known Maratha family, who were trustworthy, industrious, non-covetous and wakeful. The *Havaladar* who was entrusted with the job of upkeep of the fort should not allow it to endanger as long as he lives. Other than *Havaladar*, *Sabnis*, *Karkhanis*, *Sarnobats*, *Tatsarnobats*, *Bargirs*, *Naikwadi* are also appointed for the administration of the forts. Persons who are unsteady, murderous, thieves, fond of drinking and intoxication with drugs and *Bhang* should not be appointed at all to for the services in forts. For the proper administration of forts the post of the *Havaladar* is also made transferrable. He is appointed for a term of three years and at the end of term he is send to a new fort, and likewise a term of four years for the *Sarnobats* and term of five years for both *Sabnis*, *Karkhanis*. The author also emphases that the *Deshmukh*, *Despande*, *Patils*, *Kulkarnis*, and *Chawgules* and other hereditary *Watandars* who occupy the territory lying round about the fort should not be given service on the forts near it.³³ As they will not do their work properly and visit their homes regularly. In course of their service of the forts if they were found of committing robberies, murder, bribery, quarrel, delay and idleness and other offences then

³² *Ibid*, p. 363.

³³ A. R. Kulkarni (ed.), *Ajanapatra* by Ramchandrapant Amatya, p. 365.

they should be removed and similarly punishment for the offences should be met out. And in the administration of the forts should not be entrusted to the kinsmen, relations or recommendation. If in case they commit any fault it will be constrained on the part of ruler to punish the culprit.

For the construction of forts there should not be a higher point near the fort amongst the surrounding hills.³⁴ This is a measure taken for the safety of the fort by the king, if there is such place near the the forts adjoining area is taken down with the help of mine. The author also states that the weakness of forts should be removed by building edifices. Gates are also one of the important component of the fort, which are regularly repaired and maintained and are made up of heavy-wood. Iron Spikes are attached to the gate so war animals like elephants do not destroy the forts gate. With gates there are also secret passages in the fort. And the approach to the fort should not be very easy, if it's easy it should be destroyed and thick rows of tress should be planted and the paths should be constructed such that which will make it very difficult for the invading army to approach. For water supply in the forts, forts are built in a place which has springs nearby, or artificially tanks and reservoirs are made out by cutting the rocks, which will last for the entire season. Guns and doors of the forts are protected in the rainy season by applying wax and oil. For the effective use of forts according to the author insisted on strict discipline and maintenance of fort with military provisions and other articles necessary for the garrison to survive in period of invasion.

It is seen that most of the guidelines were carried by Shivaji in construction of the forts. During the course of fifty years after the *Ajanapatra* has been written, there was no great changes in the administration and maintenance of the fort.

“The chapter VIII: this is an important chapter giving all details of forts, their construction, administration, their advantage; and various other related aspects. It makes several suggestions, including tree plantation on the forts, the management of forts etc. it was believed in the medieval period, that fort was essence of

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 368.

kingdom. Here the author maintains that Shivaji could found the *Swaraj* because of the forts which were in his possession.”³⁵

Marathi Records

Marathyancha Itihasanchi Sadhane: The valuable collection of old Marathi papers have been published by V.K. Rajwade in 22 volumes. The papers are of different nature- Sanads, petitions, judgement (Niwade), etc. all these 22 volumes are first rate sources of the Marathi history. Several papers from volumes VIII, XIV, XV, XVI and other few throw considerable light on the fort administration at the time of Shivaji.

Shivacharitra Sahitya Khand: The Bharat Itihas Samshodhal Mandal, Poona has so far collected numerous Marathi documents from various Maratha historical families, and has published most of them through the journals. So far 13 volumes in the series, ‘Shiva Charitra Sahitya’ have been published. These are valuable documents for studying the various aspects of Shivaji’s period.

Tarabai Kalin Kagadpatra³⁶: The original documents of Tarabai’s times have been edited and published by Dr. Pawar under the title ‘*Tarabai Kalin Kagadpatre*’ in two volumes. The document gives the idea of the political situation at the time of Tarabai. Some letters throw light on Tarabai’s policy towards the fort administration.

Ballads: There are three main ballads belonging to this period, they are Agindas ballad of Afzal Khan, Tulsidas of Sinhadgad and lastly Yamaji’s of Baji Pasalkar. These ballads were preserved by people known as Gondhalis and transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition. These ballads gives us information about the customs, religion, persecution, Marathas in the services of the Muslims, about their dresses, recreations, etc.

³⁵ A. R. Kulkarni (ed.), *Ajanapatra* by Ramchandrapant Amatya, Mansanmaan Prakashan, Pune, 2004, p. 319

³⁶ Appasaheb Pawar (ed.), *Tarabai kalin Kagadpatra*, Vol. I (1969), Vol. II (1970), Shivaji Vidyapeeth Itihasik Granthmala, Kolhapur.

Persian Sources

Persian records supply valuable information of sieges of the medieval period. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb was involved in a number of military operations in the Deccan, and with the help of the contemporary or nearly contemporary sources, one can understand his war policy, the methods of attacks and the duration of sieges, etc.

Bhimsen Saksena, in his memoir *Tarikh i Dilkasha*³⁷, gives a detailed account of Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign. The memoir is written initially in Persian which was later on translated into English by Capt. Jonathan Scott, which has some incorrect translations as shown by Setu Madhav Rao Pagdi. The latter half of the work is translated into English by Sir Jadunath Sarkar himself from the Persian manuscript and the work is called as *Nuskha-i- Dilkasha*.

Raghunandan, writer's father was also in service of the Mughal so he has got the opportunity to travel with his father from an early age. Bhimsen held a minor but important post under the Mughal government. So the writer mentions about the things and places from the very beginning of his life which happened to start from Burhanpur, then to Aurangabad (1658), in 1666 the writer saw Shivaji on his way to Agra, while discharging his duties he came in contact with prince Muazzam and Jaswant Singh.

Some of the important incidents to which Bhimsen was an eye witness could be easily found the importance of his memoir. The writer gives a graphic account of the campaign of Purandhar of 1665, a meeting of Shivaji and *Mirza* Raja Jai Singh, Shivaji's visit to Agra, his escape from Agra and Aurangzeb's arrival in Deccan in 1681 to punish the Marathas. He describes the movement of Aurangzebs from fort to fort and the difficulties. He also talks about the measures adopted by the Marathas for the defence of their forts.

He also describes about the annexation of Bijapur and Golkunda to the Mughal Empire. Bhimsen, minutely describes about the nobles also who has taken the assignments, the episode of Sambhaji and prince Akbar, execution of Sambhaji, Rajaram's last expedition

³⁷ Bhimsen Joshi, *Tarikh-i-Dilkasha* (ed.) V. G. Khobrekar, Department of Archives, Maharashtra, Bombay, 1972.

and death, internal dissensions among the Marathas, capture of forts by the Mughals as he himself witnessed many of such siege operations. During 25 years of Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign the writer was serving the Mughals, so he kept a good details of events as most of the time he was in the Mughal camp. Owing to his intimacy with high officials, he had access to correct information from many sources.

Maasir -i- Alamgiri³⁸ of Saqi Mustad Khan, is an important piece of work on the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707). This book is written after the death of Aurangzeb. The author was brought up by Bakhtayar khan, a favourite official of Aurangzeb. So, the author had full access to the state archives and the book was completed by 1710.

The book is chronologically arranged, there is accurate details of names of person and places during the course of every month's narrative. The book is written in chapter form, for which each Regnal year is followed. The authentic source for the writing are the written official records by the *waqai navis* (the recorder of events) or from the official reports of the occurrence regularly sent from every province to the Central Government at Delhi.

Besides, these records were the *Akhbarat-i-darbar-i-muala* or reports of everything that was done or said in public at the court of Emperor present in person. These were written daily, sometimes twice a day when the Emperor held the court twice that is in the morning and evening. These records are accurate, detailed and contemporary records of occurrence.

The author held the post of *Munshi* and *Diwan* under Bakhtawar Khan, after his death he got into imperial service with a *mansab*. He held the following post under the Emperor Aurangzeb of *Mushrif of Ja- Namaz – Khana. Waqai Navis* of Thursday. The book on an average gives 11 pages to one year narrative compared to 1107 pages of *Alamgirnamah*. But this 11 pages are full of facts and nothing has been left out in narration of events.

Muntakhab-ul-Lubab: This work written by Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan gives good account of Tarabai, the dowager queen of Rajaram. Khafi khan has written this book 25 years after the death of Aurangzeb. So it cannot be compared with *Masir- i- Alamgiri*

³⁸ Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasiri Alamgiri*, (tr.) Jadunath Sarkar, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1947.

in point of accuracy. Although he gives dates and names, sometimes incorrect, his account is important as he furnishes enough details of military activities of Aurangzeb.

Futuhāt –ī – Alamgiri: Ishwardas Nagar, a Mughal officer, has written this work. He often used to accompany the emperor Aurangzeb in his camp. He gives a sketchy information in respect of sieges of the forts during the war of independence.

Alamgirnāma: This work was written by Mirza Muhammad Kasim, furnishes the faithful account of Aurangzeb's life. But his information regarding Shaista Khan's expedition, it seems, is not so accurate. We learn from his account how the Mughals adopted unsuitable siege tactics in the Deccan.

Sanskrit Sources

Akasbhairavkalp: This work has been composed by court poet of Vijaynagar, probably in the 16th century. The manuscript of this work ends abruptly in the midst. All the seven copies of this work traced so far is incomplete. They are preserved at the Saraswati Mahal Library of Tanjore.³⁹ Of the 135 chapters of this work available so far, seven chapters deal with the matter of the construction of forts, their types and architectural features. This work enables us to form an idea about the forts constructed in the 16th and 17th centuries. We can also trace the influence of Islamic architecture on the forts of Maharashtra.

Shivabharata⁴⁰: Anupurana or Shivabharata, written by Kavindra Parmanand, is an important Sanskrit work of Shivaji's period. The poem is an incomplete epic and written in imitation of the Raghuvamsha. It contains 31 complete cantos and nine verses. The narrative is only up to 1661 A.D. An interesting account of Afzal Khan's episode, Shaista Khan's expedition, has been described by Parmanand. Although laudatory, this work

³⁹ V. S. Bendrey, in *Gad- Kot- Durg Ani Tyanchi Vastu*, translated seven chapters of *Akasbhairavkalp* (21 to 27)

⁴⁰ Kavi Parmanand, *Shivabharata*, (ed.) S. M. Divekar & D. V. Apte, Poona, 1927.

throws considerable light on the earlier activities of Shivaji. We get some information about the siege tactics used by Shivaji in capturing forts like that of Sirval.

Budhabhushanam: The authorship of this work is attributed to Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji. The chapter on Rajniti of this work gives information regarding forts, their types, administration, etc. However, this work hardly discusses the architectural aspect of forts of medieval period. On the other hand, the account given in this work is strikingly identical with the information furnished by Manusmriti and other treatises.

Rajyavyavahar kosha⁴¹: The work is composed by Raghunath Pandit Hanumante on the instances of Shivaji. In the chapter ‘Durgavarga’ we get the technical terms in respect of fort architecture and siege tactics, Persian as well as Sanskrit, which were generally in use during the period.

Rajaramcharitam⁴²: This work is composed by Keshav Pandit who accompanied Rajaram to Jinji. It is fairly accurate description of the route of Rajaram’s journey from Ratagad to Jinji, when the former was occupied by the Mughals in 1689, and the king had to seek shelter at some other places. Rajaram wanted to be away from the constant Mughal menace and plan his military activities from a distance. On his way to Jinji he took resort at several forts. This description gives us an idea of the chain of forts, and their significance during the critical period.

Shivatatva Ratnakar⁴³: This book is composed by Basavraj. The work belongs to the medieval period and deals with the subject of forts and their types, etc.

⁴¹ Raghunath Hanumante, *Rajyavyaharakosha (Siva Charitra Pradip)*, B. I. S. M., Poona, 1925.

⁴² Keshav Pandit, *Rajaramcharitam*, (ed.) V. S. Bendrey, Poona, 1931.

⁴³ Keladi Basavraj, *Sivatattva Ratnakar*, (ed.) S. Narayan Swamy Sastry, Madras, 1964.

English Sources

A New Account of the East India and Persia⁴⁴

The account given by John Fryer, a European traveller of the 17th century, is valuable from the point of view of learning political and social conditions of that period. Fryer's account is faithful and he speaks of some of Shivaji's forts and their administration. The detailed description of fort Shivneri, the birth place of Shivaji, has been furnished by John Fryer.

English Records on Shivaji (1659-1682)

This work is in two parts and is a collection of several letters from Factory Records. Besides the copies of letters, the accounts given by English ambassadors have also been included in it. We get accurate and faithful account of siege operations conducted by Shivaji particularly against the British. The description of Rayagad fort, the capital of Shivaji, is given in detail by Henry Oxinden, the English ambassador.

Chapters

This research is divided into three chapters and each chapter mainly focuses over Maratha forts and its significance in socio-economic and administrative aspects by analysing published primary and secondary sources

Chapter I- Historical and Geographical Backgrounds to the Forts of Maharashtra.

In this chapter, I have discussed about the important geographical divisions of Maharashtra, and the Maratha fort architecture which got adapted to the geographical features of the Deccan. Basic elements of Maratha forts, How the Deccan Plateau was a place for contestation among the various powers of Deccan? Different types of forts and their contribution in the formation of Maratha *Swarajya*.

⁴⁴ John Fryer, *a New Account of East India and Persia (1672-81)*, (ed.) William Crooke, 3 Vols. London, 1909.

Chapter II-Administration of the Forts

The present chapter deals with the fort administration of Shivaji. The three tier administration of the fort by the Havaladar, Sabnis and Sarnobat, how they provided an efficient system of management. Secondly their duties, appointment, transfer, payment, promotions, punishment etc. It is interesting to note how Shivaji exploited this loose administration of hill forts under Muslim rulers. In his earlier activities, he secured the hill fort Chakan from Firangji Narasala, the Mughal officer of the fort, confirming him in his original post when he assured to serve for Swarajya.

Chapter III-Socio-economic Significance of forts.

In this chapter I have discussed how the construction of a fort in a particular area lead to the development of its hinterland, the trade routes, trade in arms with the Portuguese and French, how export and import helped to develop manufacturing centres in and around the forts, emergence of weekly bazars, emergence of ports and trading centres in the Konkan region regarding the foreign trade, protection policy of Shivaji regarding the salt trade of Konkan. And the role played by sea forts and Maratha navy in the coastal trade of Shivaji.

CHAPTER 1: Historical and Geographical Background to the Forts of Maharashtra

The origin of the Maratha kingdom can be found in the unique situation of the Deccan in the sixteenth century. Due the lack of a large Muslim population in the Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur, Golconda and so on, there emerged a trend of relying heavily on the existing Hindu population. This lead to the creation of a large corpus of trained administrators and military personnel's from different communities. One of these communities was the Marathas. They were the Marathi speaking units in the militaries of these Sultanates, particularly in the time of *Chhatrapati* Shivaji in the seventeenth century. These people contributed in forming an independent state through participating in Shivaji's army. Many local lineages and elites were there in this group of Marathi speaking units but peasants were numerous or in majority, particularly the *Kunbi* community. They claimed themselves as Maratha and acquired Kshatriya status. After the state formation their kingdom came to be known as Maharashtra, which means 'Great Nation', but some historians argued that the term Maharashtra came from the term *Mahar* caste. These Marathi speaking people were martial by nature and warlords, they were known for their struggle against the foreign powers particularly the Mughals. Taking advantage of the fluid political situation of the Deccan due to the regular warfare between the different Sultanates as well as the invasions of the Mughals many roving bands of warriors managed to create their influence in small pockets of areas. It has in this context that Shivaji managed to chisel out a separate political domain and declared himself *Chhatrapati* in 1674 leading to the birth of Maratha kingdom.

Shivaji began his political carrier with a small *Jagir*, yielding a revenue of forty thousand *hons*.⁴⁵ Shahji assigned to Shivaji his personal *Jagir* of Pune, Supe, Indapur, Chakan.⁴⁶ With the death of his guardian Dadoji Konddeo in 1647, Shivaji became his own master and full control of his father's *jagir* passed on to him. After measuring his with his own people and getting recognition from them as their leader, Shivaji could successfully deal with the neighboring powers – the Adil Shahi of Bijapur, the Qutub Shahi of Golconda, the

⁴⁵ A. R. Kulkarni, *Exlorations in the Deccan*, Pragati Publications, New Delhi, 2006, p. 24.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 23.

Mughals and the Siddis.⁴⁷ The Marathas were the last indigenous empire builders in India. The Maratha state formed by *Chhatrapati* Shivaji rapidly developed into an empire during the period of *Peshwas* after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707. Their rapid expansion was once arrested by their defeat at Panipat but soon the Marathas recovered from the shock. Even in 1794 they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Nizams at Khanda and compelled to cede half his territories. But just after nine years elapsed the *Peshwa* became a feudatory of the British - Government in India.

Shivaji inherited disorder and anarchy. But neither the nature of the country nor the character of its inhabitants was in favor of the establishment of an orderly government.⁴⁸ The beginning of the seventeenth century saw many Marathas in high positions in the military and civil services of the Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda governments. It was in the army that the Marathas particularly distinguished themselves. Every able bodied man was a potential soldier. He could enlist as a *Bargir* [literally means a burden taker but in the Mughal as well as in the Maratha army the term signified a soldier who rode a horse furnished by his employers], if he had means enough to buy a horse and the slender outfit that a soldier needed in those days, he could join as a *Shiledar* [a soldier who finds his own horse and arm] with much better prospects of advancement. The distinction between *Shiledar* and *Bargir* force was quite well known when the *Sukranitisa* was compiled. Thus we find the author of *Sukranitisa* discriminating between the two kinds of army “untrained or trained, officered by the state; equipped by the state with arms, or supplying their own arms and ammunitions, bringing their vehicles or supplied with vehicle by the state.”⁴⁹

There were in all 16 provinces under Shivaji’s government, according to M. G. Ranade. They were: Maval, Wai, Satara, Karad, Panhala, Thana, Baglan, Bednore, Shringapatan, Vellore, South Konkan, Trimbak, Wanagad, Kolhar, Karnatik, and Tanjore.⁵⁰ According to Shankarraoji Sachiv, the Swarajya territory of Shivaji comprises of Konkan and the Varghat. The Konkan had 13 *subhas* divided into 127 *Mahals* and the Varghat had 16 *subhas* divided into 101 *Mahals*, it also enumerates the names of 145 forts in the possession

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Surendranath Sen, *the Administrative system of the Marathas*, p. 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 334.

⁵⁰ M. G. Ranade, *Rise of Maratha Power*, p. 117-118.

of Shivaji. Thus the 29 *subhas* comprising of 228 *Mahals* and 145 forts form the core of Maratha *Swarajya*.⁵¹

The present state of Maharashtra is a continuous land mass with varied features where Marathi is the most widely used language. It is one of the largest states of India and lies between, approximately 15° 45' North to 21° 45' north of latitude at its farthest southern and northern points; and from 72° 30' East to 80° 45' East of longitude at its extreme western and eastern points respectively. The total land mass is approximately 3, 06,345 sq. km⁵². The physical feature is of considerable importance while dealing with the forts which, in one form or the other, dominated all lines of communications.

The state is divided into 30 districts, not counting the recent division of Bombay into two. Details of the various districts are not relevant to the present study. The rise and fall of forts can be said to have taken place between 1200 to 1800 A. D. Although the art of fortification was practiced from times immemorial, the study of the Forts of Maharashtra is confined to 17th century.

The regions of Maharashtra are however important because each had a definite influence on the use of forts. The following main regions can be noted:

1.1 Maratha Territory

1. The border region
2. The Konkan
3. The Sahyadri and the side ranges
4. The Maval
5. The Deccan plateau
6. The river basins.

⁵¹ A. R. Kulkarni, *Medieval Maratha Country*, p. 143.

⁵² C. D. Deshpande, *Geography of Maharashtra*, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi, 1971, p. 1.

The Northern Border: The present northern border runs along the river Tapti⁵³. However, the traditional border between the North and the South of India, the Hindustan and the Deccan, ran along the Vindhya and the river Narmada. For long it was considered a barrier and the expansion southward from Hindustan was considered difficult. Nevertheless there were many passages which afforded entry southwards. The age old route is known as Bhusaval gap, through which Central railway from Bhusaval to Burhanpur runs. The Narmada can be crossed at many points but most frequently at Haldia Ghat. At the northern end of the gap stood the mighty fortress of Asirgad which certainly existed in a simpler form at the beginning of the 13th century. It is surprising to note that there is no great fort at the southern end of gap. The route passed down to Aurangabad and a group of forts in the Ajanta range must have done duty to guard this route. The other passes were the Sandhwa gap west of Asirgad and the Balaghat in the north eastern edge through which Khalji descended to bring Muslim arms to the Deccan for the first time in a devastating and far reaching campaign.

The Eastern Border: This runs along the broken hill ranges which do not present a very formidable obstacle. However, the region was, and still is, very heavily wooded. In Medieval India it was the abode of small *zamindars*, many Gonds, a people never really subjugated completely by any power. The main forts in this area are Pauni, Wairagad and Tapigad.

The Southern Border: Runs zig- zag from Gadchiroli in the east to Sindhudurg in the west, bounding the districts of Chandrapur, Yavatmal, Nanded, Latur, Usmanabad, Solapur, Sangli, Kolhapur, ending at the sea. The region saw many empires and kingdoms whose boundaries changed very often. The forts of Mahur, Parenda, Dharur, Solapur, and Naldurg, all were important at one time or the others as frontier forts during the rule of various dynasties.

The Western Borders: the western sea coast is dotted with numerous forts. It is important to note that the western coast of Maharashtra had a flourishing trade from very ancient times. The entry of the European powers was through this border although in case of the

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 23, The Tapi has a drainage area of about 31,360 km in Maharashtra.

British the first expansions were from Calcutta westwards rather than from Bombay eastwards.

The Konkan: Konkan is the narrow strip of land between the Sahyadri range and the sea. Between the sea and the Sahyadrian wall this littoral region varies from about 45 km to 75 km in width.⁵⁴ Konkan comprises of three districts of Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri.⁵⁵ At times the western spurs of the Sahyadris reach up to and sometimes into the sea. The important rivers of Konkan are: Vaitarna, Ulhas, Amba, Kundalika, Savitri and Shastri. Konkan is divided into under two sub regions. North Konkan⁵⁶ and South Konkan⁵⁷ with the Island of Bombay, or sometimes the Savitri River, dividing the two. Arnala is a strong island fort and there are numerous small forts inland. The eastern edge of North Konkan is not very formidable and numerous passages exist.

Bombay: There were originally seven islands separated by narrow creeks. The area is flat with a few low hills. Seven forts provided the British with a base from which they expanded their territory. The island of Bombay developed mainly by the British has been an integral part of the Konkan from the 17th century. It became in the course of time one of the greatest centers of commerce and industry of the Indian sub- continent.⁵⁸

Central Konkan is a very hilly area and sometimes there is no beach at all. Alibag, Revdanda, Devgad are some of the main forts. It has some ports which were famous from the ancient times.

South Konkan is a comparatively broad land where there is extensive rice and coconut cultivation. Ratnagiri and Malvan are the main ports and each had a fort protecting it. The eastern face of South Konkan is much more formidable and densely forested as compared with the region north of Bombay.

⁵⁴ C. D. Deshpande, *Geography of Maharashtra*, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi, 1971, p. 18.

⁵⁵ B. K. Apte, *A History of Maratha Navy and Merchantship*, State Board for Literature and Culture, Bombay, 1973, p. 7.

⁵⁶ The North Konkan is referred to as Lat Desh or Latika by the Greeks, extended its territory from Surat to Chaul, A. R. Kulkarni, *Maharashtra: Society and Culture*, p. 139.

⁵⁷ The southern Konkan is known as Sapta Konkan, Greeks called it Ariaka, *ibid*, p. 140.

⁵⁸ A. R. Kulkarni, *Maharashtra: Society and Culture*, Diamond Publications, Pune, 2008, p. 138, 139.

The Sahyadri: This mountain range which runs from north to south is called the Western Ghats. The main range runs from about Ahwa in Dang area of Gujarat to the southern tip of Maharashtra and a little beyond. The length is about 640 km and the height varies mainly from 900-1660 mtrs. The width is from 10 to 20 km. The unique feature of the Sahyadri is its geological formation. Composed of basalt rock and subjected to weathering, it has a very steep scarp face on its western side, i.e., overlooking the Konkan. The eastern face is less steep and scarp. The entire area was once covered with thick forest.

Connecting the Konkan with the Deccan plateau there are a number of passes which cut across the Sahyadri and every ruler had a fort to control the passes. This area, therefore, abounds in forts. The terrain too, provided excellent opportunities. A naturally inaccessible hill top could be converted into a formidable fort with a minimum of fortification.

The side ranges or the off shoots of the Sahyadri run from the west to east and south east. Each major range is separated from the next by river valleys. The main ranges are the Dhulia Hills, the Satmala-Ajanta range, the Balaghat range, and the Mahadev range.

The Maval: This is a narrow strip just to the east of the Sahyadri Ghat Matha. It is a transitory belt, neither as high as the Sahyadri to its west, nor as flat as the Deccan to its east. It was an important area where Shivaji established his base. This area has many forts. Its people, the Mavles were Shivaji's childhood companions and provided him with the finest soldiers that he could have hoped for.

The Deccan Plateau: Gently sloping eastwards from the Mavals is the extensive flat tract interspersed with hills and rivers is the Deccan plateau. It is traversed by rivers and hill ranges. These proved no barrier to the Khaljis or other invaders from the North and the plateau was often the battle ground for political supremacy. All the important capitals of the period lie in the Deccan plateau like Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Bijapur, Golkunda, and Ellichpur. Only Shivaji had his capital in the Sahyadri, first at Rajgad and then at Raigad.

In the flat Deccan country communications were comparatively easy. In western Maharashtra the close proximity of the forts on high peaks enabled simpler messages to be passed by visual means. This mode of communication was mostly restricted to military use.

The People: There is considerable debate among historians regarding the original inhabitants of Maharashtra. The original tribes such as the Gonds, the Bhils, the Kolis and others still exist in considerable numbers. It is also certain that large scale migration from the North took place. Migration by the sea route was however very limited. But whatever the composition of the people, what is important is the character of the people. The people working inside the fort was a key factor in those days when forts played an important part in military campaigns.

The people of western Maharashtra were hard-hitting and adventurous. The land was poor and their comparative segregation made them freedom loving. Their affection to land, their *watan* was colossal and made them capable of great sacrifices. Forts became the focal points for their life and death. The people of the plateau on the other hand had more productive land to till. The people were not resistant from the common human failings. The poverty and desire for land made a fertile ground for disloyalty. It was the bribe of *Deshmukhi* which made Suryaji Pisal surrender the fort of Raigad to Aurangzeb. It was for the sake of a *Sanad* for land that made Nagoji Mane cut off the head of Santaji and place it at the Emperor Aurangzeb's feet.

The Climate: The climate of Maharashtra varies a great deal. Western Maharashtra has a temperate climate. The Deccan plateau has a more varied climate, very hot in summer and quite cold in the winters. The rainfall to a lesser extent, the temperature dictated the campaigning season. The monsoons made the rivers, normally dry in the remaining part of the year, unfordable, and the tracks and roads muddy which impaired movement. The already isolated forts of the Sahyadris were almost unapproachable in the monsoons.

1.2 Effect of Geography on History

To summarize the effects of geographical factors on the history of the area was considerable. The topography, especially the hilly topography, determined the direction and condition of the routes, immigration and invasions and so, by derivation the location of the forts. Geography also shaped the character of the people to a considerable extent.

The people of western Maharashtra were 'resolute, enduring, daring...' ⁵⁹ these qualities were fully utilized by Shivaji. At the same time, the people were isolated, had a narrow outlook, and greatly attached to their land. This tendency was promoted to a certain extent by the forts which afforded them shelter and a sense of being content in their own little spheres, with no thought on what lay beyond the limit.

The comparatively poor agricultural productivity in Western Maharashtra meant that neither a large population nor a large army could be maintained. Expansion towards more fertile and open land became inevitable. The history of Maharashtra or the Marathi speaking people- Maharattakas or Rashtrakutas- is of great antiquity. A rock edict of Ashoka of the 3rd century B.C. records the existence of the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan. ⁶⁰

However, up to the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 one can say that the forts of Maharashtra played a considerable role in the affairs of the state. Under the *Peshwas* when Maratha arms were carried beyond the Narmada the forts of Maharashtra lost all their military importance and were mainly used as administrative headquarters or as state prisons. When the English East India Company took over the country from the Marathas, the forts were further downgraded to the background and indeed most of them were blown up or rip to pieces so as to make them unusable.

If the period when forts began to lose their importance is fairly easy to determine 1707, the period when they started playing an important role is far more difficult to determine. The antiquity of forts cannot be traced with any degree of certainty in a large number of cases. Not all the forts of Maharashtra were built by Marathas. Fort building in Maharashtra started as early as the 8th century A.D. Many forts such as Rangna, Bavda, Vishalgad, and Salher certainly existed much before the Maratha period. Grant Duff records the names of fifteen forts as having built by Raja Bhoja during his reign, 1178-1193 A.D. ⁶¹ Many ancient and Buddhist and Jain caves had some kind of fortification near them. The Ajanta and

⁵⁹ Sir Richard Temple, *Oriental Experiences*, p. 339.

⁶⁰ G. S. Sardesai, *the New History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, p. 13.

⁶¹ James Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I, p. 21; Raja Bhoja-II, established his capital at Panhala (Padma-nala) and built the following 15 forts-Panhala, Pawangad, Bhudargad, Bawda, Khelna or Vishalgad, Samangad, Rangna, Vasangad, Satara, Chandan, Wandan, Nandgiri, Kelanja, Vairatgad, Pandavgad; D. B. Parasnis, *Panhala*, Lakshmi Art Printing Works, Sankli Street Byculla, Bombay, 1923.

Ellora group of temples had the forts of Abhasgad and Baitalwadi very close to them. Even Daulatabad existed as a fortified peak from before the Yadava period.

Considerations has to be given to the conditions in which the forts existed and functioned. In the 17th century we find a very different scenario. The Deccani Muslim nobility - some of them converts from the bravest and the brainiest Marathas and Kanarese⁶² had begun to gain strength. The growing rivalry between the Afghan and the Deccani nobility led to the emergence of a third nobility- the Maratha nobility. In the power game in the courts of Sultans each side sought the support of the Marathas. The inborn character of the Marathas, their courage as well as their loyalty to the Muslim masters made them valuable allies.

Considering the political instability of the times the Maratha nobility represented stability and loyalty provided they were given a free hand in managing their *watans* and the forts which soon became the symbol of this stability. For instances we can take the case of Shahji. His loyalty to the *Nizamshahi* throne motivated him to defy the combined might of the Mughals and the *Adilshahis*. But, transferring his service to Bijapur, he was equally loyal. Indeed it was Shahji more than anyone else who helped Bijapur expand southwards and it was he who put down many fellow Hindu. The Mores and the Nimbalkars took great pride in serving the Adilshahi Sultans and were openly hostile to Shivaji's attempt to found a Hindu kingdom.

In the skirmishes, the forts provided stability to the regime, shelter in times of stress and prestige in times of prosperity. Therefore, the capture of forts held by the rivals often become an end in itself without the military advantage.

But the fort also acquired another image. Brutality and disloyalty had become a part of life. There were innumerable instances when a Muslim general promised the garrison of the fort that it would be allowed to go in peace, but when the fort was actually given up, the men were put to the sword. The old women and children were sold into slavery and the young women were taken into the harem. So forts became necessary for protection from one's own people as well as from the enemy. Many forts thus stands as a symbol of oppression.

⁶² Sir Jadunath Sarkar, *the House of Shivaji*, p. 2.

In such an atmosphere Shivaji stood. Peace was restored. A kingdom was founded. Forts became the symbols of the king's goodness and strength. They started representing safety and welfare and not places from where only oppression had flowed in the past. Because of this administrative and symbolic nature of the fort, more than its purely military value, that Shivaji spent a great deal of thoughts and efforts in the management of forts. In an age where communications were scanty and difficult, the people especially in remote areas, were cut off from the main stream of political activity which took place in some great distant places. Their life revolved around their village and then to the fort in the vicinity. They had never seen their king, nor had the king ever set foot in their village or fort. The village people looked to the *killedar* for help and protection and thus loyalty and submission to him became their prime consideration.

Shivaji took a number of steps to ensure that the forts were properly managed and did not become symbol of oppression or center for revolt. Shivaji's personality infused to the lowest level and from the farthest corners of the kingdom people came under his banner. With the reintroduction of the *Jagirs* under the *Peshwas* Central authority got unsurprisingly eroded and the forts became the fiefs of individual *sardars*.

The economy was predominantly agrarian and this tied down people to a particular location. The forts too were essentially static in concept and functioning. Not only the physical mobility but also the mental mobility of the people and the rulers got stunted. What if the Marathas had not crossed the Narmada but had first consolidated their position firmly in the Deccan and the extreme south, using the forts as both military and political bases, the triumph of British East India Company would have been delayed or at least restricted to a few areas only.

1.3 Fort Architecture

“Shivaji Raja was famous for his forts” says Lokahitavadi.⁶³ He had captured and built no less than 240 forts and strongholds. He used to prize them highly and large sums were usually granted for their upkeep and repair.”⁶⁴ This shows the strategic importance of forts and strongholds in the military organization of the Maratha state. Shivaji aimed at efficiency. Vastly inferior to his enemies in numerical strength, he tried to compensate by quality, the lack of quantity. He, therefore tried to enforce strict discipline in his army and appealed not only to the military instinct but also to the patriotism of his soldiers.⁶⁵

The maximum fort building activity in the Deccan took place during the early years of the Maratha period under Shivaji, who was called ‘mountain rat’ by the Mughals. Shivaji knew only too well the value of the mountains, and built innumerable hill forts. He conquered as many as 130 forts, out of which 50 were in the districts of Maharashtra and 80 in Karnataka and below Ghat regions. He also built as many as 111 forts, thus having in his possession more than 240 forts.⁶⁶

Forts were the manifestation of kingly authority. If there is any architectural monument to the genius of Shivaji, it is the many forts up and down the Ghats of Maharashtra.⁶⁷ The forts of Deccan presents us with a rich, diversity of site, function, history, architectural style and cultural heritage, each with a wide range. At one end of the broad spectrum is the mighty mountain fort of Salher, the highest in the entire Deccan, guarding its north – west border. Then comes the massive Gond tribal fort of Narnala in the Vidharbha satpudas, north of the Akola , on the southern edge of the Chandavan valley, then comes the land cum hill fort of Daulatabad, both in design and construction, was one of the most powerful

⁶³ Gopal Hari Deshmukh is popularly known as Lokahitavadi, was a social reformer from Maharashtra. He started his carrier as a translator for the British Raj. The group of article on social reform has come to be known in Marathi literature as Lokhitawadinchi Shatapatre. British Government honored him with the title of ‘Justice of Peace’ and ‘Raobahadur’. He was also the founder of *Gyan Prakash*, *Indu Prakash* & *Lokhitawadi* periodicals in Maharashtra.

⁶⁴ Surendranath Sen, *the Administrative system of the Marathas*, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 127.

⁶⁶ Prabhakar V. Begde, *Forts and Palaces of India*, Sagar Publications, New Delhi, 1982, p. 178.

⁶⁷ Stewart Gordon, the New Cambridge History of India, Vol. II-4, [*The Marathas 1600-1800*], Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p. 82.

(as it is one of the best preserved) fortresses of the Middle Ages in existence.⁶⁸ And not the least to mention the Royal Capital fort of Raigarh of Shivaji. Further the territories comprised within the boundaries of Maharashtra are crowded with forts like Purandhar, Harishchandragarh, Ankai, Shivneri, Panhala, Sholapur, Pratapgarh, Kalyan, Janjira, Torna, Rajmachi are just a few forts to mention from the Deccan region.

Most of the strongholds are in the state of decay and practically speaking denuded of all early monuments, just mounds of desolate ruins. Though most of them exist just for the name's sake and still further several of them do not exist even for that, a few are well preserved so as to retain most of the medieval distinctive defense features practically intact. Even if the exact nature and character of the buried monuments is not known, the ruins occasionally are so imposing that they give an unmistakable notion of the grandeur and the majesty, these places once must have known. For instances the fort gateways have obviously suffered the maximum damage from all possible causes, such as sieges, neglect, weathering and so on. But in spite of that, they though stripped of their decorations of gold and silver and precious stones, a few of them even today retain ample evidence of their past glory. The ruins do not merely make us to remember the memories and incidences of the past but also the decayed fortification also enhance the beauty of the rugged hills of the Deccan.

These fascinating remains still provide evidence, of not only man's expression of power, or the privilege of the ruler but also their constant sense of threat, their helplessness and the inborn need for their protection as well as their freedom. Military defenses are practically innumerable throughout India.⁶⁹ Many forts are still of difficult access, being on the summit of hills even at a height of more than 2000 feet from the surrounding regions and they still possess the forbidding aspect of military strongholds, still impregnable.

The series of forts in the South of India depicts mainly two important features, firstly they offer the visitor the opportunity of a brief look into the history of the Deccan region and secondly they unfold before the one who wish to study the process of evolution of the techniques of the medieval architecture i.e. fortification. History of all the forts have seen

⁶⁸ Sidney Toy, *the Strongholds of India*, p. 33.

⁶⁹ *ibid*, p. 1.

many battles and they have changed hands many times, almost in set patterns. The history of each fort is a story of heroism and treachery, self- sacrifice and degeneration. Each one fort also has witnessed the plans and plots. The Marathas took advantages of these natural strong holds and transformed them into invincible forts with the minimum artificial additions.⁷⁰

Fortification, as a universal phenomenon, is continuous process carried out over centuries by generations and over the ages by the civilizations to attain perfection. Enclosed buildings, walled towns and fortified settlements have existed all over the world as characteristic feature of civilization, since the beginning of time. The forts are designed and constructed to serve as defense in warfare and as military bases. They can be made in any ways but the walls are the main component. Uruk in ancient Mesopotamia is one of the world's oldest known walled cities. The ancient Egyptians also built fortresses on the frontiers of Nile River to protect against invaders. Remains of pre- historic fortifications have been also found in Scotland and parts of India and Pakistan. In the absence of any trace of archaeological findings, epigraphic remains or documents of the time it is very difficult to come to any conclusion when the first fort came into being, either in India or in Deccan.

The development of castles and fortifications was bound to be most spectacular during the Middle Ages of the 5th to the 15th centuries all over the world, which in India and in the Deccan prolonged till almost the end of the 17th century by the Marathas. Even a cursory look at the map of India's medieval military defenses suggests that they were obviously constructed in groups, relatively close together, with only few regions showing heavy concentration and the rest devoid of any fortification. With a few minor exceptions, the rise and fall of almost all the forts in a particular region is uniform. In medieval India the regions around the mountain ranges of the north- south extending Sahyadris in the western Deccan and next the north east running the Aravalis in the Rajasthan were particularly rich in forts.

As a matter of fact, these two mountain ranges happened to be the only barrier which had tried to arrest the wave of foreign invasions and encroachments advancing from the north

⁷⁰ J. N. Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 14.

and north- west. Yet another observation in this context is that Hindu rulers of the Deccan had built a large numbers of forts which are better preserved in South India than in north – India where Islamic architecture had predominant impact upon all the construction, secular or otherwise.

1.4 Site of Forts

According to K. M. Panikkar, “the geography constitutes the permanent basis of every nation’s history”.⁷¹ The evolution of Deccan has its effect on the history. If India south of Tapi was never subjugated by the alien powers, in the sense in which the northern India was conquered, it was undoubtedly due to its geography dominated by the Sahyadris. The geopolitical importance of such mountain ranges and their rugged environment was immense. Firstly the hilly Deccan region nourished a courageous, enduring, and audacious spirit among the inhabitants. Secondly, they provide the strongholds which are well surrounded by the thick forests to which the natives could retreat whenever they were chased by an enemy. Fortunately for them, the hills offered convenient strongholds so that they could make raids on the low lands and resort back to their inaccessible dens with amazing rapidity.⁷²

William Henry Tone states that ‘perhaps no country on earth is better calculated for the purpose of defensive war’ and that ‘a country so strongly situated is unconquerable’.⁷³ This barren wilderness provided a tactical paradise to the natives of Deccan and logistically nightmare to the invading foreign armies. According to Sir Richard Temple the hill country of Deccan is regarded by strategists as one of the strongest, in a military sense, to be found in India.⁷⁴ Grant Duff states that there is probably no stronger country in the world than the Deccan from the military defense point of view. The Sahyadri mountain ranges offered immense political advantages in times of war with the northern powers. The Maratha peoples inborn love of independence and isolation was greatly helped by nature, which

⁷¹ K. M. Panikkar’s *The Geographical Factors in Indian History*, quoted in, J. N. Kamalapur, *The Deccan Forts*, p. 12.

⁷² J. N. Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 14.

⁷³ Surendranath Sen, *the Administrative system of the Marathas*, p. 110.

⁷⁴ M. G. Ranade, *Shivaji and the rise of the Marathas*, Punalekar and Company, Bombay, 1900, p. 6.

provided them with many read made and easily defensible forts close at hand, where they could quickly flee for refuge and whence they could offer a tenacious resistance. Unlike the Gangetic plain, this country could not be conquered and annexed by one cavalry dash or even one year's campaign.⁷⁵

The word 'fort' originates from French word 'Fortis' which means strength, and in that sense, the Sahyadri mountain ranges were quite strongly fortified by nature. Even in Indian languages they deserve the name *Durg* which originates from the Sanskrit word *durgamam*, meaning inaccessible.

Any good architecture, from the simplest to the most complicated, was based upon a correct evaluation and choice of site itself, since its position decisively determined its efficiency as a fighting unit. For the site situated on the top of a mountain range, the difference in altitude always offered a marked advantage over the enemy. The fort as an isolates site which is at an estimable height offered a readymade moat all around. The site also provide the criteria for the classification of the fort. Such as hill or forest fort, land fort and sea fort. The fort was so constructed so that the garrison was not only well protected against foreign attack, but also able to control a strategically point or region, such as an important mountain pass, waterway or a major settlement. The builders had to consider the logistics of the fort under construction.

To discuss about the choice of site, can be better illustrated by citing the examples of three important fort in the Deccan region. Often isolated position is the source of security and strength of the fort built on it. Sinhagad, old name Kondana (Kundhiyana)⁷⁶ had always proved to be better suited for defense purposes as compared to Purandhar, which is surrounded by a number of hills. Sinhagad stands on the – Bhuleswar range of the Sahyadris, about 4320 feet above sea level and 2300 feet above the Poona plains.⁷⁷ Whereas Purandhar is at a height of 4472 feet above sea level and 2566 above the Poona plain and commands a passage through the hills called Purandhar Ghat.⁷⁸ On Sinhagad the

⁷⁵ Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and his Times*, S.C Sarkar and Sons LD., Calcutta, 1984, p. 5.

⁷⁶ G. H. Khare, *Simhagadh*, BISM, Poona, 1953, p. 4.

⁷⁷ J. N. Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 34.

⁷⁸ Sidney Toy, *the Fortified Cities of India* p. 37.

besieger was required to drag the guns to the hills to storm the gates. In 1663, immediately after the night attack of Shivaji on Shaista Khan, Jaswant Singh tried to capture the fort of Sinhagad but in vain. He laid siege to Sinhagad for more than a year but the fort had a tradition of prolonged defense since the first recorded history. Muhammad Bin Tughluq 'found the fort so strong that he was unable to take it by storm'.⁷⁹ So after eight months until their supplies were exhausted and the Koli chief Nag Naik in about 1325,⁸⁰ surrendered to Muhammad Bin Tughluq. In 1665, the Purandhar fort was besieged by Aurangzeb, and Shivaji fearing its fall surrendered the fort and he himself entered the service of the emperor.⁸¹ This shows the vulnerability of the Purandhar fortification. Once the adjoining fortified hill of Rudramal⁸² [a sub fort of Purandhar was captured before taking Purandhar] was taken by the Mughals [Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Diler Khan besieged the fort of Purandhar for Emperor Aurangzeb] then Purandhar slips away from the hands of Shivaji. Another example is the Royal Capital of Raigad, it derives its basic form and inherent strength from the close contours of the spurs of the rock on which it was built. Though its early history is obscure, its enormous size, strength and strategic position must have made Raigad an important stronghold from very early time. The site is situated to a highway, rendered it less protective.

One of the first innovations of civilization appears to be the construction and growth of fortifications. Primitive man fortified his dwelling by a hedge of thorns to keep away wild animals. But when man became a greater menace than animals, when man grouped themselves to attack other group of people, when armies were formed fortification grew into substantial structures. Forts became an integral part of the state.

A definite pattern can be found in the development of forts. First it was the village that was fortified, then the town. But a time came when a chieftain residing in a town felt that his house needed special protection. So fortified residence or *gadhis* came into being. The *gadhis* dotted all over the Maharashtra are a good example of fortified residences.

⁷⁹ Sidney Toy, *the Strongholds of India*, p. 61.

⁸⁰ J. N. Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 35.

⁸¹ Sidney Toy, *the Fortified Cities of India*, Heinemann, Educational Books Ltd, London, 1965, p. 37.

⁸² Bhimsen, *Tarikh -I- Dilkasha*, (ed.) V.G. Khobrekar, Department of Archives, Maharashtra, Bombay, 1972, p. 44.

1.5 Basic Elements of Maratha Forts

The Rampart or Wall: This is the main element of forts. It surrounds the place to be protected. These two terms - ramparts and wall- are sometimes used synonymously. But a distinction should be made. The term wall is used when the structure is high and rounded, tapering and narrow at the top with no flat surface where troops can patrol. A rampart, on the other hand has a flat wide surface at the top where troops can patrol and take up positions.

Both have advantage and disadvantages. A wall does not allow patrolling or observations. It also does not allow the defenders to fire upon the advancing enemy. On the other hand it had the advantage that escalating by the enemy becomes difficult. A rampart affords patrolling all round and firing on the enemy from any point. The disadvantage is that an attacker can get a foothold, can move sideways and make room for his fellow man to follow. On the whole ramparts offer more advantage but are costlier to build and maintain.

The height and thickness of the walls depended upon many factors, such as its location, its purpose, the threat, the construction material available and the availability of enough finance. And in some cases the massive walls were just to satisfy the ego and image of the king rather than any military requirements.

Towers and Bastions⁸³: Bastions are projections outwards from the wall or rampart. The normal shape is semi- circular but tetragonal and hexagonal bastions are also seen. They were built along the entire perimeter and on either side of the entrance. The main feature of a bastion is the flat and large surface at the top, or slightly higher than the rampart. Bastion has enough space to hold a body of troops and to mount a gun. Steps were built to reach the bastion. The main purpose of a bastion was to provide enfilading fire on advancing enemy troops. But for this to be effective the height, width and frequency of location had to be accurately determined. For example, Simhagadh is surrounded by strong fortifications on all sides and flanked by 33 towers (bastions).⁸⁴

⁸³ Bastion – in Marathi it is called *burj*, Gunakar Mulle, *Bharat Ke Prasidha Kille*, p. 432, Rajkamal Prakashan, Allahabad, 2012.

⁸⁴ G. H. Khare, *Simhagadh*, BISM, Poona, 1953, p. 12.

Approach to the Fort: The approach to the fort is made difficult as possible. Cactus was grown on the slopes which made the passage almost unpassable without making a passage through it, which off course made the surprise attack impossible. The way to the top of a hill, usually one, was along steep and twisting paths and rock cut or rock built steps. It is not possible for more than one or two persons to climb the stairs together. And at some forts chains and ladders were used to climb to reach the forts. Tunneled staircases, covered paths and rock cut gates and trap doors were provided to make the entry truly difficult. The approach to a land fort was made difficult by moat or ditches. This was outside the main wall, although instances of a ditch along the inner wall are also seen. The depth and width of the ditch was dependent upon the space available and the treat present. The excavated material from the ditch was used for building the walls and other structures of the fort.

Gates⁸⁵- A Must: Wall, however thick, strong and with every possible precaution against its being breached, must have an entrance. The defense of this entrance, which after all was a ready-made breach in the wall and so obviously the weakest point of the whole defense system, placed considerable demand on the ingenuity of the medieval military architect. Great attention was paid to the defense of the approaches to the entrance of the fort. The gateways differ in strength but are often very powerful, as at Bidar, Daulatabad and Golconda.⁸⁶ A number of powerful gates ranging even up to seven as in the case of Shivneri, were thrown across the path at strategic points.

In hill forts there was usually one massive main gate and an inner gate placed at an angle to the first. There was succession of gates placed one after other. The distance between the gates varied, depending upon the space available and the terrain. The passage between the gates was zigzag, commanded by a wall, bastion. The idea was that even if an invader succeeded in entering the main gate, they would be caught in the narrow, twisting path. Hill forts always had a secret gate, *chor darwaza* for an unseen escape.

The doorways are very large, generally from 12 feet to 16 feet wide and up to 25 feet high to the point of the arch or underside of the lintel.⁸⁷ The doors closing these large openings

⁸⁵ For the names of gates of different forts please refer appendix.

⁸⁶ Sidney Toy, *the Strongholds of India*, p. 5.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, p. 5.

are heavy timber structures about 6 inch thick, strengthen by large battens behind; they are often plated and studded with numerous sharp iron spikes to protect them from being butted into by elephants.⁸⁸ For the fort Raigad, Shivaji's Royal Capital, which was constructed by him only after the attainment of considerable strength and stability, the steps were broad enough, to enable even elephants and camels to climb the fort. The doors which once protected the forts against the armed enemies during medieval centuries, proved utterly defenseless against the 20th century vandals.

The gates were made of hard seasoned timber sometimes plated with iron sheets. They were fitted with, especially in land forts, with steel spikes to prevent elephant being used to batter down a gate. The panels of the gateways were hinged and secured on strong hooks or holes in the side wall. A thick strong wooden bar was placed across the two panels to give further strength. In some case gates were hewn out of solid rocks. A narrow path led to the main gate and continued beyond, through a covered passage or tunnel. Land forts had two or more gates. The main gate was usually high enough to permit passage of an elephant. Forts built or renovated by the Marathas, especially Shivaji, had the image of Ganapati sculptured near the main gate.

The Parapet⁸⁹: This was a 1.2 to 2 meters high structure built at the forward edge of a rampart. Its main purpose was to provide protection to the soldiers patrolling on the rampart. Parapets were loop-holed (*jangya*)⁹⁰ to enable the defenders to fire upon the enemy below. An upper and lower row of loop holes was provided.

Merlons (Ardhadal), Embrasures (Falika), Machicolations (Zaroka)⁹¹: The parapet was never continuous with the same height throughout its length. It has punctured with alternate merlons and embrasures. The merlons afforded protection to the soldiers standing behind it and firing through the loop holes. The embrasures⁹² were the openings which could be used for observation or for hurling missiles on the enemy below. The importance of

⁸⁸ *ibid*, p. 5.

⁸⁹ In Marathi parapet means *padkot*, Gunakar Mulle, *Bharat Ke Prasadha Kille*, p. 432, Rajkamal Prakashan, Allahabad, 2012.

⁹⁰ Loop-holes, *ibid*, p. 431.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 431.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 432.

these features declined sharply with the advent of improved artillery. Machicolations were openings on the top of the gateways and entrance. They were used to fire upon the enemy who may have reached near the gate. If the enemy tried to burn the gate then water could be poured from here to extinguish the fire.

The Citadel: The Persian *bal- e -kila* or the Marathi *balle killa* was a term applied to the inner fortified area where the king or the fort commander stayed. It was usually built on the highest point within the fort. The most famous example of an extremely well -fortified citadel is that of Rajgad. Many land forts also had an inner enclosure where the palace of the king stood, protected by walls, bastions and even a ditch.

Machi and Met: Machi is a term applied to a flat piece of ground on the slope of the hill on which the fort is built. Machis were always fortified and provided place for quartering the troops and for building water tanks and granaries. They are also suited for a good gun position.

Met is a term applied to a small observation point on the slope of a fort.⁹³ A small body of troops could be positioned there to keep an eye on what was going below the fort and give timely warning of any suspicious movement. Shivaji used *Bhils and Kolis* extensively to man these posts. The machi of Rajgarh is described in Maasiri Alamgiri:

“the infernal Shiva after gaining possession (of Rajgarh) made terraces on three sides around it on a lower level (machi) and there built three strong forts, namely Suvela and Padmavati situated towards Kokan uplands and Sanjivani on the side of the Kokan lowlands; he thus made its capture by any enemy impossible.”⁹⁴

1.6 Water - Life Blood of Defense

In the context of logistics, apart from being surrounded by a fertile country, the site had to be self -sufficient in supply of water. The heavy rains across the Sahyadri range ensures a regular and abundant water supply. Further, the construction of numerous reservoirs, wells

⁹³ Gunakar Mulle, *Bharat Ke Prasadha Kille*, Rajkamal Prakashan, Allahabad, 2012, p. 432.

⁹⁴ Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasiri Alamgiri*, translated by Jadunath Sarkar, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1947.

and cisterns, mostly excavated in solid rock conserves the rain water or else stores the spring water, providing perennially water. This aspect tremendously enhanced the staying capacity and the defending power of the Sahyadri forts. Water supply was one of the most important things carefully provided for. Fifty-one small and large ponds out of which four are always dry and these larger ones gradually dries after the rain are over. The water from a rock cut well on Sinhagad is famous for its medicinal properties.⁹⁵ Few of them were- Ganesa, Deva or Divine, Rajaram (the water from this pond has strong digestive power).⁹⁶ Another water reservoir at Purandhar is Mahasoba- Taki (drinking water) and Shakhari Talao or the sugar reservoir.⁹⁷

Apart from water, another equally important aspect of logistics was readily availability of adequate supply of food. For any fort, when other conventional methods such as surprise attack or mines provided no way for the besieger then the besieger tried to surround the fort and cut off the connection with the outside world. But the forts on the Sahyadri range could not be completely surrounded, so the army inside the fort can maintain a link with the outside area and receive the necessary things. To counter ant threat of blockade, the army inside the fort must be well provisioned both with food and arms and ammunition and proper storage places was an essential part of the defense of the fort. The Ambarkhana (granary house) of Panhala has a holding capacity of 25,000 *Khandis* of grain.⁹⁸

The climate and environment of the Deccan region also played the role of defense. The heavy rains across the Sahyadri range played dual role of defense. Firstly the rain water, apart from reinforcing the fort water reservoirs also makes the surrounding area fertile. And, secondly the heavy monsoon made it difficult for the besieging army to remain in such an atmosphere for so long so that the garrison of the fort have been starved out.

The siege of Purandhar⁹⁹ in 1665, illustrate how the scarcity of water not merely impaired but totally paralyzed the defenses system of the fort. Apart from fortification being exposed

⁹⁵ J. N. Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 18.

⁹⁶ G. H. Khare, *Simhagadh*, BISM, Poona, 1953, p. 12.

⁹⁷ *Description and History of Purandhar*, Commercial Printing Works, Poona, 1909, p. 7.

⁹⁸ Surendranath Sen, *the Military System of the Marathas*, p. 94-95.

⁹⁹ Purandhar is situated 18° 17' North latitude and 74° 2' East longitude, 2566 feet above the Poona Plain and 4472 feet above sea. *Description and history of Purandhar*, Commercial Printing Works, Poona, 1909, p. 5.

to bombardment from the adjoining Rudramal hills, it always suffered from the shortage of water. The sudden collapse of the Maratha resistance even before the attack by Mughal forces under Jai Singh is attributed to exhaustion of water in the fort. Shivaji promptly tried to rectify this drawback. After his escape from Agra, as soon as he succeeded in retrieving the fort of Purandhar, the first thing he did was getting constructed a large tank Padmavati.

No amount of fortification could make a fort formidable if the garrison was not provided with adequate food and drinking water. Construction of wells, tanks, cisterns as well as store houses for oil and grain took the highest priority. A site otherwise suitable will be rejected if sufficient water was not available.

Construction Material: The ramparts of most of the hill forts were made out of dressed or undressed blocks of rock or stone. Sometimes these blocks are placed one on top of another, since no mortar is used the base had to be very thick in order to sustain the weight of the wall. Mud and straw mortar are very common. Molten lava has been used by Shivaji in the construction of Sindhudurg. The steps and staircases of most hill forts were rock cut and thus did not involve use of any construction material.

In the case of land forts the moat was first dug and the excavated material was then used for building the walls. Flat bricks, stones, mud or lime mortar were used. The use of wood was common and iron was not very common.

Administration and Garrisoning of Forts: In a climate where loyalty often took a back seat, how did Shivaji achieve this enviable record? It was partly by adequately fortifying and provisioning the fort, partly by a careful selection of personnel, partly by imbuing his commanders with such a high sense of duty that giving up a fort was almost unthinkable. But above all he took the practical measures of ensuring that no fort was under the control of a single person. In almost every fort, the larger and the important ones, there were three officers of the same status and same authority. They had their duties clearly laid down and had to consult with other on all important matters. Documents required the signatures of two of them. The *havaladar* from the Maratha caste, was in charge of the garrison and defense of the fort. The *Sabnis*, a Brahmin was responsible for accounts. The *Karkhanis*, from the Prabhu caste was responsible for the commissariat work. The selection of officers

from the three castes served the purpose of keeping a check on each, but also made for inter caste harmony since each had equal status. A further step was to see that officers were posted out to different forts after a tenure of three to five years. And most important of all, it was ensured that none of these posts became hereditary. It was observed that these excellent measure were forgotten so soon after his death and therein lay the main cause of the decline of the intrinsic strength of the fort.

The Garrison: “five hundred was the normal strength but in some exceptional cases a stronger force was allowed.”¹⁰⁰ The garrison of the forts was mostly infantry in the hill forts and a mixed force in the land forts. Some hill forts such as Singhgad, Panhala had stables for a sizable cavalry force. The horses were normally left to graze at the base of the fort. The garrison was housed in barracks or tents, usually on the machis. Various tradesmen were also stationed. Carpenters, ironsmiths and armorers were to be found in most of the large forts. The garrison is often seen in large land forts, especially when the fort is the principal residence of the ruler. During the 18th century the importance of forts in military planning and operations declined, the quality of garrison fell sharply. When forts were given to nobles, the garrison was employed by the chief and the link and loyalty to central government was lost. This is considered as one of the main reason for the fall of the Marathas.

Armaments: Forts could be captured only by two methods. First, a part of the wall or rampart could be blown up by cannon or mining and then an assault party could gain entrance, and succeed in opening the main gate from within to allow the enemy forces to entre. Secondly the entry could be gained by escalading, wave after wave of attackers going over the top of the wall. Mining was not easy in case of hill forts. In the case of the land forts cannons were not up to the mark and mining had to be resorted. Besieging a fort and forcing surrender through starvation was a long drawn process if the fort was adequately provisioned.

Regarding artillery the Marathas like other Indian princes, were not very good in this department even when they had the example of Babur in front of them and what artillery

¹⁰⁰ John Fryer, p. 127.

can do. The main weakness was the total dependence on foreign powers for guns and ammunitions. They charged more, sold guns of poor quality and often delayed shipment. Indian manufactured guns were reported 'notoriously crude and clumsy'.¹⁰¹

The success of the attacker's artillery was mainly because the fort did not have enough guns for counter attack. The guns within the fort are either too heavy or too light. In the former case they were fixed on rigid mounts and could not be elevated and depressed. The light guns could be moved along the rampart but did not have the range to silence the guns of the enemy. A great variety of missiles were used by the defenders of hill forts. Some of them were so difficult to reach that a handful of brave men could defend their positions against a vastly superior force as long as the provisions lasted.

1.7 Classification of Forts

Parmanand classifies the forts into four types. They were 1. *Giri durg* (Hill fort), 2. *Jaladurg* (Marine fort), 3. *Sthaladurg* (Ground fort), 4. *Vanadurg* (Forest fort).¹⁰² In text *Sivatattva* Ratnakar forts are classified into eight type's viz. 1. *Mrunmayi* (Mud fort), 2. *Jalatmika* (Marine or water fort), 3. *Gramkot* (Gadhi), 4. *Gavar* (Forest or desert fort), 5. *Giri kot* (Hill fort), 6. *Bhatavara* (Naradurg), 7. *Vakrabhumi* (Fort on unusual ground), 8. *Visham* (Hill cum ground fort). In the *Akasabhairavkalp*, again, we get eight types, viz. 1. *Giridurg*, 2. *Vanadurg*, 3. *Vrakshadurg*, 4. *Jaladurg*, 5. *Pank durg* (mud fort), 6. *Nabhi* or *misradurg* (desert fort), 7. *Naradurg* ¹⁰³, 8. *Kostadurg* (ground fort). The author of *Akasabhairavkalp* further provides eight varieties of *giridurg* or hill forts. They are *Bhadra*, *Atibhadra*, *Chandra*, *Ardhachandra*, *Nabh*, *Sunabh*, *Ruchir*, and *Vardhman*.¹⁰⁴ It seems that

¹⁰¹ Surendranath Sen, *the Military system of the Marathas*, p. 93.

¹⁰² *Shiva Bharata*. 67

¹⁰³ Fort protected by well-equipped army, a system of protection by keeping forces around the city.

¹⁰⁴ *Bhadra* –the hill fort having summit.

Atibhadra – the hill fort having extensive summit.

Chandra – the hill fort having extensive base.

Ardhachandra – the hill fort having moderate base.

Nabha – the hill fort having acute base.

Sunabha – the hill fort having wide base and which is tapering gradually towards spur.

Ruchir – the hill fort having great height.

minute details of physical features like crest, summit, scarp, etc. might have been considered while describing these sub-types.

Although ‘Sivatattva Ratnakar’ and ‘Akasabhairavkalp’ furnishes the eight types of forts, we find four main heads viz. 1 Giridurg, 2 Jaladurg or Janjira, 3 Sthaladurg or Kota durg and 4 Vanadurg, which may cover all the varieties given above.

Table 1.1: Types of Forts Mentioned In Four Text

Types of forts	Akasabhairavkalp	Sivatattva Ratnakar	Sivabharata
1. Hill fort	Giri durg	Girikot	Giridurg
2. Ground fort	Panikdurg	Mrinmayi	Sthaladurg
	Nabhidurg	Gramkot	
	Kostadurg	Vakrabhumi	
3. Marine fort	Jaladurg	Jalatmika	Jaladurg
4. Forest fort	Vanadurg	Gavardurg	Vanadurg
	Vrakshadurg		
	Naradurg	Bhatavara	

Forest Forts: Of four major types of forts only forest forts were completely natural forts. From strategic point of view, these forests played important part during the period of Vijaynagar Empire. The emperor like Krishna deva Raya encouraged the growth of forests on the frontiers of the territory.¹⁰⁵

So far as the Western Ghats were concerned the vegetation is mainly tropical semi – evergreen. On the residual hills forest is patchy and open on hill tops and ridges. ‘In sheltered valleys trees generally grow close together to form a coherent forest canopy’.¹⁰⁶ Such canopy served as forest fort on certain occasions during the medieval period. The

¹⁰⁵ *South Indian Polity* p. 272.

¹⁰⁶ *Western India* p. 75.

Maratha Chiefs could convert these forests into forts and assault the enemy intending to enter their territory.

When Afzal Khan undertook the expedition against Shivaji in 1659, Shivaji selected the fort of Pratapgad to fight. The peculiar position of the fort was most favorable to Shivaji. The surrounding territory, on east up to Wai, on north- east up to Javli and Dhavala ghat and on south up to Chatur, is covered even now with a thick forest. It was possible for Shivaji to conceal his army in the jungle of Javali. Afzal khan's troops faced great difficulty while conducting the military operations. In the end Shivaji succeeded in overcoming Afzal Khan.

“More's kingdom was captured by Shivaji in 1656-57 when Aurangzeb was busy fighting with Kutubshah and Adilshah was busy helping Kutubshah. This pargana is spread over both Ghatmala and Konkan. The list of Tarfs and villages of the Pargana are available in the Poona Archives in the Shahu Daftar.”¹⁰⁷

During the period under discussion, the trees on forest were supposed as important means for the defense purpose. We learn from Ajanapatra that the defense of forts depends on the trees grown up on the belt of hill (Kamarga).¹⁰⁸ Amatya hints that all the trees on fort, useful or not, should be preserved.¹⁰⁹

Ground Forts: Shivaji paid little attention towards the ground forts. His earlier activities were confined to Ghatmala and Konkan region which rendered him excellent sites for building hill forts. The forts like Chakan and Kalyan were strategically important ground forts and the Mughals tried to keep them. But such forts are very rare in the hilly region of western Maharashtra. Shivaji recognized the significance of Chakan which was the guarding fort of Poona and Junnar. We find that most of the ground forts were in the Karnataka region. It is difficult to ascertain precisely the total number of ground forts held by Shivaji.

¹⁰⁷ Shahu Daftar, Rumal No. 31, pudka no. 2 & 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Ajanapatra*, p. 69.

¹⁰⁹ *Ajanapatra*, p. 71-72.

Karnataka forts: In his Karnataka expedition, Shivaji captured forts like Vellore, Kopal, Balawad (Belwadi) and Jinji. With a view to reduce the Vellore fort Shivaji fortified two neighboring hills and named them as Sajara and Gojara. Batteries were mounted on these hills for bombardment during the period of siege, and the fort was captured in July, 1673 by the Marathas. Before that in the month of May, 1677, Jinji was brought under the Maratha control. Shivaji wanted to form the third line of defense by capturing the forts in the Karnataka region. We learn from factory records of St. George how Shivaji undertook the project of strengthening the forts. In one of his letters addressed to the English governor of Madras, Shivaji writes,

‘In the Karnataka country.....I intend to build new works in several forts and castles. You may likely have with you such men as know how to make great carriages for guns and how to contrive mines. We have need of such men at present, especially those that know how to make mines and to blow up stone walls.’¹¹⁰

Shivaji aimed at expanding his territory in the South, which might serve him to secure a firm base for his newly created Maratha Swarajya. He must have planned the conquest of South, as a place of resort, if the Mughals pounced on his kingdom. The network of forts in the Karnataka region would have served as a bulwark against the Mughal menace. So Shivaji developed many ground forts in this region.

Gadi:¹¹¹ Gadi like a castle was a dwelling place with defensive outworks. In the days of Bahamanis, the gadhis were the mansions of the Jagirdars which includes Patils, Kulkarnis and Deshmukhs. These local Jagirdars were influential people in the states of Adilshahi and Nizamshahi. They were allowed to collect revenue from their respective jurisdictions. But it seems that they used to surrender very little amount to the central treasury of the state.¹¹² Sometimes they used to pay only 200 or 300 hons for a village yielding 1000 or 2000 hons as revenue.¹¹³ As such these Jagirdars became so rich and sometimes created trouble for the ryots. They nominally depend on the state, otherwisw used to behave

¹¹⁰ *English Records on Shivaji*, Vol. II, p. 137, 138,251.

¹¹¹ To see the image of a *Gadi*, please refer to the image section of the appendix.

¹¹² *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 26-27.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 27.

independently. They not only built the gadi but employed their own troops.¹¹⁴ When Shivaji acquired these areas, he took severe measures against these Maratha Sardars. He not only confiscated their Saranjams but also dismantled their fortresses which would have endangered his position in the Deccan. Shivaji adopted the policy of keeping all the forts and fortresses under his direct control.

The most famous and well known example of a gadi of the period under consideration is the Shanivarwada palace at Poona. It was constructed by the second Peshwa, Bajirao I and the mansion was later enlarged and enriched by the successive Peshwas. Other example of a gadi are seen at Jadhavwadi (Diva), Wagholi, Darewadi, Karad, Tasgaon, Ranje and Talegaon and several other places in Maharashtra.¹¹⁵

Hill forts- a Key to Maratha *Swarajya*.

In his earlier activities Shivaji realized the strategic importance of the hill forts and launched a movement to capturing them as early as 1645. He first captured Torana, which was followed by Sinhgad, Purandar, and Rajgad and so on. As his resources were limited then he had to seek the co- operation of nature in defending his territory. Hill forts, thus became of utmost importance to him. Shivaji must have learned the importance of hill forts as centers of protection to the kingdom. Because while defending the Nizamshahi kingdom against the Mughals, Shahji shifted his centre of activities to the forts like Pengiri and Mahuli. These experiences of his father must have enabled Shivaji to formulate a policy to use hill forts as a tool to achieve his goal of *swarajya*. Most of the hill forts were located on the trade routes. The main purpose of the fort is to protect the political and economic interest of area which fall under its sphere of influence. In the middle ages the old trade routes were converted into military routes. Consequently these hill forts played an important part in commanding the military routes.

All these forts are mostly maintained by the Marathas. When Shivaji undertook the work of forming the chains of forts, he planned to construct some new forts on military routes. Accordingly, he constructed the fort of Pratapgad on the Parghat in order to protect the

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 27.

¹¹⁵ M. S. Mate, *Maratha Architecture, AD 1650-1850*, University of Pune, Pune, 1959, p. 53.

territory of Javali. We also find that fort of Makarandgad was constructed by Shivaji for commanding the Hatlot ghat.

Table 1.2 : Some of the important Ghats and Commanding forts

Ghats	Commanding forts
Nane	Jhadgad, Junnar ¹¹⁶
Kolumba	Kotaligad
Kusur	Bhivagad Dhak
Pimpri	Sudhagad
Kavalya	Mangad
Shevatya	Lingana
Kamtha	Kangori
Par	Pratapgad
Ambavali	Rasalgad
Kumbharli	Jangali Jayagad
Mala	Bhavangad
South Tivara	Prachitgad
Kundi	Maimatgad
Vishalgad	Vishalgad, Machal
Phonde	Sivgad
Nardava	Bahiravgad

¹¹⁶ Sidney Toy, *the Fortified Cities of India*, p. 41.

Route from Manmad to Ahmadnagar	Ankai-Tankai
The Thal pass	Balvantgad
The Diva pass	Malhargad
Konkan –Desh track	Ratangad
Mahad ¹¹⁷ –Bhor Route	Kaula
The Ambavani pass	Koairgad

Table 1.3 : Some forts were located since early period to command the river valleys

Commanding forts	Rivers
Anjanvel	Vasisti
Arnala ¹¹⁸	Vaitarana
Ambolgad	Rajapur
Belapurgad	Panvel
Jayagad	Sangameshwar, River Shastri ¹¹⁹
Kharepatan	Nagothan
Vijaydurg	
Trimbak	Godavari
Bhudargad	Vedganga

¹¹⁷ B. K. Apte, p. 13; Mahad was a good inland port throbbing with trade. The other ports of Kolaba were busy with local commerce.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 16; the fort was rebuilt by Bajirao I under the supervision of architect Baji Tulaji in 1737.

¹¹⁹ B. K. Apte, p. 13; the mouth of the river is crowened with the fort of Jaygad.

Ratangad	Pravara
Harishchandragad	Mula
Karnala	Panvel- Apta

A network of hill forts was in existence before the rise of Shivaji. Shivaji captured several hill forts and formed his first line of defense. While doing so he reconstructed the forts like Rajgad, Lohagad, Lingana, Raigad, Bhudhargad etc. He also constructed some new forts like Pratapgad, Makarandgad, Machindragad, Vardhangad, Yashwantgad, Palagad, Mahipatgad, Managad, at strategic places.

Sea forts

By the end of 15th century, the Nizamshah of Ahmednagar had established their own navy at Janjira, situated at the mouth of Rajapuri creek. The purpose of establishing navy was two- fold. The *Siddi*, who was appointed as the in charge of Janjira, had to supervise the coastal trade as well as the safe conveyance of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca. When Shivaji expanded his territory across the Western Ghats into the coastal region of Konkan, he was severely opposed by the *Siddis* of Janjira. Shivaji established his own navy and constructed and rebuild the marine forts like Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, Suvarnadurg, etc. to reduce the *Siddis* he constructed the sea fort of Kansa or Padmadurg opposite of Janjira at the mouth of Rajapuri creek. Further he constructed the forts of Kolaba or Alibagh to strengthen his coastal rule. The purpose of establishing naval order was to hold in check various powers of the west coast including the Portuguese, *Siddis* of Janjira, and the English who were the chief rivals of Shivaji. One more reason for the establishing the chain of sea forts on the west coast was that Shivaji wanted to keep an opening for escape by sea if he was overwhelmed by the enemies on land.

1.8 Forts in Relation to Natural Factors

Forts on Ghatmatha: the important forts erected on the Ghatmatha are: Harishchandragad, Jivadhan, Siddhagad, Shivneri, Prabalgad, Rajmachi, Lohagad, Tung, Tikona, Isagad, Sinhgad, Purandar, Vajragad, Rajgad, Torana, Raigad, Lingana, Rohida, Pratapgad, Makarandagad, Ratgad, Gunavantgad, Vishalgad, Bhudhargad etc.

Forts in the Desh: the important forts on the Satmala-Ajanta range of Sahyadri are: Chandor, Devgiri, Ahivant, Dhodap, Ratgad, Ankai, and Tankai. The forts on the Mahadeo range are- Chandan, Vandan, Kamalgad, Parali, and Vasantgad whereas fort like Aundha-Patta, Ratangad, were constructed on the Balaghat ranges.

Forts in Konkan: main forts are Sindhudurg, Vijaydurg, Suvarnadurg, Jaygad, Padmadurg, Alibagh etc.

1.9 Three Chains of Forts

We have seen that a network of forts, particularly of hill forts, was in existence before the rise of Shivaji. Shivaji added some more hill forts and expanded his rule right from Ahiwant to Tanjore. For establishing the maritime supremacy, he constructed the forts like Sindhudurg¹²⁰, Padmadurg, Khanderi, and Undheri and strengthen the forts like Vijaydurg, Suvarnadurg, and Jayagad. The network of forts was divided by him in three main chains which were in fact responsible for keeping his territory safeguarded from the rivals like the Mughals, the Siddis, and the Portuguese.

The First Line of Defence

The first line of defence was extended from the fort Aseri in the north-west to the Vishalgad in the south. This line include the core of Shivaji's Swarajya which was formed by the forts Kondana, Purandhar and Vajragad on the east , Rajgad, Torana and Rayagad on south, Tale and Ghosale on the west and Sudhagad on north.

¹²⁰ *English Records on Shivaji*, Vol. I, p. 73-100; Shivaji laid the foundation of Sindhudurg on 25th of November, 1664.

The Second Line of Defence

This line of defence was created by Shivaji for two reasons. First was to safeguard his territory against the maritime powers of the Siddis, the Portuguese and the British and secondly for keeping an opening for escape by sea. While forming this second line of defense Shivaji constructed forts like Sindhudurg, Suvarnadurg, and Vijaydurg etc.

The Third Line of Defence

After his coronation, Shivaji started building his third line of defence from Vishalgad to Jinji. During his Karnataka expedition he conquered and annexed a portion of Karnataka territory. For keeping this territory safeguarded, he strengthen the forts like Jinji, Tanjore, Vellore¹²¹ etc. and also built new ones. Thus Shivaji created a third line of defence in order to make swift military operations from Raigad to Jinji. As this defence line was created by Shivaji, Rajaram could retire to Karnataka from Vishalgad and could defend the Swarajya against the Mughals.

1.10 Sieges

Forts are put to test during the period of sieges. Capture of a fort, during the 17th century, by the enemy led to an easy subsequent conquest of the kingdom. The longer the duration of the siege, the greater the exhaustion of the enemy. The significance of a fort thus depend on its capacity to withstand the assault of the enemy. We find that several methods, measures and missiles were in use for reducing forts since remote past. Kautilya has paid due attention to the role of forts during the period of sieges. In the Arthashastra, he describes the steps to be taken during the operation of a siege. He refers to the underground tunnels dug up to the walls of a fort. He also furnishes the information in respect of siege towers and siege engines.

By the end of 14th century, use of gun powder became well established. The powerful fire-spitting machine made great change in the system of warfare. The guns of great caliber

¹²¹ Vellore fort was captured by Shivaji in 1677. Sidney Toy, *Strongholds of India*, p. 18.

made the siege engines outdated. But the method of constructing siege towers, scaling ladder, digging tunnels were generally in practice even after the introduction of artillery.

1.11 Treaty of Purandar

Aurangzeb deputed Raja Jai Singh to deal with Shivaji. Full military and administrative authority was conferred on Jai Singh so that he should not depend on Mughal viceroy of Deccan for any decision and dealt directly with the emperor. Jai Singh did not underestimate the Marathas. He made diplomatic and military preparations. He appealed to all the rivals of Shivaji in order to isolate Shivaji. Jai Singh decided to strike at the heart of Shivaji's territory- fort Purandar where Shivaji had lodged his family and his treasure. Jai Singh besieged Purandar fort in 1665.¹²² Shivaji negotiated with Jai Singh, the following terms were agreed upon:

- i) out of 35 forts held by Shivaji, 23 forts with surrounding territory yielding a revenue of four lakhs *hons* to be surrendered to Mughals, while the remaining 12 forts with annual income of one lakh *hons* were to be left for Shivaji, on condition of service to the Mughal emperor.
- ii) Territory worth 4 lakhs *hons* a year of Bijapuri Konkan, which Shivaji already held was granted to him, Bijapuri territory of Balaghat worth 5 lakhs *hons* was also granted to him, in return he has to pay 40 lakhs *hons* to Mughals in instalments.

A careful study of these two lists of forts, will clearly reveal that that the forts ceded to the Mughals, except Purandar and Sinhgad did not play any significant role in the Maratha history. Whereas those retained by him were the key forts of his territory controlling the borders of the new state in the making. Rajgad, Torana, Rairi, Asheri helped at various stages. Again most of these forts like Sudhagad, Sarasgad, Rajgad, and Torana belonged to the Swarajya territory. Rajgad and Torana, Rairi and Lingana were pair of forts acting as sentinels to each other.¹²³

¹²² Jadunath Sarkar, *House of Shivaji*, p. 126.

¹²³ A. R. Kulkarni, *Medieval Maratha Country*, p. 72.

Table 1.4: Sieges and their results¹²⁴

Expedition	Year	Fort	Type of fort	Length of siege	Way of assault	Result	Remarks
Siddi Johar	1660	Panhala	Hill fort	Six months	Blockade method	Fort captured	Shivaji fled from Panhala to Vishalgad
Shaista Khan	1660	Chakan	Land fort	Two months	Sap and mine method	Fort captured	
Jai Singh & Diler Khan	1665	Purandar Vajragad	Hill fort	Two months	Blockade method	Fort captured	Treaty of Purandar
Manaji Malsure	1670	Sinhgad	Hill fort	Less than one week	Scaling ladder	Fort captured	Manaji was killed
Shivaji	1670	Ahivant Ravala-Javala, Markhand Anchalgiri Lohagad	Hill forts	Less than one week	Scaling ladder	Fort captured	

¹²⁴ Marg, (ed. Doshi Saryu)- the art of *Chhatrapati* and *Peshwas*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Magazine of Architecture and Art), Walachandranagar Industries Ltd., Marg Publication, Fort Bombay.

Kondaji Farjand	1673	Panhala	Hill fort	Less than one week	Scaling ladder as well as bribery	Sap and mine method	Fort captured
Shivaji	1673	Phonda	Hill fort	One month	Sap and mine method	Fort captured	
Shivaji	1677	Vellore	Land fort	One year 2 months	Blockade method	Fort captured by Narhari Rudra in the absence of Shivaji	
Shahabuddin	1682	Ramsej	Hill fort	Five months	Sap and mine method	Siege withdrawn	Fort taken by Mughals by means of bribery in 1686
Matabar Khan	1682	Trimbak	Hill fort	Five months	Sap and mine	Fort captured by bribing the Killedar for Rs. 80,000	
Matabar Khan	1689	Mahuli	Hill fort			Killedar accepted the <i>mansab</i> and	

						surrendered the fort	
Zulfikar Khan	1689	Raigad	Hill fort	Eight months	Blockade method	Fort captured	By this time Rajaram fled to Jinji
Aurangzeb	1700	Satara	Hill fort	One and half month	Sap and mine method	Fort taken by Mughals by negotiations	
Aurangzeb	1700	Parali	Hill fort	One and quarter month	Scaling ladder	Fort taken by negotiations	
Kamabaksha & Tarbiyat Khan	1700- 1701	Panhala	Hill fort	Eight months	Sap and mine method	Fort taken by bribing the Killedar for Rs. 55, 000	
Aurangzeb	1702	Vishalgad	Hill fort	Six months	Sap and mine method	Fort taken by bribing Parshuram Pant for Rs. 2 lakhs	

Aurangzeb	1702-1703	Sinhgad	Hill fort	Three and half months	Sap and mine method	Fort taken by bribing the Killedar	
Aurangzeb	1702-1704	Rajgad	Hill fort	Two and half months	Construct ed huge towers etc.	Fort taken by negotiation	
Aurangzeb	1704	Torana	Hill fort	Half month	Scaling ladder	Fort captured	
Marathas	1705	Sinhgad	Hill fort	Less than one week	Scaling ladder	The fort was captured in the month of July when there was heavy rainfall.	

CHAPTER 2: Administration of Forts

Shivaji paid much attention to the administration of forts as it constituted one of the major projects of the Maratha state. Amatya rightly observes that Shivaji could create a kingdom only because of forts.¹²⁵ The 91 Qalami bakhar says, 'just as ships and boats are strengthened with nails of iron, so by means of forts and redoubts the kingdom is strengthened and the ryots safeguarded'.¹²⁶ Further it is mentioned that 'the forts are for the protection of land and people.'¹²⁷ We can get the clue of Shivaji's policy towards the forts in his excellent administration of forts. Forts are the defendants and guardians of the kingdom and the royal power.

2.1 Chief Officials of the Forts

According to Sabhasad, the three major officers at a fort under Shivaji were Havaladar, Sabnis and Sarnobat,¹²⁸ who looked after the military and civil affairs. He also hints that they should be of equal status.¹²⁹ But it seems that the sarnobat¹³⁰ was subordinate to the Havaladar. If a fort was of utmost importance or if it has machis, the sarnobats were appointed as subordinates to the Havaladar to look after the military affairs. For example, there were three independent sarnobats for three machis of Rajgad fort. Raghunath Pandit speaks of Havaladar and Karkhanis, but he is silent about sarnobat. Sabhasad too mentions Karkhanis as an officer having the portfolio of storage and its account. Amatya in his treatise, *Ajnapatra*, refers to four main officials. They were Havaladar, Sarnobat, Sabnis and Karkhanis.¹³¹ Elsewhere he mentions that if Havaladar of a fort passes away while performing the duty of the Sarnobat his services should not be offered to his son or his any other relatives. So it may be presumed that the post of a sarnobat was not provided to each and every fort. Instead of sarnobats, it seems that the Tat-sarnobats were generally

¹²⁵ *Ajnapatra*, p. 61.

¹²⁶ 91 *Qalmi Bakhar* (Sarkar), p. 129.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 129.

¹²⁸ Sabhasad, *Siva Chhatrapatti*, p-22.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 22.

¹³⁰ Literary Sarnobat means one who is the officer of watchman.

¹³¹ *Ajanapatra*, p. 62, 63.

appointed to look after the defense of the ramparts.¹³² The Karkhanis was undoubtedly a responsible officer and from the memorandum drawn up in the first year of the coronation era, it appears that the Karkhanis too enjoyed an equal status of the Havaladar and the Sabnis. It may be, therefore, concluded that the three officials at the fort were the Havaladar, the Sabnis and the Karkhanis. All these three officers were responsible for the administration of the fort and no single officer was able to surrender the fort to any rebel or miscreant. In this manner, according to Sabhasad, a new system was introduced by Shivaji.

But it is often argued that this was not a new element that Shivaji introduced in the fort administration. Even Muslim rulers implemented this method. However, it must be admitted that Shivaji alone realized the importance of hill forts in the system of his state, and paid much attention to its organization. Prior to Shivaji the Bahamani rulers did not pay serious attention to the organization of hill forts. On the contrary they allowed the local Watandars to look after the administration so far as the jurisdiction under their respective forts were concerned. These local Watandars often used to pay the respective dues and sometimes tried to behave independently.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the Bahamani kingdom was disintegrated into five separate branches. The local Watandars sieged this opportunity and tried to establish supremacy in their respective jurisdictions. It may be noted here that the hill forts, particularly in the Western Ghats, were in the hands of Maratha Chiefs. These Maratha chiefs were practically independent or rather nominally dependent upon the Muslim rulers.

It is interesting to note how Shivaji exploited this loose administration of hill forts under Muslim rulers. In his earlier activities, he secured the hill fort Chakan from Firangji Narasala, the Mughal officer of the fort, confirming him in his original post when he assured to serve for Swarajya. The fort Kondana was also captured by Shivaji, probably in 1647¹³³, by means of intrigues through Deshpande of Khedebare. He also captured the fort Purandar in 1648 by using the same diplomatic tactics. Thus Shivaji secured such important forts like Kondana, Purandar, and Chakan only because of the lack of administration of

¹³² *Ajanapatra*, p. 63.

¹³³ Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, p. 35.

forts prevailing under the Muslim rule. As shrewd and far-sighted he was, Shivaji did not allow any room for loopholes in his fort administration for which he preferred not one but three officers of equal status, who were conjointly responsible for civil and military affairs, and who would act in unison. He was aware of the fact that loss of a fort weakens the state power. He could capture forts in succession from the Adilshahi kingdom because of the mismanagement and general indifferences shown by the rulers. He had realized the fact that it was not enough to capture a fort, but to retain it. This required sound administration. Shivaji, therefore, did not spare any pains in introducing a sound system of administration of forts.

2.2 Key Fort Administrators

As we have already seen that there were three major officers of equal status at every fort. They were holding special departments and responsibilities. Among them the Havaladar was the head of the garrison within the fort. As he possessed his own seal he was called *Mudradhikari*. He was holding the charge not only of fort but also of the sphere of influence or surrounding area of the fort (*Ghera*) consisting of villages and open fields. He was authorized to establish a 'Meta' (watch post) in his power. In emergency, if required, he was allowed to issue order for vacating any village under the jurisdiction of fort.

In the army Shivaji had aimed at unity of command; in the forts he deliberately avoided it. No single officer was entrusted with the sole charge of the fort, it was therefore impossible for any single officer to betray it.¹³⁴ If a fort was of utmost importance, a number of Havalدارs were appointed. In such case the chief Havalدار was called Sarhavalدار. At Purandar fort Kondaji Bhole was sarhavalدار in 1687.¹³⁵ The Sabnis was the superintendent of accounts and in charge of the muster roll. The Karkhanis was the chief officer of commissariat.

¹³⁴ Surendranath Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, p. 96.

¹³⁵ Rajwade Vol. XVIII, p. 83.

2.3 Appointments: Caste Basis or Merit Basis?

According to Sabhasad, the Havaladar and the Sarnobat should be Marathas of noble families, the Sabnis should be Brahman, while the Karkhanis should be Prabhu.¹³⁶ Chitnis and other chroniclers support Sabhasad in this respect. Fryer tells us that ‘trust and authority’ he (Shivaji) puts only ‘Brahmins’ (Brahmanas) or other substitutes, viz., ‘pundits’ (prabhus).¹³⁷ Amatya also recommends that the Havaladar and the Sarnobat should be noble Marathas who are loyal, hardworking but not corrupt and sluggish.¹³⁸ According to him the Sabnis and Karkhanis are the clerks appointed by the rulers. They are also responsible officials as the Havaladar and the Sarnobat.¹³⁹ Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad says that generally someone of the royal personal staff was expected to stand surety for the new recruit.¹⁴⁰ But Amatya was silent about their caste.

About this management Surendranath Sen observes, ‘Shivaji had clearly laid down that the three officers must be dissimilar in caste.’¹⁴¹ But this view is not wholly acceptable. Shivaji and his successors were not particular about castes while appointing their officials. Trimbak Bhaskar, a Brahman, was asked by Shivaji to look after the fort Panhala. We also know that the Havaladar of Purandar fort during the time Jai Singh’s siege was Murar Baji Deshpande, a Prabhu. Narhari Rudra, a Brahman, was appointed by Shivaji as the Havaladar of the forts Sajara and Gojara¹⁴² which were fortified by him during Karnataka expedition. Abaji Vishvanath Prabhu was the Havaladar of Torna in the year 1694. It seems that Shivaji and his successors might have laid down this rule for attracting the people of particular genius. Traditionally the Marathas were the best warriors, while Brahmans and Prabhus were adept in the art of writing and keeping accounts.

First preference was given to merit while employing the officials. Amatya says that the Havaladar and the Sarnobat should be appointed if they are loyal, hardworking, non-

¹³⁶ Sen, *Siva Chhatrapati*, p. 29-30.

¹³⁷ John Fryer, p. 3.

¹³⁸ *Ajanapatra*, p. 62, 63.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 63.

¹⁴⁰ Surendranath Sen, *Siva Chhatrapati*, p. 29.

¹⁴¹ Surendranath Sen, *the Military System of the Marathas*, p. 34.

¹⁴² *Shivaji Souvenir*, p. 133,134.

covetous and wakeful. They should be able to extract the royal work (from the subordinate). They should consider that the fort is the dearest treasure entrusted to them by their masters, and so it should not be surrendered as long as they are alive.¹⁴³ It is also mentioned that the Havaladar should be of unyielding nature. He must be brave, a man of family, noble and devoted to his duties.

Sabhasad hints that the Havaladar and Sarnobat should be appointed, if anybody of royal personal staff agrees to stand surety for them. Such type of surety was certainly useful for the king to keep the activities of the military officials under his control. The same care was taken while appointing any Brahman in the post of Sabnis. Sabhasad says that a Brahman should be appointed Sabnis and a Prabhu Karkhanis, if they are well acquainted with personal staff of the king. Here it may be noted again that not influence but surety was considered for the appointment to key positions. It is expected that both of them should carry out their duties laid down by a king precisely and honestly.¹⁴⁴

From the above account it is clear that maximum care was taken while appointing the responsible officials on every fort. Shivaji used to test these officials. An interesting episode described by Chitnis reveals how Shivaji took the test of a Havaladar at Panhala at night and how he appreciated his sense of duty. If the Havaladar or any other officer failed in such test, he was degraded or dismissed.

2.4 Duties and Responsibilities of the Fort Officers

Havaladar: Although these officers enjoyed equal status, the prominent among them was Havaladar. He was *Mudradhikari* (one who possesses his own seal) and was responsible for the entire administration of the fort. The havaladar was specially entrusted with the keys of the fort.¹⁴⁵ Every evening he was to lock up the gates and to confirm whether the gates were properly secured. During night he was not to allow any outsider, whether friend or

¹⁴³ *Ajanapatra*, p. 63.

¹⁴⁴ *Ajanapatra*, p. 63.

¹⁴⁵ Surendranath Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, p. 96.

foe, into the fort. In the morning it was his first duty to open principal gates personally. He had to always keep watch on all the watch posts.

The Havaladar was to put his seal on the order issued by the Sabnis. Besides, he was to put his seal on the accounts prepared by the Karkhanis. He was also supposed to execute judicial duties under his jurisdiction. The Karkhanis and the Sabnis assisted him in his judicial duties, and they used to endorse his verdict by acting as juries.¹⁴⁶ He was paid 125 hons, probably per annum for his services. But it seems that the scale of salary varied from place to place. Ramchandra Nilkanta, the Havaladar of Sindhudurg, was drawing the salary of 100 hons.

It was expected that the Havaladar should be well versed in firing matchlocks and guns.¹⁴⁷ Further it was one of the important duties of the Havaladar to visit the magazines periodically. He was to take out powder, rockets, grenades and other explosives for drying them. He was to store them carefully and to seal ammunitions.¹⁴⁸

Table 2.1: List of Qiladars or Havaldars (Fort Commanders)

Fort name	Qiladar or Havaldar
Karnul ¹⁴⁹	Muhammad Sakhi
Prabalgad	Kesri Singh
Bidar ¹⁵⁰	Marjan
Parinda ¹⁵¹	Ghalib Khan
Junnar ¹⁵²	Shamsuddin Muhammad Khan

¹⁴⁶ Rajwade, Vol. XVI, p. 40, XV, p. 271.

¹⁴⁷ *Ajanapatra*, p. 70.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p-70.

¹⁴⁹ Bhimsen, *Tarikhe-i-Dilkasha*, p. 204.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*. p. 13.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*. p. 14.

¹⁵² *Ibid*. p. 17.

Ambar ¹⁵³	Jakaji
Mahuli ¹⁵⁴	Manohar Das
Daulatabad ¹⁵⁵	Raja Rao Karan
Sholapur ¹⁵⁶	Qizalbash Khan
Mulher ¹⁵⁷	Neknam Khan
Ahmednagar fort ¹⁵⁸	Qalandar Khan
Dhodap ¹⁵⁹	Ali Reza Beg
Bidar ¹⁶⁰	Gangaram, Wazir Beg
Gulburga ¹⁶¹	Abdul Rasul Khan
Naldurga ¹⁶²	Qalandar Khan
Bijapur ¹⁶³	Sayyid Zain-ul-Abidin
Ausa ¹⁶⁴	Murshid Quli Khan
Sagar ¹⁶⁵	Pam Nayak
Himmatgarh ¹⁶⁶	Shakir Khan

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 18.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 54.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 55.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 60.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 68.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 75.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 100.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 113.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 115.

¹⁶² *Ibid.* p. 115.

¹⁶³ Bhimsen, p. 144.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 146.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 165.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 166.

Qamarnagar ¹⁶⁷	Jahangir Quli Khan
Adoni ¹⁶⁸	Rao Dalpat
Udgir ¹⁶⁹	Abdul Qaiyum
Kondana ¹⁷⁰	Maqsd Khan Roz Bihani
Chakan	Firangji Narasala
Purandar	Murar Baji Deshpande
Sajara - Gojara	Narhari Rudra
Torna	Abaji Vishwanath Prabhu
Sindhudurg	Ramchandra Nilkanta
Vellor fort ¹⁷¹	Nagoji Bhosale
Rohida ¹⁷²	Santaji Nimbalkar
Rajgad	Abdul Khair Khan
Purandhar ¹⁷³	Kirat Singh(Son of Jai Singh)

Sabnis

The Sabnis was in charge of accounts in general and the muster roll in particular.¹⁷⁴ He was to issue all the orders of expenditure under the seal of the Havaldar. It was his duty to prepare the daily accounts of cash and treasury department and to obtain the Karkhanis's

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 166.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 166.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 227.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 253.

¹⁷¹ Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 35.

¹⁷² Rajwade, Vol. XV. P. 342.

¹⁷³ G. H. Khare, *Simhagadh*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁴ Surendranath Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, p. 96

endorsement and Havaladar's seals in token of their approval. He was supposed to issue orders regarding accounts etc., from fort to its jurisdiction (Ghera). For such orders also the Havaladar's seal and the Karkhanis's approval were indispensable. He maintained the muster roll for the soldiers of the fort. As and when required, he was allowed to levy taxes in the area under the fort in order to meet the needs of the fort. For issuing such orders, again the Havaladar's seal and the Karkhanis's approval were necessary.

The Sabnis was also expected to attend the correspondence with the government or with various departments. For every letter addressed to the government, the seal of the Havaladar was essential. In addition to the above duties of the fort proper, he was supposed to prepare an estimate of revenue of the 'Ghera' i.e. the area under the influence of the fort. He was supposed to issue orders about revenue after obtaining the Havaladar's seal and the Karkhanis's approval.

Karkhanis: The Karkhanis was in charge of the stores of the fort. All accounts of assets and liabilities were maintained by him. He prepared statements of such accounts and obtained the endorsement of the Sabnis and the seal the seal of the Havaladar as token of their approval. He was expected to distribute as and when required. The orders in respect of goods were to be issued by him under the seal of the Havaladar and approval of the Sabnis. Further he was supposed to take charge of female slaves, boy servants, horses or cattle's obtained as spoils of war or otherwise. He also supervised the construction work of buildings on fort.

The clerk of the Karkhanis was supposed to prepare accounts of naval stores under the supervision of the Sabnis. He was also to verify the muster roll maintained by the Sabnis. On the contrary, the clerk of the Sabnis was entitled to be present while making the distribution of stores by the Karkhanis for verification.

Sarnobat: The post of the Sarnobat was created particularly for major forts. The Sarnobat were the deputy Havaladar and were expected to assist the Havaladar in military matters. Generally the Sarnobats were appointed in charge of the Machis. At the Rajgad fort, there were separate Sarnobat for the administration of the three Machis. Like, Havaladar, the Sarnobat too enjoyed the privilege of having his own seal. It indicate that probably the

minor forts were kept in the hands of Sarnobats. As a matter of fact both the posts, Havaladar and Sarnobat were identical and sometimes the Havaladar of the fort was also called Sarnobat. For instances, Netaji Palkar, the Havaladar of Purandar fort, was also mentioned as Sarnobat.

The Havaladar of Machis: When the Machi was as big as fort, perhaps an independent Havaladar was appointed to look after the Machi. Such a Havaladar was perhaps the assistant of Sarhavaladar or the Chief Havaladar. The Havaladars of Machis held their separate subdivisions and were allowed to make correspondence independently.

2.5 Other Officials in the Forts

Tat-sarnobat: The Tat-sarnobats was in charge of the defense and supervision of the ramparts, or a section of it, if it was too big for a single officer.¹⁷⁵ If a fort had a curtain wall of considerable length, the number of the Tat-sarnobats was usually increased. There were four to six Tat-sarnobats at fort Purandar.¹⁷⁶ We learn that Shivaji despatched four Tat-sarnobat in the year 1677 to Vellore on demand from Nagoji Bhosale, the Havaladar of Vellor fort.¹⁷⁷ These Tatsarnobats were entitled to receive a salary of 12 hons per year.

Imarati Havaladar: Imarati Havaladar was an independent post for the execution of building work in fort. So far as the ordinary hill forts were concerned, minor construction work was generally carried out under the supervision of the Karkhanis. Shivaji constructed numerous buildings in the forts of Rajgad and Raigad. From inscription at Raigad we learn that several buildings including a famous temple of Jagadisvara were built by Hiroji Indulkar. He was holding the post of Imarati Havaladar.¹⁷⁸

Skilled Labour / Craftsmen: Besides the Imarati Havaladar, a mason was also appointed for the structural construction. But it is not known whether they were appointed on permanent basis or on daily wages. Amatya included mason (Patharvat) in the list of

¹⁷⁵ Surendranath Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, p. 99.

¹⁷⁶ K. V. Purandare, *Kille Purandar*, BISM, 1939, p. 49.

¹⁷⁷ Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 35.

¹⁷⁸ Rajwade, Vol. XVIII, p. 57

craftsman required in the fort.¹⁷⁹ The other craftsman stated in the list supplied by Amatya are Brahmans, Astrologers, Physicians who are well versed in mineral medicines and those in herbal medicines, Surgeons, Exorcists, wound dresser, Blacksmiths, Carpenters and Cobblers, etc.¹⁸⁰ Amatya suggests that there is no necessity of these craftsman in an ordinary fort. It is also mentioned that the charioteers, the veterinary surgeons and the Brahmans should have their dwellings in fort. But it is also added that craftsmen are really useful should be allowed to stay in the fort. Amatya points out that those craftsmen should be always well equipped and when required, they should carry out their duties. In case, if there is no work for them, they should be engaged in other civil duties like collection of revenue dues, etc. But they should not be kept idle.¹⁸¹

It appears from the above account that the general policy of the Maratha rulers was to provide several opportunities to the craftsmen and make use of their technical skills whenever required. But these craftsmen were not dismissed or discharged as soon as their jobs were over. Instead they were engaged in other civil duties suitable to their respective positions.

Unskilled Labour: The unskilled labour were generally engaged on daily wages, whenever there was any new construction work or repair in the fort. It is important to note that Shivaji was liberal enough to pay adequate wages. English Factory Record tells us that Shivaji often tempted workmen from Bombay with offers of better wages and better lodging. In a Bombay letter of March 1672 it is mentioned that ‘Sevagee being abuilding and giving great wages, hath tempted severall of our workman to run away’.¹⁸² Like unskilled labour Shivaji used to offer better wages to skilled labour and craftsmen also. It is interesting to note that the culprits kept in the fort prison like that of Rajgad were also employed as laborers to carry stones, etc.

Garrison: For ordinary fort, strong garrison was not required. It appears that a contingent of five hundred¹⁸³ was normally maintained in a fort, but in some exceptional cases a strong

¹⁷⁹ *Ajanapatra*, p. 72.

¹⁸⁰ *Ajanapatra*, p. 72.

¹⁸¹ *Ajanapatra*, p. 72.

¹⁸² *English Records on Shivaji*, p. 293.

¹⁸³ Fryer, *a New Account of the East and Persia*, p. 127.

force was stationed. The persons employed in garrison were known as Gadakaris. According to Sabhasad, of every ten men of the garrison to be stationed in the fort, one should be made a Naik (Chief). Remaining nine should be placed under him as soldiers (Paik). In the garrison, matchlock firers, spearmen, archers, light armed men, should be recruited. If the fort was besieged by the enemies, the number was increased twice or thrice the normal strength as per recruitment. In Purandar fort, even in peace times, the number of garrison was 1000.¹⁸⁴

The Gadakaris were the local people and were supposed to carry out the duties of protecting the gateways, watch duties of strategic posts (metas), supervision of ramparts etc. here it may be noted that these Gadakaris were the ordinary servants in the forts before the rise of Shivaji.

Regarding the recruitment of the garrison, Amatya suggests, 'the relations of the sardars (officers) of the cavalry, or the persons recommended by them, should not be positively entrusted with the work of the forts. Similarly if there are one, two, three relations belonging to one family who are well versed in the management of forts, then the work of forts has necessarily to be entrusted to them. For it is very difficult to get men for work in forts.'¹⁸⁵ Further he warns, 'but they should not be placed in forts which are near each other. They should be given work and made to serve in distant forts, from where one is not able to join hands with others, and between which there are other forts'.¹⁸⁶ It seems that the maximum care was taken to avoid the riot or revolts. The garrison in fort was also supposed to attend the civil duties, whenever necessary, in the premises of the fort.

Bargirs: In Persian 'Bargir' means a burden taker, but in the Maratha army the term was used for a soldier who rode a horse furnished by his employer. It is not known with certainty whether there were 'bargirs' on the hill forts, but that was not impossible as well. The ground forts, or hill cum ground forts maintained special troops of bargirs. We learn from a document that Shivaji dispatched seven bargirs to the fort of Vellore.¹⁸⁷ Amatya suggests

¹⁸⁴ Kille Purandar, p. 49.

¹⁸⁵ Ajanapatara, p. 41.

¹⁸⁶ Ajanapatra, p. 41.

¹⁸⁷ Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 35.

that the bargirs working on the fort should possess knowledge of firing gun and matchlock.¹⁸⁸ Elsewhere he says that they should be appointed, if they were found brave and trustworthy. As regard the wages of these bargirs, though a general rule cannot be laid down, yet from some accounts, it appears that the rate of wages was about nine hons per year.¹⁸⁹

2.6 Other Minor Servants

Naikwadi: Every unit of nine soldiers in the garrison was commanded by a petty officer called naik.¹⁹⁰ Naikwadi were the officers of the smaller detachments. Their post were created to assist the Tat-sarnobat in his work. We find the officers called Naikwadi in the Adilshahi and Nizamshahi states. From the factory records at Surat it seems that these Naikwadis sometimes created trouble in the administration of forts during the period of Adilshahi. Amatya says that the Naikwadis should be appointed if they are brave and trustworthy.

Rajputs: The Rajputs too were recruited in the service of the forts. For their employment, Amatya hints that they should not be appointed without a royal grant. Further their proportions should be 10% of the total garrison.

Sweepers: The sweepers or mehatars were also appointed in forts to maintain sanitation.

Temporary Clerks: If any pending work has to be disposed of early, the posts of temporary clerks were created. During his Karnataka expedition in 1677-78, Shivaji captured several forts. Many of them were rebuilt by him. He also constructed some new forts in strategically places. For the reorganization of the administration of forts on the Karnataka plain, he created several new posts of Tatsarnobat, bargirs,¹⁹¹ Imarati Havaladar¹⁹² etc. he also appointed one temporary clerk by name Timaji Narayan and

¹⁸⁸ *Ajanapatra*, p. 70.

¹⁸⁹ Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 35.

¹⁹⁰ Surendranath Sen, *Siva Chhatrapati*, p. 29.

¹⁹¹ Rajwade Vol. VIII, p. 35.

¹⁹² Rajwade Vol. VIII, p. 36.

despatched him to the fort Valgudnur for disposing of the pending work there on a monthly allowances of three *hons*.¹⁹³

Amatya suggests that a person should not be kept in services, if he is unsteady, thievish, murderous, capricious, fond of drinking and intoxicating drugs, addicted to the use of bhang and perfidious.¹⁹⁴ He should be appointed only on assurance of his good character because a fort was likely to be lost to the enemy due to the misbehavior of a single person.

Administration of Machi: Machi was an important limb of the fort. Loss of a Machi will result to loss of fort. Hence adequate precautions were taken to protect the Machis. Although the administration of Machi was entrusted to the three major officers of the fort, a separate post of Sarnobat or Havaladar was created for the defense of the Machi. The Sabnis and Karkhanis of the respective forts were supposed to maintain accounts of cash and stores allotted to the Machi. A separate Karkoon assisted the Sabnis in keeping the accounts of the Machi.

The Metas or the watch posts were established at strategic points from where one could watch the movement of persons descending or ascending the fort, privately or secretly. The watchmen of such Metas were generally recruited from the Ramoshi, the Koli, the Berad and the Mahar communities. Their appointments were hereditary. Being the tribal people, their knowledge of hills and forts was first rate, and therefore they were best suited to the post of watchmen.¹⁹⁵ It is said that Shivaji was the first ruler to employ Ramoshis as watchmen of his fortresses. Shivaji extracted maximum advantage of their geographical knowledge by providing permanent jobs to them.

Watch and Ward Duties: A systematic arrangement for watch and ward duties was introduced, particularly in the case of hill forts. At night, the watchmen, while conducting their duties of watch and ward from the main fort, used to shout loudly to which a response in the same manner was given by the watchmen stationed on the Metas. The same arrangement was made in case of the Machis also. At important forts a metallic vessel for

¹⁹³Rajwade Vol. VIII, p. 34.

¹⁹⁴*Ajanapatra*, p. 364.

¹⁹⁵Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol. I, p. 822.

giving sounds (*tas*) was used. We learn from a document that Krishnaji Bhaskar Bhat was especially appointed in the Purandar fort for this purpose. In Vishalgad fort, one hillock is known as *tas tekadi* from where it is said that the sounds were given at regular interval.¹⁹⁶ It is interesting to note that *tasekhana* (the place from where the sound was given) was sometimes included in the eighteen departments of Shivaji. The rooms known as Alanga were the retiring rooms for watchmen on duties.

Hereditary Rights: Shivaji was not in favor of making military services hereditary. Merit alone counted while making appointments for such posts. Amatya says, ‘if the Havaladar of the fort dies on duty, his post should not be entrusted to his sons or relatives.’¹⁹⁷ The list of havalgars at Rohida fort (Vichitrabad) provided in the document reveals that the Havalgars appointed in succession were not from the same family. Although the hereditary rights was rejected, it may be noted, the sons of responsible officers were generally consoled by entrusting other work according to their ability.¹⁹⁸ Certain documents support will support this statement. When Sambhaji Silimkar was slain in a fight against the Mughals in the Rajgad fort, his son was granted one village in Inam in the year 1704.¹⁹⁹ In 1700, Shivaji II released the grant to Matyaji Ingale, whose father Shidoji Ingawale died on duty at the fort of Sajjangad.²⁰⁰ In 1703, Shivaji II released the grant to Girjoji Yadav, whose brother Anjji Yadav showed great skill in constructing buildings at fort Pawangad and Pratapgad.²⁰¹ It is mentioned in the same document that Shivaji was pleased when he inspected the work done by Anniji in the Pavangad fort, and made a generous gift of 6000 hons to him.²⁰²

Regarding the appointments of the watandars who occupy the territory lying about a fort, Amatya suggests that the Deshmukhs, the Deshpandes, the Patils, the Kulkarnis, the Chawgules and other hereditary Watandars should not be given services on a fort near their respective Watans. If such services were entrusted, the Watandars would be disloyal and

¹⁹⁶P. B. Shirwalkar, *Kille Vishalgad*, p. 67.

¹⁹⁷*Ajanapatra*, p. 64.

¹⁹⁸*Ajanapatra*, p. 64.

¹⁹⁹Rajwade, Vol. VX, p. 288.

²⁰⁰*Tarabai Kalin Kagadpatre*, Vol. I, p. 96.

²⁰¹*Ibid*, p. 143.

²⁰²*Ibid*, p. 143.

could divulge secrets for sake of their own interest.²⁰³ From the above account it is clear that utmost care was taken to minimize the chances of treachery often caused by the officials in the fort. Amatya suggests that such Watandars should be employed on the forts which are ten or five villages distant from their Watan.²⁰⁴

Transfer of Officers: It seems that Maratha rulers laid down rules for periodical transfers of officials in the fort. Amatya says, ‘Havaldar should be transferred after three years, Sarnobat after four years, whereas Sabnis and Karkhanis should be transferred after five years.’²⁰⁵ Here also great care taken, particularly about the transfer of military officers. It is not known whether those rules were strictly observed. So it may be presumed that these Havaldars were posted or transferred to other forts during the interim period. But this was not made a strict rule.

According to Amatya the changes should be made frequently in respect of the post like the Sarnobat and the bargir.²⁰⁶ Records however do not lend support to this principle, which might have been generally accepted as a matter of policy.

2.7 Salary, Payments and Receipts

Sabhasad furnishes the nature of payment that was introduced by Shivaji for the payment of military officials. He says, ‘Mokasa Mahals or village with absolute rights should on no account be granted to the men in the army, the militia (Hasam) and the fort establishment. Every payment should be made by ‘varats’ (kinds) or with cash from the treasury. None but the Karkuns had any authority over the lands. All payments to the army, the militia and the fort establishment should be made by the Karkuns.’²⁰⁷ This system could not continue during the period of crisis after the death of Shivaji, owing to the changed circumstances.

²⁰³ *Ajanapatra*, p. 64.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 64.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 63.

²⁰⁶ *Ajanapatra*, p. 64.

²⁰⁷ *Siva Chhatrapati*, p. 34.

Table 2.2 : Fort officials and their remunerations²⁰⁸

Officials	Salary in <i>hons</i>
Havalдар	125 <i>hons</i> plus 25 <i>hons</i> for two servants
Sarnobat	100 <i>hons</i>
Tat-sarnobat	12 <i>hons</i>
Sabnis	100 <i>hons</i>
Majumdar of Imarati Havalдар	36 <i>hons</i>
Clerks	3 <i>hons</i>
Bargirs ²⁰⁹	9 <i>hons</i>

Promotions: If any Havalдар showed tremendous courage during the siege of a fort, he was promoted to a higher position. Shivaji generally used to select his officers from the cadre of Havalदars. So there was great scope for the Havalдар in that period to achieve higher promotions by showing great skills in war. Netaji Palkar, the Senapati or the Commander –in-Chief of Shivaji was a Havalдар of the fort Purandar in his early career. Narhari Rudra was appointed by Shivaji as Havalдар of Sajara and Gojara in the Karnataka.²¹⁰ In 1702 he was promoted to the post of commissioner of Koppal province. Kadatoji Gujar was the Sarnobat of the fort Rajgad. As Sarnobat he acquitted his duties to the entire satisfaction of his master and his merit was recognized by promoting him to the post of Senapati. Like the Havalदars and the Sarnobats, the Sabnis were qualified for the post of the Sarkarkun, the chief of division.

Penalty: Amatya says, while performing the duties in the forts persons are found to have committed robberies, murders, bribery and other offences, they should be discharged

²⁰⁸ *Marathanchya Itihas Sadhne*, Vol. VIII, p-28-31.

²⁰⁹ Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 35.

²¹⁰ *Shivaji Souvenir*, p. 183,184.

before the term of their service is completed.²¹¹ Punishment should be given according to the nature of offence committed. If it is found that the officers of the fort or anyone else is harboring an evil desire of betraying the place, he should be immediately removed without conducting any enquiry and presented to the king.²¹² Further he states that in the royal presence he should be judged properly, and if the charge is proved against him he should be immediately beheaded without showing any mercy.²¹³ Amatya adds further that his head should be severed from his body and be displayed on every fort and drum should be beaten proclaiming that such is the punishment for those who commit such offences.²¹⁴

For want of authentic contemporary records, it is difficult to show whether such severe punishment was given to any treacherous officials working in the fort. In 1665, Keso Narayan, a Sabnis of the Rajgad fort, misappropriated a large sum of money from the public fund when the officers of the forts were busy elsewhere.²¹⁵ How Keso Narayan was punished is, however, not known. In the year 1663, a revolt took place in the fort of Singhgad. On receiving this news, Shivaji postponed his programs of marching into the Konkan and despatched Moro Trimbak Peshwa and Abaji Sondev to Singhgad for conducting an enquiry about the rebels. The result of the enquiry was not known as the contemporary records are silent on this point. The punishment of hurling down from a precipice (Kadelot) was in practice. During the time of internal crisis (1680-1689), it is reported that Yesaji and Sidoji Farjand were hurled down from a precipice of the Rayagad (Takmak Point).²¹⁶ But we find such cases rarely. In 1704, Duduskar, the official of the fort of Koppal became disloyal and as such Trimbakrao Narhari Sabnis was dispatched to punish him. What type of punishment was given to him is not known.

The crime of adultery was treated as cognizable. In 1675, one female coolie working on the Rayagad fort was found guilty of adultery and the state imposed fine on hers.²¹⁷

²¹¹*Ajnapatra*, p. 65.

²¹²*Ibid*, p. 65.

²¹³*Ibid*, p. 65.

²¹⁴*Ibid*, p. 65.

²¹⁵Rajwade, *Marathyanchya Itihasachii Sadhanen*, Vol. VIII, p. 7-9.

²¹⁶*Jedhe Chronology, Shivaji Souvenir*, p. 32.

²¹⁷Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 32.

During the period of Sambhaji, one disloyal Sarjarao Jedhe tried to prove his innocence by writing a letter to Santaji Nimbalkar, a Havaladar of Rohida fort. Sambhaji severely condemned Sarjarao and warned him for keeping contact with the officials of the fort.²¹⁸

Although Amatya recommends severe punishment for criminals, it appears from one document of 1691, that during the period of Rajaram the influential persons, if guilty, were not punished but simply warned and excused so far as their first crimes were concerned.²¹⁹ The reason for this liberal attitude is found in the reversal of the administrative policy of Shivaji. In the critical period of Aurangzeb's campaign, when he adopted the policy of terrorization, massacres, bribery and forced conversions. Rajaram and his advisers found that the administrative system, although prudent, was unworkable. The Maratha state was actually in the melting pot, and Rajaram initiated the system of feudal decentralization. He also adopted very lenient view in judicial field as he wanted to invest all the Maratha captains, each acting on his own account.

It seems that it was impracticable to inflict severe punishment recommended by Amatya, particularly during the period of independence. Even the Muslim rulers were not so particular to punish the officials according to the judicial code. In 1689, after getting the fort Rajgad, Aurangzeb appointed Abdul Khair Khan as the Havaladar of the fort. When the Marathas again seized the fort the said Havaladar surrendered it and retreated to the camp of Firuz Jang. Aurangzeb dismissed and sent him compulsorily to Mecca. So it is clear that Aurangzeb too adopted a lenient policy towards his officials who were not always in a position to capture or retain forts.

Provisions of Grains: Apart from water, another equally important aspect of logistics was readily availability of adequate supply of food. For any fort, when other conventional methods such as surprise attack or mines provided no way for the besieger then the besieger tried to surround the fort and cut off the connection with the outside world. But the forts on the Sahyadri range could not be completely surrounded, so the army inside the fort can maintain a link with the outside area and receive the necessary things. To counter the threat of blockade, the army inside the fort must be well provisioned both with food and arms and

²¹⁸*Ibid*, Vol. XV, p. 342.

²¹⁹*Ibid*, Vol. XV, p. 350.

ammunition and proper storage places was an essential part of the defense of the fort. The *Ambarkhana* of Panhala has a holding capacity of 25,000 *Khandis* of grain,²²⁰ with its three enormous stone and cement granaries, named after the three life- giving holy streams, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati.²²¹ And the longest is 130 feet long 80 feet wide.²²²

During the period of Shivaji, great care was taken for the provision of grains and other commodities required for the garrison within the fort. The fort was provided with a granary known as *Ambarkhana*.²²³ A curious reference occurs in the letter of the Governor of Surat dated 22nd January 1677, in which he complains that Shivaji used to collect all the grain production of his territory and store it on his forts. The provision of grain was no doubt an important factor in those days. Because the garrison could defend the fort so long as they could meet their requirement of food. Abbe Carre, a French traveler furnishes an interesting account in this regard. On his way to Goa, he came across a number of villagers carrying grains to the forts near Khed (Ratnagiri district). He writes, ‘an immense number of people, in troops of eighty or hundred persons, both men and women, all were laden with large sacks of big chests of rice and grain. They were coming from every side, and I asked them where they were going with all this food. They replied that they were taking it to Shivaji’s forts for the garrison and soldiers who protected the countryside, and that all villagers for fifteen leagues round were obliged to take their grain there’.²²⁴ The forts referred to by him were Rasalgad and Prachitgad (both in Ratnagiri district).²²⁵ It is inferred from this that the cess like the Karsai and the Gadcavani were levied for the services of a fort from those villages which were dependent on it.²²⁶

We know that Shivaji was caught in the fort Panhala when it was besieged in March, 1660 by Siddi Johar. The siege dragged on for nearly five months and all the roots of ingress and egress were blocked. Shivaji could resist the fort for such a long time because of the huge granaries of Panhala which were filled with grains.

²²⁰ Surendranath Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas*, p. 94-95.

²²¹ D. B. Parasnis, *Panhala*, p. 61.

²²² Sidney Toy, *Fortified Cities of India*, p. 30.

²²³ Granary house.

²²⁴ Quoted in *Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji* p. 120.

²²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 120

²²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 120.

After his accession to the throne Sambhaji ordered all the clerks of the royal stores to submit lists of the property accumulated by Shivaji. We find in the lists submitted by the clerk's accounts of grains stored by the great king. The articles like ghee, mustard oil, rice, sugar, salt, garlic, onion, etc.²²⁷ According to Warings there are various types of grains in huge quantity, sugar, and tobacco were stored by Shivaji in the Raygad fort.²²⁸

Like the main fort, the sub-forts or the minor forts in the vicinity were also required to store adequate quantities of grains so that the supplies could be made available to the fort besieged by the enemy. When the fort of Ramsej was besieged by the Mughals in 1632, Keso Trimbak Peshwa took his residence in the neighboring fort of Trimbakgad and supplied all kind of help to the garrison of Ramsej who successfully resisted the siege for six months.

A valuable information in respect of stores to be made on the fort is given in the Mestak-Pustak, an account which was composed during the reign of Rajaram (1689-1770). The author in this work points out that if an impregnable fort is provided with enough grain, the defeat of enemy may be treated as certain. The author also remarks that the impregnability of hill forts always lies in the sufficient stock of required commodities, and therefore necessary provisions should be made appropriately. It may be noted here that when the Raigad is compared with Gibraltar it is mentioned "if the hill be furnished with provisions, a few men may keep it from all the world."²²⁹ It is also observed that forts proves to be useless, if they were not provided with required material on time.

Like the Mestak Pustak, Budhabhusanam, throws light on the importance of provisions on forts. It recommends that all sorts of oils, medicines as well as grains like barley, wheat, an inferior grain phaseolus Mungu, pulse, grams, sesame-seed, etc. should be stored in the fort. Although Amatya is silent on the actual stores, he also emphasized that all granaries and store houses of military provisions in the fort should be free from troubles of fire, rats, insects, ants and white ants.²³⁰ It is also suggested that the wealth of the rich people and

²²⁷ Jadunath Sarkar, *House of Shivaji*, p. 186,187.

²²⁸ Avalaskar, *Rayagadchi Jeevankatha*, p. 73.

²²⁹ *English Records on Shivaji*, Vol. I, p. 252.

²³⁰ *Ajnapatra*, p. 70.

merchants residing in the vicinity should be protected in the fort, particularly in times of crisis.

Water supply: In the context of logistics, apart from being surrounded by a fertile country, the site had to be self-sufficient in supply of water. The heavy rains across the Sahyadri range ensures a regular and abundant water supply. Further, the construction of numerous reservoirs, wells and cisterns, mostly excavated in solid rock conserves the rain water or else stores the spring water, providing perennially water. This aspect tremendously enhanced the staying capacity and the defending power of the Sahyadri forts. Water supply was one of the most important things carefully provided for. The water from a rock cut well on Sinhagad is famous for its medicinal properties.²³¹ Shivaji paid great attention to the provision of water in the forts. Generally rock-cut cisterns were used for water supply in case of hill forts. Sometimes tanks or reservoirs were built to store water. On the Raigad fort we find that several cisterns were excavated, among which the Gangasagar tank is still preserved which is full of water during all the seasons.

War Equipment: The garrison within the fort was well equipped with arms like swords, spears, bows and arrows, matchlocks and muskets. Sometimes rockets were used against the assailants and some missiles were in use. One can conjecture the types of weapons used during the period of Shivaji by referring to *Rajyavyavaharkosh*, chronicles, records and *Tawarikhs*. Shivaji was fond of guns. Several letters of the English factories reveal how Shivaji was earnestly desirous of acquiring more and more guns. We learn that in 1674, Shivaji acquired 88 guns and 3000 maund lead from the French.²³² But the guns and cannons purchased from the French and Portuguese were of poor quality. It seems that Shivaji did not possess too many guns and cannons to strengthen all his forts. While strengthening the fort Panhala he was compelled to reduce a number of guns mounted on the forts of Konkan.

From the accounts of *Ajnapatra* we learn that Shivaji possessed some light pieces like *Jejala*, *Zambaruka*, *Sutarnal* and *Charaka*, perhaps locally manufactured. Such cannons were generally mounted on the platforms of the bastions of the forts. So far as the hill forts

²³¹ J. N. Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 18.

²³² Orme, p. 46.

were concerned, these guns played an important part during the sieges. But for repulsing an attack, huge pieces of stones were more effective than the gun. The garrison within the hill fort usually rolled down huge pieces of stones if the assailants tried to climb up the steep hill side.

In this behalf Dr. Fryer, who visited India during the 17th century observes, ‘on the top of the mountains, several fortresses of Seva Gis, only defensible by Nature, needing no other Artillery, but stones, which they tumble down upon their foes, carrying as certain destructions as Bullet where they alight.’²³³ Huge pieces of stones were, therefore, heaped at convenient points of the forts from where they could be hurled down.

Regarding the war equipment within the fort Amatya says, ‘All soldiers should possess arms, namely sword and (takanya) missiles.’²³⁴ On all the vulnerable places in the fort, big guns, small guns and ‘charakyas’²³⁵ and machines suitable for those places and also for higher places, should be mounted on platforms on every bastion and rampart wall at suitable intervals. The ‘charaks’ and big gun should be kept on gun carriages after testing the weight of the guns and by giving them strong iron rings as support.

Amatya further provides a list of accessories required for guns to be kept ready on the fort. ‘bags of powder, iron-bags, brushes for cooling guns, balls and other iron filings, small or great river stones of the size of betel nuts, ‘Palakhas’ of rockets, matches of guns, ‘tarafas’, tool for repairing the touchholes of guns, and other things necessary for gun firing should always be kept ready near guns.’²³⁶ Further he states that the grenades and rockets should be kept ready at every watch post.

From the above account it is obvious that the Marathas were having the light pieces of guns like Jamburas, charkyas, etc. which they used to mount at strategic points. Amatya emphasizes more on keeping the accessories ready. He condemns the officers ‘who says that there is no enemy in the vicinity at present, when he comes he (officer) will bring the

²³³ Fryer, *A New Account of the East India and Persia*, Vol. I, p. 307.

²³⁴ A kind of missile or may be a hand grenade.

²³⁵ Charak – an iron tube filled with powder and fastened to a staff.

²³⁶ Amatya, p. 47.

required things from the store house.²³⁷ Great care was taken for the preservation of artillery within the fort. In the rainy season guns were to be smeared with oil and wax. The touch holes of guns were to be filled up with wax and front corners. Every care was taken to keep the weapons safe from the effects of damp weather.

2.8 Maintenances of the Fort

From the contemporary records it appears that Shivaji captured several forts, rebuilt or renovated many and constructed a few. Sabhasad furnishes a list of 108 forts constructed by Shivaji. In this list several pre- Shivaji forts were included because they might have been renovated or repaired by Shivaji. We know that Shivaji fortified duly the then existing forts like Rajgad, Torana, Vishalgad, Mahipatgad, Raigad, etc. Shivaji always paid much attention to the repair forts. Amatya says, ‘although the work of construction is completed, several features of the fort like walls, watch towers, bastions, ramparts are possible to get damaged or breached in times of siege.’²³⁸ For this purpose a department of building should be kept on every fort, and it should be entrusted to the Havaladar or ‘Mudradhikari.’²³⁹

From the account given in the 91 Qalami Bakhar we find how Shivaji was particular about the repairs of forts. It is mentioned that the forts of Malvan, Ratnagiri, Suvarndurg and others were strengthened by Shivaji. Shivaji visited Mahipatgad and Khelna and urged the building of houses and repair of the walls and towers. Shivaji never neglected the repair of the walls, gates and towers. He make sure that all the stores, ammunitions and provisions of the forts were ready.

From one letter it appears that in the year 1671-72 Shivaji decided to allot a fund of one lakh and seventy five thousand hons for repairing his principal forts.²⁴⁰ From this account we find how Shivaji distributed the amount according to the importance of forts.

The fort of Raigad was important of all as it was the capital of Shivaji. Rajgad, Purandar, Singhgad and Pratapgad were the forts at strategic places and therefore a considerable

²³⁷ Amatya, p. 71.

²³⁸ Amatya, p. 71.

²³⁹ Amatya, p. 71.

²⁴⁰ Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 22

amount was allotted to their repair. Forts like Sindhudurg and Vijaydurg were marine forts and for keeping constant check on the activities of the Siddis, these forts were important. For these forts also a considerable amount was granted. It is interesting to note here that Shivaji allotted 4% *hons.* i.e., 7000 in the estimate for miscellaneous expenditure as it is done by the contractors of modern times.

The required funds were generally raised from various sources like treasure- troves and spoils of war. We know that while constructing the fort of Rajgad, Shivaji utilized the treasure –trove found at Torana. In 1673, the great treasure trove was found at Panhala fort and Shivaji used this wealth for the repair of the said fort. With this he also acquired the forts of Satara and Parali.

Removing of unwanted trees and burning the grass was minor work normally to be carried out on the fort. Amatya says, ‘trees which grow on fort walls have to be constantly cut down. After burning the grass growing on the wall and down near the wall, the fort has to be cleared and cleaned.’²⁴¹ Because if the trees took root, the walls become weak.

²⁴¹ Amatya, p. 47.

Table 2.3: Reserve Fund for the repair of principal Forts of Shivaji

Raygadh	50000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citadel 5000 • Ramparts 15000 • Terrace 10000 • Two tanks 20000
Sinbgad	10000	
Sindhudurg	10000	
Vijaydurg	10000	
Suvarndurg	10000	
Pratapgad	10000	
Purandar	10000	
Rajgad	10000	
Prachandgad	5000	
Prasiddhgad	5000	
Visalgad	5000	
Mahipatgad	5000	
Sudhagad	5000	
Lohagad	5000	
Shrivardhan	5000	
Manaranja	5000	
Korigad	3000	
Sarasgad	2000	
Mahidhargad	2000	
Miscellaneous	7000	
TOTAL	1,75,000 hors	

2.9 Reserve Fund

It seems that a special reserve fund was constituted for the maintenance, repairs, etc. of the forts. In the year 1671-72, Shivaji decided to raise a reserve fund of one lakh and twenty

five thousand hons to meet the extraordinary needs of the beleaguered forts.²⁴² The fund was to be raised from the following Mahals and personage at the rates described against them.

Table 2.4: Mahals and their Rate of collection

Mahals	Rate
Kunal	20000
Rajapur	20000
Kole	20000
Dabhol	15000
Pune	13000
Nagoji Govind	10000
Javali	5000
Kalyan	5000
Bhivandi	5000
Indapur	5000
Supe	2000
Krishnaji Bhaskar	5000
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,25,000 hons</i>

²⁴² Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 21.

It must be noted here that a special condition was laid down that this reserve fund was not to be used, if money was available from other sources.

Preservation of Trees and Plantations: Amatya gives utmost importance to the preservation of trees in the fort. He says, ‘Trees on the fort should be protected. Jackfruit, tamarind, banyan, papal and other big trees as well as lemon, orange and other small trees should be well protected, similarly, flower trees, creeping plants, nay, all the significant and insignificant trees should be planted in forts and protected. In times of need all of them would serve as wood.’²⁴³

Elsewhere he states that the protection of fort depends upon the trees growing on belt of the hill.²⁴⁴ Therefore these trees should be allowed to grow thick. In emergency, soldiers and musketeers should be placed in the thicket.

While writing on sanitation, Amatya suggests that no rubbish should be allowed to fall on the roads, in the market and near the walls of the fort. With a warning not to throw the accumulated rubbish down the fort and by burning it in places, (when it is accumulated), and by putting the burnt ashes in the backyards, vegetables should be made to grow in every house.

Inspection: We learn from one contemporary letter that Shivaji had a plan to undertake the inspection of buildings on the forts in Lohagad jurisdiction.²⁴⁵ In his program the forts Rohida and Pandavgad were included. It seems that Shivaji frequently undertook the tours of inspection.

Shivaji’s instance on inspection has been well brought out in them⁹¹ Qalami Bakhar. It is mentioned that once Shivaji visited Mahad where Daod Khan, the official of Shivaji, expressed that as Shivaji ascended the throne, he now ought to repose in one place. At that time Shivaji replied, ‘No kingdom can be preserved long without constant touring and

²⁴³ Amatya, p. 72.

²⁴⁴ Amatya, p. 69.

²⁴⁵ Rajwade, Vol. VIII, p. 13.

attention. For watching over the peasantry, strengthening the forts, and putting down oppressors, it is necessary for the rulers to tour in his kingdom'.²⁴⁶

In the same Bakhar it is stated that Abaji Pant and Annaji Dutto were appointed to tour and inspect the forts. Their orders were to visit and inspect every fort and to report to Shivaji the strength of its fortifications and store of materials and food.²⁴⁷

Amatya provides instructions to officer in charge of fort about the arrangements to be made during the visit of the king. He says that the place should be smeared with cow dung and should be decorated with 'Rangoli'.²⁴⁸

At the time of Shivaji's death, his kingdom was defended by two hundred and forty strongholds and not one of them was held by a hereditary noble. Shivaji introduced a complicated system in his fort administration for which constant and vigilant supervision on the part of the king was required. It was unfortunate that Sambhaji, Rajaram and Shivaji II could not pay vital attention towards the administration of forts as they were constantly engaged in war with the Mughals.

During the time of Rajaram, the chief officers of the state become the custodians of the forts. During the time of Shahu, the things became worse. We learn from the contemporary records that Shahu allotted small funds towards the administration of forts²⁴⁹. In the year 1709, an account of only rupees 400 was allotted for Suvela and Sanjivani Machis of the Rajgad fort. For the Rohida fort an amount of Rs. 1200 was allotted whereas for the Prachandgad fort Rs. 3000 were allotted.²⁵⁰ These funds were too inadequate to meet the expenses of these once upon a time most important forts.

In his period, the chief officers of the state possess a number of forts. In 1710-11 Parashuram Pratinidhi was in charge of not less than 35 forts which covered the important forts like Vishalgad, Pratapgad, Chandan, Vandan, and Satara etc.

²⁴⁶ 91 *Qalami Bakhar* (Sarkar) quoted p. 74, 75.

²⁴⁷ 91 *Qalami Bakhar*, p. 74.

²⁴⁸ Amatya, p. 69.

²⁴⁹ Peshwa Diary No. 45.

²⁵⁰ Peshwa Diary No. 45.

As a matter of fact the importance of forts in warfare was rapidly declining in the 18th century. Further the theater of war were shifted from the Deccan to the North and hence little attention was paid to the administration and maintenance of forts.

CHAPTER 3: Socio-Economic Significance of Forts

The objectives, analysis of community life of the period can be made on the basis of available sources in a systematic way. The economic history of any period in Indian history cannot be examined without understanding of the social life perfectly. A network of responsible social system presented in the period. Hence a clear cut close analysis of interlock of social and economic life has been made in this chapter. A sharp analysis of the inter relationship between these two aspects has been explored here. In each period social system develops its own economic resources and professions suitable for the continuity of social system. The Maratha period was not exception to this theory. All these aspects which have been carefully studied here reveal different magnitudes of the period under discussion. In order to highlight these problems a new outlook has been developed in this research work for better understanding of the socio economic life is closely related to each other and they are inseparable from each other.

It is very important to understand various social aspects like caste, *Watan* (province), rituals and traditions in various eras in the Indian History. These aspects are the major units which provide stability to the contemporary social situation. We have to consider all these elements. In the contemporary Maharashtra, there prevailed several castes, hence, caste was the most important aspect of this era. An impact created by the caste on any person was very important in view of his family. This was the most important element to keep the family intact and combined its members. The tradition of joint family system prevailed in India from time immemorial. Due to tremendous dominance of caste on the society, marriages even in the sub-castes were prohibited. The impact was so that even the transactions with the other castes were barred in the contemporary society or liable for the punishment from the caste institution or the government. There was tremendous impact of the caste system on the society.

Similarly, the tradition of Sati also prevailed extensively in the society. This tradition was prevalent in the contemporary Brahmin, Maratha and other communities. During this era, we could see that not only wife, but also the concubines and maids

used to jump in the funeral pyre of their masters. Both Tavernier²⁵¹ and Fryer²⁵² had mentioned the prevalence of the practice of sati in Vengurla, a town near Savantvadi of the present Ratnagiri district. This Sati system and dowry system was more prevalent in the upper strata of the society. In some communities, the father of bride used to get lucrative sum from the father of the groom during marriage. This means that girl was purchased for marriage.

Shivaji treated women with great respect. His enemies too commanded his fairness in matters of women and religion. The highest testimony in this respect comes from Khafi Khan who writes-“he (Shivaji) made it a rule that wherever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God or the women of any one.....”²⁵³

Superstitions had major domination in the society. The people used to think that diseases like cholera, smallpox, plague were caused due to the anger of their village deity. The people used to conduct special rituals giving donations of money and animals to the priests to get rid of these epidemics. An annual fair was organised in the name of Goddess Kadak Laxmi, considered to be the Goddess of Smallpox, and collective prayers used to perform to protect the society from her anger. We find several such examples prevalent in the contemporary society during this medieval era. In Maharashtra, Bahiroba or Bharav, Mashoba, Khandoba, Durga, Bhawani, Shiv were the major village deities along with the most popular public deities were Vithoba of Pandharpur, Bhavanimata of Tuljapur, Mahalaxmi of Kolhapur and others. These deities had the greater impact on all the communities right from the Brahmins to the lower caste people.

In the rural economy, every village unit was important and the head of the village was called Patil. Under the Alutedari system, the Patil used to hire voluntary labour from the people of Mahar, Mang, Karagir and other castes. Under Alutedari and Balutedari systems, the rural economy was maintained through barter system. Similarly, the (*vethbega*) bounded labour system was also existed extensively in the society which was the forced labour from the people of the lower castes. They exploited the services of *vadvals* (a tribal community) and *anadis* (non- expert) cultivating the irrigated or non -

²⁵¹ Tavernier, *Travels*, p. 181.

²⁵² John Fryer, *New Accounts of the East*, Vol. II, p. 337.

²⁵³ Rawliknson and Patwardhan (ed.), *A Source book of Maratha History*, Bombay, 1921, p. 123.

irrigated land.²⁵⁴ This system was deep rooted in the Saranjamshahi provinces. The people of lower castes were given meagre monetary benefits in this system in lieu of physical labour. These labours were inflicted several atrocities by the upper caste people.

Despite extensive division in the society, Chhatrapati Shivaji had deployed people of every caste in his army. The people of Charwaha (Shepherds), Gujrathi Dhangar, Farmers, Katkari (weavers), Ramoshi, land labours and others were included in the army. They were imparted rigorous military trainings, enhancing their desire to struggle and show bravery in the battlefields. Chatrapati Shivaji had used people of every caste effectively in the task of Swaraj establishment and preservation. Shivaji instead of considering the caste factor used to give importance to the qualities and talents of the people. Due this policy, we find brave soldiers from the Shudra (lower caste communities executing several important expeditions for the Swaraj.)

The then existing rural economy was self-sufficient and had unity and organisational co-ordination amongst the villagers. The villages had their own administrative system to look after the needs of the villagers. The unit of the village include the people of various social groups at various strata. The administration in the rural areas was unified and systematic. The distance from one village to another was huge, which provided organisational unity to the villages. Every village had the same administrative situation. Chhatrapati Sambhaji continued the administrative system started by Chhatrapati Shivaji in the *Swaraj*. He never interfered in the administration of the villages and the society. He implemented the policy of equality with everyone and treated everyone with equality and equal justice. G. S. Sardesai says in this regard, there are several documents available referring the judiciary system and administration of the *Swaraj*. He used administered justice without any distinction and partiality. This implies his selfless devotion towards the *Swaraj* activities. He used to inquire everyone with the same affection and discuss the major issues with his subordinates and used to make plans of the administration along with his friend Kavi Kalash.²⁵⁵ Many such instances are referred in the contemporary official documents. Like his father Shivaji, Sambhaji

²⁵⁴ A. R. Kulkarni, *Medieval Maratha Country*, BOOKS & BOOKS Publishers, New Delhi, 1996, p. 180.

²⁵⁵ G. S. Sardesai, *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol. II, p. 117.

continued the work of granting awards and monetary benefits to the Ryot. The original inhabitants of the village were relieved of the paying revenue. These people were assigned the responsibility to maintain co-ordination in the villages. These people had to adopt professions according to their castes and also gained social status as per the caste. During the Maratha dominance, every person had to abide to the profession according to the caste. He was not allowed to do the work not assigned to his caste. Every caste has some or the other restrictions. Chhatrapati Shahu continued this traditional social system and did not try to bring innovative changes in this system.

From the sources available it could be seen that the rural standard of living was lower than urban standard of living. The traditional system of *balutedari* prevailed almost all over the area which assured a minimal subsistence to the *balutedars*. On the contrary, the *Zamindars* [*Deshmukhs and Deshpandes*] and *Inamdars* were enjoying a luxurious life and were regarded as rural aristocrats.

As stated above, the old system of village economy based on self- sufficiency and self – government continued even after the entry of the British traders and The East India Company. Famines i.e. shortage of food occurred frequently in the 17th century and due to absence of welfare state and economic backwardness, the standard of living of the common people deteriorated to the minimum level. However, there are some opponents to the concept of self-sufficient village economy of the medieval India who feel that the concept was a product of the theoretical and conceptual analysis emerged out of the imperialistic viewpoint of some scholars. The present study neglects this controversy and assumes the traditional concept of the self-sufficient village economy.

In the closed and agrarian rural economy of Western Maharashtra, even the main industries were based on agriculture. Weavers, oil- crushers, carpenters, potters, tailors, washer men, painters, religious preachers, fishermen, snake charmers, shepherds, singers, masons blacksmiths and goldsmiths were among the main occupations. It is reported that the occupation of goldsmiths was quite advanced as they specialized in making various types of ornaments during the 17th century. There was no separate mint for Maharashtra and the coins were made mainly by the gold-smith in those days.

In addition to land revenue and custom duties, a small income was derived from the mints. The Peshwas did not permit free coining but the goldsmith usually obtain license for mints,

under certain restrictions. That must have been the practice in the pre-Peshwa period also. We can see that all sorts of foreign currency are in circulation in Shivaji's kingdom. Sabhasad enumerates no less than 32 different kinds of gold coins and 6 different kinds of silver coins while giving accounts of Shivaji's treasures.²⁵⁶ Shivaji had his mint at Raigad. His first coins were not probably issued before 1674. Large number of copper coins were issued nearly 25,000 but very few gold coins were struck.²⁵⁷ Another mint is Chandor mint closed in 1830. Neither the land revenue, nor the income from the mints added so much to the treasury of Shivaji as the Chauth (25%) and Sardeshmukhi (10%). Even in peace times he depended more on his army than on his civil officers for his finances. He had to face the Mughals, Bijapuri Sultans, Siddis of Janjira, Portuguese of Goa and sometimes independent Maratha Chiefs.

To keep all the enemy at check, he had to organize an army to defend the newly acquired territory, to build new forts to protect his important passes and trade routes, he built a strong navy to prevent piracy at the western coast, and he had to buy arms and ammunitions needed for these works.

The weekly '*hats*' [bazaar] were organized and a village officer [*watandar*] called '*shete*'²⁵⁸ was in charge of administration of these. Another officer called '*bidwai*' was recognized as responsible for promoting local business and attracting outside traders towards the local market. With the rise of Maratha rule in the middle of 17th century, Shivaji was reported to be keen on promoting and encouraging trade and business activities in his region. He gave concessions to traders, levied tariffs, built permanent markets on the capital forts of Raigad and Rajgad.²⁵⁹ Jijabai issued an order in the year 1657 to establish a peth at Pasan and name it after her. Other peths are Malpura, Khelpura, Praspura, Vithapura etc. Obviously, his trade policy deserves praise considering the economic and political situation of those times.

It was strictly laid down that no soldier or military officer should have anything to do with the revenue collection of the country. And there was, in those days' anarchy and war,

²⁵⁶ Surendranath Sen, *Administrative system of the Marathas*, p. 107.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 109.

²⁵⁸ Shete: officers in charge of the market; also known as nagarshetes, A. R. Kulkarni, *Medieval Maratha Country*, BOOKS & BOOKS Publishers, New Delhi, 1996, p. 172.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 66.

hardly any officer who was not required to take up arms. In Sabhasad's account we find that "the balance of their dues (was paid by) 'varat' (orders) either on the Huzur (central government) or the district (establishments). In this manner their annual accounts punctually settled. Mokasa Mahals or villages with absolute rights should on no account be granted to the (men in the) army, militia and the garrison of the fort. Every payment should be made by 'varats' or with cash from the treasury. None but the Karkun had authority over the lands. All payments to the army, the militia, and the garrison, should be made by the Karkuns."²⁶⁰

3.1 Economic Condition

The major source of earning for a person in this era was agriculture. Most of the people were dependent on farming. For gaining more revenue from the agriculture, Shivaji introduced new land measuring system and assigned the task of maintaining and measuring the farmland to his minister Annaji Datto.²⁶¹ The revenue was collected in kind and not cash.

The farmers had to pay 33 per cent of the entire produce as revenue to the state. Apart from agriculture, the state has other means of revenue including the Cungi (octroi), excise, fine and forest resources. Before Shivaji, the previous rulers, the Bahamani emperors had only one policy to expand their empire in this Maratha country. They never adopted the policy to encourage investments or agriculture in their conquered areas.

In the contemporary official documents, the farmers have been referred to as Kunbi, Mujari, Ray and Ryot. Shivaji encouraged the ryot to cut the jungles and utilize the land for farming in his state. To encourage farming in the state, Shivaji provided, cattle, oxen, farming equipment's and other assistance to the farmers. Shivaji conquered whatever territories were brought in the main stream by preferring agriculture there. His policy include, 1) to convert infertile lands into fertile lands, 2) to measure all the land of the province and fix the revenue for it, and 3) providing security to the farm produce and the ryot. Generally, the tax was fixed for a year. On this basis, the

²⁶⁰ Surendranath Sen, *Siva Chhatrapati*, p. 33-34.

²⁶¹ Finance minister of Shivaji. A. R. Kulkarni, *Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji*, p. 152.

revenue of the state was fixed. Noted historian Jervis says about revenue system of the Marathas, Shivaji has fixed the revenue to half of the income of the land (Batai) which is the 50 per cent of the produce, however, he never recover that much kind. The land in possession was measured in the unit of Bigha and the revenue was fixed on that basis. Shivaji had issued the orders not to collect the revenue in cash but in kind.

There were several people assigned with the responsibilities to cater the need of the villages. In lieu of their services, they were provided the annual return in kind of crop. Accordingly, the daily needs of every person were fulfilled. This system of return was called Baluta system. There were several artisans in the village from whom daily need articles were manufactured. These articles include the agriculture equipment's, household articles and others. These artisans used to manufacture articles of highest quality during the era of Marathas. Their profession was on the verge of development which produced excellent quality of cloth, shela pagota (turban), jewellery and other artefacts. In the same period, the people in the western coasts, Konkan were engaged in the professions like salt manufacturing, ship building, smoaked fish, mango, cashew nuts, wooden artefacts, coconut rope and other occupations.

During the period of Shivaji the commercial situation was stable. Custom duties were levied on the imports and exports of goods at the custom houses or toll *nakas* located at various market places, at the towns situated on the boundaries or at the harbours.²⁶² The commercial activities initiated during the period of were continued with same stability till the era of Peshwas. During this period, the trade was linked with the other states. According to the agreements made with the British during the period of Shivaji and Sambhaji, *cungi* (octroi)²⁶³ was recovered from the British on export and import transactions. The policy of imposing octroi on British started from the period of Shivaji continued during the entire Maratha empire tenure. In this period, the British were involved in the Slave trade. Shivaji imposed three pagodas as tax on the sale of each slave. These activities helped the Maratha Empire to enhance the revenue of the state. Later, Sambhaji increased the tax from three pagodas to 12 pagodas on the sale of each

²⁶² K. N. Chitnis, *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India*, Atlantic Publishers Pvt. Limited, 2009, p. 319.

²⁶³ The alien merchants in addition to the usual rate paid a tax in kind, called the *cungi* per ox load. A. R. Kulkarni, *Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji*, p. 113.

slave. This not only increased the revenue in the state treasure, but also put restriction on this inhuman trade to some extent. Efforts were taken in the later period to stop the slave trade completely. During this period, the weekly markets were held at the major villages. In the markets, transactions of cloths, coconuts, cheese, betel leaves, betel nuts, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish and others. Crops were also sold extensively in the markets. The people from the nearby villages used to visit these villages to purchase articles of their need.

During the period of Shivaji, the commercial centres like Kalyan, Bhivandi, Rajapur, Dabhol, Vengurla, Pen and others were on the verge of development. The commercial activities were at the peak at these commercial centres. The harbours were also developed to carry the inter-country trades from here.

3.2 Important Urban Centers

During the period of Shivaji, there were a number of flourishing urban and trading centres. Chaul, Dabhol, Kalyan, Bhiwadi, Vengurla and Pen were the prosperous and populous centres. Factory records ascribe their prosperity to the commercial and industrial activities carried out over there, consistently. They invited various traders from different markets and places for carrying out these activities and increased affluence of them. Moreover, they were also ports and compared with the other ports of the country like Goa and Surat. Among other important urban centres Rajapur, Keleshi, Bandra and Mahim helped the East India Company a lot to develop her trade and commerce at the port, Mumbai. Thus, such and many other urban centres under the Marathas can be studied as under:-

Poona: It was the de facto capital during the period of Peshwas. Its development as urban centre was unlike many other centres in the country, because it was neither destined the commercial importance as Burhanpur. Surat nor had any imperial legacy like Delhi or Agra. It was the creation of only one family and the one person, the family was of the Peshwas and the person was the Peshwa Bajirao I. They converted Poona from a seat of jagir into a thriving city of the Marathas. It became a very important commercial and industrial city and the hub of the Maratha power.

It is said that originally Poona was a small village in the southern part of the present Kasba Peth, in which the temples like Ganpati and Kedareshwar were nestled with some rows of small, simple, unpretentious and beautiful houses. Although, it was a market place but being away from the river had not reached to the grandeur of the popular peth. It began to develop in the reign of Peshwa Bajirao I. Although, his career was a short period of twenty years, he tried his level best to develop this city as he was a matchless military leader of the Marathas. Bajirao, basically lived at Saswad in a rented house, from where he shifted to Poona for the convenience of the administration. He acquired five acres of land, which was occupied and resided by some fishermen and weavers.

In January 1730, Bajirao I began to construct his dream residence, which came to be known as Shaniwarwada.²⁶⁴ This was the real beginning of the development of Poona as an urban centre. It became a transit point for the traders from the various places, who brought very expensive merchandise to the city. It had a number of peths such as Ganesh, Ganj, Musafarjung, Shukrwar, Ravivar, Manglwar, Somwar, Shantwar, Budhwar, Nagesh, Vetal, Navi, Navapura, Bhavani, Hanamant, Shivpuri, Ghorpadi, Narasimha and Mastani.²⁶⁵ Poona was connected with several trading ports from where the traders brought horses, camels, furniture's and other commodities for sale to Poona. It was also connected with Ghats, Konkan, Burhanpur, Paithan, Vashim, Belapur and Khandesh. Elphinstone said that Poona became a flourishing commercial centre of one lakh ten thousand population and connected with the inter-provincial and the international trade. There were several custom houses functioning under the supervision of kamvisdars, which collected octroi from the export and import trade. Mallet, one of the English Residents at the court of Peshwas said that the expansion of Poona in length and width increased the trade relations with the English in Mumbai. The merchants of Junner Prants visited Poona often for sale and purchase of cloth, domestic goods, valuable articles, horses, bullocks and camels. These traders sold those articles and animals in other markets also. Thus, Poona was developed as an urban centre due to the leadership of Peshwas.

²⁶⁴ Shanivarwada Palace is the finest example of a Maratha *Gadi*. Please refer the appendix for the image of a typical *gadi*.

²⁶⁵ K. N. Chitnis, *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India*, p. 313.

Satara: It came to prominence and became an urban centre, when Chhatrapati Rajaram made it his capital city. It was built upon the slopes of hills of Satara, had several mansions and palaces of the royal family, It so happened that after the fall of Raigad, the capital city of Marathas in the fight with Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor in 1689, Rajaram shifted his capital to the far off Southern place known as Ginji, to enable him to keep the capital intact and continue the war of independence against the Mughal with double vigour. But in 1698, it was realised that the Maratha capital should be a centrally located place. This made Rajaram to select Satara as his capital city. This was the beginning of the development of Satara as an urban centre. Shahu, after his return from Agra, after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 assumed the throne of Marathas as king and began to rule the kingdom from this Satara. Shahu lived in Satara up to his last in 1749. He was only responsible for its development, construction of buildings, palaces, mansions and increasing the trade and commerce over there. It was open secret that as long as it was the capital city of Marathas, its importance, name and fame was heightened day by day but when the capital was shifted to Poona after the death of Rajaram in 1749, the popularity of this urban centre began to decline. Because, Poona being centrally located, proved utmost useful for administration. Thus, Satara although, lost its political glamour due to transfer of capital, it continued its status as an urban centre under the Marathas.

Chaul: This was one more urban centre during the time of Marathas. It was known popularly as Murtazabad. It was located in the present Alibag *taluka*²⁶⁶ of Raigad district and became a flourishing trade centre in the region. Chaul, a thickly populated urban centre, came into Chhatrapati Shivaji's hands after 1670.²⁶⁷ Dr Fryer visited Chaul twice in 1672 and 1675 writes, "Upper Chaul a town belonging to the Rajah, about two miles distant from the Portugal city, and was in former times a great mart of all sorts of Duccan commodities, but totally ruined by the late wars between the Moghul and Seva Gi."²⁶⁸ Because the wars between Shivaji and the Mughal ravaged it and whatever was spared from the above wars ruined in the accidental fire which took place in 1674. It is said that

²⁶⁶ Taluka is a sub-division of a district.

²⁶⁷ *English records on Shivaji*, Vol. I, P. 277, 307, 315, 352.

²⁶⁸ John Fryer, Vol. I p. 198-99.

around three thousand houses were gutted in fire, which forced the inhabitants to move to safer places like Mumbai, Karanja and Thane.

Among the articles in trade at Chaul were Indigo, horses, opium and silk. It produced so much silk cloth that was enough to meet the needs of Goa and surrounding area people. The silk produced at Chaul was of better quality cloth than it was produced in China and Bengal. Chaul also was involved in the business import and export of European articles to various marketplaces. Along with silk weavers at Chaul manufactured various boxes, carved articles, commodities of lacquer and taffetas. Although, the artisans were quite happy and remunerated appropriately they began to leave this city after 1668 and settled in Mumbai due to the apprehension of the Mughal onslaught. Even then the importance of the place sustained as usual. Thus, Chaul was one of the urban centres under the Marathas.

Kalyan: Kalyan was another populous city of the 17th century where goods from all ‘Indostan, Golkunda and Coramandel’ poured in.²⁶⁹ But when Fryer visited Kalyan in 1675, he found this chief “emporium of the trade which once excelled in trade and sumptuousness” practically in a state of decadence.²⁷⁰ and said that Kalyan was the emporium of all valuable goods brought from various places. Kalyan was the key to the British territory, it was the magnificent urban centre which excelled in all kinds of trade, and it was also a centre of growing timber in large quantity to be used to construct houses, ships. The Company, Government in Mumbai needed timber for making carriers to be used to mound guns and other weapons. Kalyan was the cheapest and convenient source of timber for them. Sabhasad says that Shivaji after conquering Kalyan in 1670, began to construct ships for his naval force like Gurab, Galbats Sibans, Trandes, Tarus and Pagars. The ship building industry of the king at Kalyan thrived very much for which the timber production in this belt was responsible. Factory records say that the timber of Kalyan was popularly known as the oak of India. Thus, these industries, its central locality and availability of almost all commodities led to be one of the urban centers of the Maratha period. Shivaji captured Kalyan in October 1657.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ *English Records on Shivaji*, Vol. I, p. 96.

²⁷⁰ John Fryer, *New Account of the East*, Vol. I, p. 308-9.

²⁷¹ R. S. Sharma, *Maratha History- Re examined*, p. 208.

Dabhol: This was another urban centre of the Marathas. In 1662 Chhatrapati Shivaji possessed the centre, and began to use it for trade between the territories of Marathas and the East India Company at Mumbai. It is said that the centre was the most magnificent and thickly populated maritime port in the Kokan region. It had very spacious building, stately houses. Popular and superb temples as well as mosques. It was the halting place for ships plied for far off places like Malabar. Combay, Surat, Goa and Persia and the place for loading and unloading the commodities brought from other centres.

Factory records say that Dabhol was a very busy urban and trading centre, which used to get a number of great caravans of bullocks loaded with goods from interior parts of the region every day. It was very essential centre for the trade of the Company which supplied almost all commodities cheaper than the popular trading centres like Surat and Burhanpur. Dabhol supplied a number of articles to the Company like pepper, sticklack, seedlack dungarees, percollas, several other coarse cloth at cheaper rate than Surat,²⁷² which the East India Companies exported to England and other countries of Europe. Dabhol also traded with Malabar and Cambay.²⁷³ Although, Dabhol was a prosperous urban centre in the Seventeenth century, it became a deserted place in the first half of the Eighteenth century. It attracted the attention of several buccaneers and led to a political crisis. In 1744, Tulaji Angre controlled the centre for some years and consequently, in 1755 Peshwas took over the port and retained till the end of the Marathas. Thus, the centre rejuvenated and resumed the past glory under the Peshwas.

Rajapur: was one of the biggest urban trading centres of the western Maharashtra. It was nestled in a beautiful and natural scenario and was one of the prosperous and popular places of Ratnagiri district in 1312. In 1660, Henry Revington, a British factor in collaboration with Rustom Zaman of Bijapur developed the Company trade at and around Rajapur. Naturally, it became a focal point to French, Arab, Dutch and Persian traders. Revington says that Rajapur was a flourished trading and commercial centre for 'saltpetre, pepper, calicoes, cotton yarn in the near future'.²⁷⁴ In 1672, Carre visited Rajapur and found that "it is inhabited by Moors, Hindus, and some strangers engaged in

²⁷² K. N. Chitnis, *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India*, p. 299.

²⁷³ *English records on Shivaji*, Vol. I, p. 352.

²⁷⁴ *English records on Shivaji*, Vol. II, p. 115.

commerce. It has also some rich merchants whose ships trade in the Red sea, in Persia at Basra and with the whole of India".²⁷⁵ It is said that the British Factors at Rajapur began to help the enemies of Shivaji which forced Shivaji to attack the Factors over there to teach them a lesson. Finally, the activities of the East India Company led herself to close down the factory in 1682. Later, in 1713 Angre controlled Rajapur and enhanced its trade and commerce. In the first decade of eighteenth century, Hamilton landed in the port of Rajapur and found that the English and French factories were working over there. There was a political turmoil over Rajapur between the period 1720 and 1734. But the centre began to flourish as usual under the attention of Chhatrapati Shahu, who permitted Arabs and other traders to trade their commodities. Bhave says that due to the encouragement of Peshwas, Rajapur became the trading centre of horses, various cloths, calicoes and salt which were also exported to Mumbai and other parts of the world. Thus, Rajapur proved one of the excellent urban and trading centres of Marathas.

Vengurla: In addition to the above urban centres, Vengurla also was prosperous trading port during the period of Marathas. Along with other Europeans, the Dutch had also established their factory and began to explore and exploit the trade and commerce over there. Vengurla was a populous and busy trading centre of interior and international commodities. Due to its feasibility and convenience in trade, it became a junction of trading ships for Batavia, Japan, Ceylon, Persia, Basra and the Red sea.²⁷⁶ It became the major port for loading and unloading the trading ships in the whole region, naturally, it attracted the attention of neighbouring people to move in and involved themselves in various urban activities.

Bassein: This was one more urban centre under the Marathas. Bassein was very much accessible for trade and commerce from Salsset or Sasti. Bhave says that the merchants and traders began to rush to Bassein, the moment they came to know that it was possessed by the Marathas. The Peshwas encouraged them to settle down at Bassein and increase trade and commerce in the area. Hove also visited Bassein and came to know that it was the trading centre of sugar, rice, salt and fruits, which were sent to Mumbai. The Peshwas,

²⁷⁵ Abbe Carre, *the Travels of Abbe Carre in India and the Near East*, (1672-74), ed. Fawcett, Vol. I, London, 1947-48, p. 20.

²⁷⁶ Bombay Gazeetter, Vol. X, p. 175.

in order to prosper Bassein exempted traders from octroi duties and allotted houses to those who were unable to purchase them. Thus, Bassein became one of the urban centres of the Marathas

Roha: Among all other urban centres, Roha was also a centre linked with many villages and neighbouring centres like Revdanda and Nagothana. This urban centre was popular in the eighteenth century for trading commodities as salt, coconuts, rice, jaggery, wheat, nagali, wood, oil, tobacco, cloth and salty water fish. It was also a famous port for loading and unloading goods to be exported and imported. It is said that the articles imported to this port were turmeric, tobacco, onion, dried dates, sugar, ghee and lac and were sent to various interior parts. There was also a considerable trade of good quality horses brought from West Asia and Persia.

Nagothana: Another port and urban centre, which came to prominence was Nagothana. This was very well connected with other urban centres like Pen, Panvel, Roha, Chaul and Karanja and worked as the transit point between Ghat area and the Konkan region. It exchanged the commodities of both these regions to each other. Nagothana came to popularity due to its trade in rice and spices. In 1743 salt pans in Nagothana of Prant Chaul were ordered to be taxed at the rate of one *takka* per salt-pan.²⁷⁷ It sent rice to Mumbai through the ports of Reva, Alibag and Mora. Naturally, several supplementary avocations had come into existence. Nagothana and Pen had great importance as the places of trade from where Bombay had the greatest supplies of all sorts of commodities.²⁷⁸

In addition to the above centres, there were some semi-urban places popular for a numberable activities as port Sangmeshwar, Agashi, Pen, Panvel, Solapur, Pandharpur, Junner, Kolhapur, Bankot, Mahad, Aste, Chiplun and Kelesi. Trade and commerce also took place there and the commodities were sold much cheaper than Surat.

During the period between 1680 and 1707, the economic conditions were relied on various aspects. The most important of which was the agriculture. It was the most important source of income. Apart, there were several trades and businesses. International trade was also the source of income and many trade centres and harbours were established for the development of the trade.

²⁷⁷ K. N. Chitnis, *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India*, p. 231.

²⁷⁸ *English records on Shivaji*, Vol. I, p. 302.

Whenever a famine or any other calamity occurred, it caused socio-economic disruption that changed the socio-economic positions of people, which included Balutedars also. Calamity resulted in devastating effects for agriculture, industry, trade, lives and it caused starvation, deaths of animals including cattle, migrations etc.

W. H. Moreland viewed famine of 1629-30 as the deadliest famine of 17th century that affected mostly Gujarat and Maharashtra. He revealed that this famine caused scarcity of food due to the failure of rains, it caused the break-up of family life because people had to roam alone from one place to another in search of food and shelter, it resulted in a loss of agricultural capital, aimless strolling, volunteer enslavement, deaths from starvation and suicides, cannibalism etc. He stated that after few years, industry and commerce returned to normalcy but the level of skills of artisans dropped significantly because this famine also caused the deaths of skilled artisans (Balutedars).²⁷⁹ Moreland described the impacts of famine in Gujarat and in Deccan as well but he mostly focused over Gujarat because he did not get the reliable records for Maharashtra but A. R. Kulkarni stated that the impacts of the famine of 1629-30 were the same in Gujarat and Maharashtra.²⁸⁰ Moreland concluded, “The Deccan therefore, remained impoverished for at any rate a generation.”²⁸¹ It caused the deaths of expert peasants and skilled artisans which wrecked agrarian and industrial economy in Maharashtra as these economies were based upon the articles made by Balutedars, and their deaths directly affected the agriculture and industry.

The effects of this famine in Maharashtra forced even contemporary poets and saints such as *Parmanand*, *Ramdas* and *Tukaram* to describe the devastation that occurred due to this famine. For instance, *Sivabharat* described the effects of famine in poetic exaggeration. He wrote, “The failure of rains caused the prices of food grains to mount high up while that of gold declined immensely. Rich people could get with difficulty two pounds of *Kulith* (a low type of pulse generally given to cattle) for 24 *tolas* of gold. The shortage of food in

²⁷⁹W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Macmillan, London, 1923, p. 212-217.

²⁸⁰A.R. Kulkarni, *Maharashtra in The Age of Shivaji: A Study in Economic History*, Revised 2nd Edition, Prabha Prakashan, Pune, 2002, p. 94.

²⁸¹Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 218.

some cases resulted in cannibalism.” Like *Sivabhat*, saint *Ramdas* wrote about the miserable conditions that occurred due to the famine.

He wrote:

“Tathapi marg chi chaalena bhiksha maagta milena

Avghe bhikaarich jana kaaye mhanaave

Bahusaal Kalpant Lokaansi aala

Maharge bahu dhadi keli janaala

Kiti yek mratyaasi te yogya aale

Kiti yek te desh tyaguni gele

Kiti yek graame chi te vos jaali

Pikey sarv dhaanye ch nana budali

Jan budaale budaale potevin gele

Bahu kashtle kashtle kiti yek mele”

It means everyone transformed into beggars, villages got depopulated as many people died due to starvation and others had to leave their villages in search of food and shelter and mostly people died. Ramdas estimated that only 5 percent of the total population survived.²⁸²

In fact, it is said that Tukaram became a saint as he lost everything including family, cattle and wealth in the famine. Even due to the perennial scarcity of food, his wife died of starvation. He belonged to a Mahajan family but he converted into an insolvent due to famine.²⁸³

²⁸²Kulkarni, *Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji*, p. 95. For more information regarding the writings of Parmanand and Ramdas on the effects of famine, see, pp. 102-104 of this book.

²⁸³*Ibid.* p. 96.

Therefore, in his writing the devastating effects of famine of 1629-30 can be seen. He wrote that:

“Sawansare jahalo ati dukhe dukhi

Mayabapa seknhi kramiliya

Dushkale aathile dravya nela maan

Stri eki anna anna karita meli

Lajja vate jeeva trasalo ya dukhe vevsaye dekhe tuti yeta

Bare jhale deva neeghale deevale

Bari ya dushkale peeda keli

Anutape tujhe rahile chintan

Jhala ha vaman sansaar

Bare jhale deva baail karkasha

Bari he durdasha janaamadhya”

It means due to the famine everywhere there is nothing but grief, the famine has shattered all the wealth, women died for want of a single penny, there is no work, it has ashamed the very existence of humankind, the crop has failed utterly, what can I offer you God, this famine has brought great grief.²⁸⁴ The reality was grave-people including children and women were in misery and in order to stay alive they were ready for any work however low. Some of them threw themselves in rivers, some self-immolated and others poisoned themselves. People had to sell their utensils, cattle, clothes, ornaments at any rates. This famine while resulting in a high human death toll also caused the deaths of animals including cattle due to lack of fodder. This famine caused the decline of trade and industry that further compounded the misery conditions of artisans and merchants.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴For more information about the writing of Tukaram on the effects of famine, see Kulkarni, *Maharashtra in The Age of Shivaji*, p. 104.

²⁸⁵*Ibid.* p. 96.

Apart from the writings of poets and saints, there are contemporary family papers that also demonstrate the same picture of the impacts of famine; people were selling their perquisites, watan, houses at any rate, leaving their ancestral villages, and migrating to other places for food and shelter. For instance, a Kulkarni sold his office at 20 *hons* only for saving himself from starvation. A priest had to sell his privileges of three villages for 14 *hons* only. A village Patil sold his office and left the village. People were ready for selling their immovable property but no one was ready to purchase. If this was the condition of village officials, then what would have been the conditions of Balutedars? Besides family papers, factory records described the effects of this famine. For instance, a factory record revealed, “The whole land between Gujarat and Golkonda had become one vast charnel house. The times were so miserable that never in the memory of man any like famine and mortality happened.”²⁸⁶ Decline of agriculture and industry reveals the spoiled socio-economic positions of Balutedars. For instance, the grandfather of Jakhoji and Yamaji Nhavis had to leave the Nhavi watan of Chinchodi village in Tarf Sirale in Pargana Newase due to the famine that destroyed their grandfather’s socio-economic status completely like others in the village of Chinchodi. The grandfather and father of Jakhoji and Yamaji had to wander in search of food, occupation and shelter; they became beggars and they could not go back to Chinchodi. The watan given to Balutedars was generally hereditary but when Jakhoji and Yamaji Nhavi returned to Chinchodi in 1749-50, the Nhavi watan of their grandfather had been granted to someone else by the Patil. When they claimed for their watan, the Patil of the respective village shooed them off. However, after approaching the Peshwa their watan was returned to them but for a long time they also had to suffer a lot like their father and grandfather.²⁸⁷ Thus, the famine spoiled the socio-economic life and positions of Balutedars as the industry and agriculture failed.

It reveals that the occupations of Balutedars and state treasury both were based upon the industry and agriculture and failure of them due to famine eliminated their occupations and discontinued their allowances. The state also started assisting Balutedars such as Mahars during the time of drought and famine by providing food, shelter and money so that they

²⁸⁶*Ibid.* p. 96-97.

²⁸⁷*Selections from the Satara Rajas’ and the Peshwas’ Diaries*, Vol. 2 No. 2, prepared by G. C. Vad, ed. D. B. Parasnis, Deccan Vernacular Translation Society, Poona, 1906, Letter No. 16, p. 9.

could not migrate because besides the detraction of their socio-economic positions, their migrations reduced the agrarian and industrial economy of the village also.²⁸⁸ Thus, it was general that famine destroyed the agrarian and industrial economy which in turn spoiled the socio-economic positions of Balutedars as the decline of agriculture and industry resulted in the decline of requirements of their services in the villages. This further led to migration in other places that again affected their socio-economic positions.

Moreover famines, the floods also caused socio-economic disturbances in the lives of villagers. Whenever a flood occurred, it affected the agriculture, markets, cattle, humans etc. that caused socio-economic changes. In fact, sometimes people had to migrate and settle in other places till the time of restoration. For instance, in 1787-88 the wall of village Wari in Pargana Kumbhari was washed away from three sides by the flood of Godavari. Wari village was conferred 1000 Rupees for its repair by the state.²⁸⁹ It reveals the insolvent position of the economy of a village that was based upon agriculture and industry. It affected the socio-economic positions of each community, which was related to agriculture and industry.

Apart from calamities, other events like raids, plundering etc. caused socio-economical movements. People had to leave their village and watan due to continuous disturbances and had to settle in different places that affected their socio-economic positions. It also caused spatial mobility as they had to change their dwelling and occupational spaces. The effects of the disturbances were so widespread that even the travelers of contemporary period were forced to write about it. For instance, French traveler *Abbe Carre* visited many villages and wrote, “All the inhabitants (of a village called Panga-tera, which must have been in the neighbourhood of Dasgav, and on the river *Savitri*, Kolaba District) had fled to the neighbouring mountains with their families and cattle, as everyone along this river was in terror of the *Siddi's* people”, who used to come with many armed boats and loot the villages. It affected the socio-economic positions of residents. Therefore, people had to leave their village and settle in other places. Apart from Pang-tera village, Abbe Carre

²⁸⁸T. N. Atre, *Gavgada*, editor. D.D. Punde, Rajhans Prakashan, Pune, New Addition, 2015, pp. 196-202.

²⁸⁹*Selections from the Satara Rajas' and the Peshwas' Diaries*, Vol. 3 No. 8, Prepared by G.C. Vad, ed. K. B. Marathe, Deccan Vernacular Translation Society, Poona, 1911, Letter No. 1055, p. 216.

mentioned another village called Khed in Ratnagiri district that was facing the same problems. The inhabitants of this village had escaped into forests and mountains to save themselves from the terror of *Siddhis*.²⁹⁰ These two instances reveal the extent to which the plundering and raids of *Siddhis* disturbed the socio-economic positions of residents of respective villages and their migration degraded their socio-economic positions more as they were the newcomers in new places, which affected their occupation and social relations.

Like *Sidhis*, *Bhils*, *Gosavis* and Balaji Matkar used to plunder the Parganas of Dhargaum, Kasarabad and Mandalaeshwar in 1764-1765 that caused changes in the socio-economic positions of residents of these places.²⁹¹ Besides, in 1769-70 Ditya Bhil burnt 5 villages and caused disturbances in other neighboring villages that degraded the socio-economic positions of inhabitants.²⁹² Similarly in south of Pune Ramoshis a community of thieves and plunderers used to plunder the country that spoiled the socio-economic positions of inhabitants.²⁹³

The continuous plundering activities of the Portuguese, many Jewelers had to migrate especially at Karwar and Sunkeri to avoid the plundering.²⁹⁴ It reduced their socio-economic positions as they left their houses and watans and settled at Karwar and Sunkeri where they were the newcomers which affected their occupation and social relations. Their migration also affected the socio-economic positions of those people who were living at Karwar and Sunkheri as it led to depletion of limited resources.

Each Maratha fort had watchtowers that belonged to specific castes; no person could work over the watchtower that belonged to someone else's caste. It was a hereditary service. For instance, in Purandar fort one tower belonged to a Mahar whose name was Alang Parwari Mahar only his family was supposed to work over that tower. The persons who were

²⁹⁰Abbe Carre, *the Travels of the Abbe Carre in India and the Near East: 1672-74*, Vol. 1, ed. Charles Fawcett, London, 1947-48, pp. 196-197.

²⁹¹*Selections from the Satara Rajas' and the Peshwas' Diaries*, Vol. 1 No. 9, Prepared by G. C. Vad, ed. K. N. Sane, The Deccan Vernacular Translation Society, Poona, 1911, Letter No. 325, p. 298.

²⁹²*Ibid.* Letter No. 331, p. 302.

²⁹³Elphinstone, *Report*, p. 2.

²⁹⁴Anuradha K. Ranade, *Socio-Economic Life of Maharashtra (1100-1600 A.D.)*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2009, p. 133.

employed at watchtowers were given salary from fort treasury. It uplifted the socio-economic positions of Alang Parwari Mahar as he had hereditary employment in fort that made his social position better than those Mahars who were serving village and it decreased his dependency over villagers and it provided him and his family better social spaces. In addition to, the services of each person who worked in the fort were significant and were necessarily required but the services of those persons who contributed in fort administration including prison administration like making fetters and iron chains for tying the prisoners were considered higher and more respectable. Therefore, the person who manufactured fetters, chains and iron artillery for the fort and prisons was given house in the fort and status of professionals known as '*Chakar-Manyā*'. Generally, the fetters and chains were made by the Lohars. For instance, in Purander fort there were thirty houses of which one house was conferred to a Lohar whose name was Ambaji Lohar as his services were required in prison administration and fort artillery. Therefore, he was given the status of professionals known as "Chakar-Manyā". It uplifted the socio-economic status of Ambaji Lohar as he was given one house of 30 houses that reveals the exalted status of Ambaji Lohar.²⁹⁵ His socio-economic positions were better than village Lohars and even other Balutedars and it provided him better social spaces.

In forts, the work of construction was perennial, therefore, services of '*mazdoor*' or manual workers were always required in the forts. In villages the work of lifting stones, making mud mortar (*chikhal*) for affixing stones or bricks, lifting garbage and cleaning chamfer and groove were considered very low and were associated with specific castes that became the cause of socio-economic degradation of those castes which had to practice these works. For instance, only female-Mahars and their children were obliged to lift the stones in building construction and in fact, only Mahars were compelled to prepare the paste or mud mortar (Chikhal) that was used for affixing stones or bricks. In fact, in forts and in villages only Mahars used to be compelled to lift the garbage and to clean the groove and chamfer. These Mahars were known as Mahar *Naak* such as Vithnaak and Raghnaak were the Mahars who cleaned chamfer and groove and lifted garbage in Purander fort.²⁹⁶ State also

²⁹⁵*Quarterly*, Vol. 9 No. 1, Bharat Itihasa Sanshodhaka Mandala, Pune, pp. 32-36.

²⁹⁶*Ibid.* pp. 32-36.

got these works done by those persons who were socially obliged to do such works due to their low caste status. State did it because state controlled and stabilized the caste-based practices,²⁹⁷ which abased their social positions more.

²⁹⁷Hiroshi Fukazawa, *The Medieval Deccan Peasants, Social Systems and States sixteenth to eighteenth century*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998, p. 107.

Table 3.1: Athara (Eighteen) Karkhanas

Khajina	Cash
Jawahirkhana	Jewel stones
Ambarkhana	Granary
Sharbat Khana	Medicines
Toph khana	Artillery
Daftar khana	Record department
Jamdar khana	Public treasury
Jirat khana	Corn depot or armoury
Mutbak khana	Kitchen
Ushtar khana	Camels and their trappings
Nagar khana	Band
Talim khana	Gymnasium
Pil khana	Elephant shades
Faras khana	Carpets, tents and accessories
Abdar khana	Drinks
Shikar khana	Games, aviary, chase and allied materials
Daru khana	Magazines
Shahat khana	Conservancy department

Table 3.2 : Bara (Twelve) Mahals

Pote	Treasury
Saudagir	Merchandise
Palkhi	Palanquins
Kothi	Warehouse, granaries
Imarat	Buildings
Bahili	Chariots
Paga	Stables
Seri	Comforts
Daruni	The Zenana
Thatti	Cow sheds
Tanksal	Mints
Sabina	Guards

3.3 Ports and Trading Centres

In the same period, Maharashtra was slowly becoming open for the European traders and merchants. The Portuguese, Dutch, Arabs, Iranis, Danish, French, Armenians, and the British traders had established their fortifications on the west coast of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The main trading centres in the region were Chaul, Dabhol, Kalyan, Bhivandi, Vengurla, Pen, Dahanu, Tarapur, Kelve, Mahim, Agashi, Vasai, Bandre, Nagothane, Shrivardhan, Jaitapur, Rajapur, Kharepatan etc. located on the west coast of Maharashtra. Among these, the port of Dabhol which was located at an important place, carried a large amount of trade with Bombay port. Kalyan, a populated town near Bombay also was recognized as an important place. Fryer, [1675] a European traveller mentioned earlier called it as 'the key from Bombay into that rebel's [Shivaji] country.' Bhivandi near Kalyan was famous for its weaving activity from the ancient period. However, along with the other weaving centres, it gradually faced a decline in its production due to the rise in imports of British machine-made cloth. It is reported that the British traders requested the weavers in Bhivandi to migrate to newly developed Bombay island to carry on their activity. But, the native weavers rejected the offer. Their stagnancy and inability to take advantage of the changing situations could be stated among the main causes for the decline in the traditional weaving sector.

From the list of main trading centres given above, it could be clearly stated that the *Konkan* region was the backbone of the state of Maharashtra as the foreign trade developed along the ports. It was an area of attraction to the trading community because of its proximity to the sea, and mountain passes which made the inland, coastal and overseas trade possible.²⁹⁸ The Konkan region is divided into two parts: north Konkan and south Konkan. The main business of *Konkan* was salt-making because production of salt on the sea-shores of *Konkan* was comparatively cheaper and salt was exported in a large quantity. Shivaji recognized the importance of salt trade and decided to give protection to the industry. There are several salt-pans in Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri districts of Konkan. Pen, Panvel, Nagothane, Revadanda Thana were the chief salt manufacturing centres of the Maratha kingdom. Shivaji had maintained an

²⁹⁸ A. R. Kulkarni, *Maharashtra: Society and Culture*, Diamond Publications, Pune, 2008, p. 136.

independent fleet for the transport of salt from Konkan, which was mainly sold in the Desh areas.²⁹⁹ This proves him as a pioneer in practicing protection policy in the international trade in the year 1671.³⁰⁰ The important trading items in the internal trade were- jaggery (*gud*), raw sugar, turmeric, sandal wood, copra and coconut, clarified butter (ghee), honey food items – wheat, pulses, rice, maize, millet, sesame, spices, onions, tamarind, and opium. Fruits –water melons, jack fruit, sugarcane, lemon, banana, mango, pineapple, cashew nuts, betel nuts, milk, butter, meat etc. Other items – utensils, ropes, paper, small boats, domestic animals [bulls, cows, buffalos, goats, horses etc.

3.4 Maratha Navy

Ramchandrapant Amatya says:

“Navy is an independent limb of the state. Just as the king’s fame for success on land is in proportion to the strength of his cavalry, so the mastery of the sea is in the hands of him who possesses the navy. Therefore a navy should necessarily be built.”³⁰¹

After the acquisition of the coastal towns of Kalyan, Bhiwandi³⁰² and Panvel, Shivaji envisioned navy that will take on the navies of Bijapur and the Mughals, and also facilitate his foreign trade. For the same, some Portuguese ship builders helped him (probably secretly, fearing the wrath of the Siddi, the Bijapuri admiral and the Mughals). Though Shivaji officially maintained that it was to be used ostensibly against the Siddi, he secretly desired to reduce the influence of the Mughals, the Portuguese and the English, who had encamped in the coastal areas, and on the basis of their power full navy, they controlled the trade of the Arabian Sea. But since the naval technology was only available with these European powers, he didn’t want to antagonize them also.

²⁹⁹ A. R. Kulkarni, *Medieval Maratha Country*, BOOKS & BOOKS Publishers, New Delhi, 1996, p. 132.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 132.

³⁰¹ Ramchandrapant Amatya, *Ajanapatra*, p. 373.

³⁰² Shivaji captured Kalyan and Bhiwandi in October 1657. R. S. Sharma, *Maratha History- Re examined*, p. 208.

The legendary Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji, was the founding father of the naval arm of the Maratha Armed forces. In medieval India, the Muslim Rulers (such as Deccan Sultanates and Mughal Empire) mostly ignored the naval arm of their militaries, probably the reason was that they came from North and won decisively in land battles. This scenario however changed when the Portuguese arrived in India and started monopolizing and controlling trade on the western coast of India. Chhatrapati Shivaji realized the importance of a strong navy and the first keel of the Maratha naval vessel was laid down in a creek near Kalyan circa 1654.

‘On that account the Raje fitted out ships in the sea.’ He also fortified some submarine rocks and built strongholds in the sea. ‘Uniting ships with forts, the Raje saddled the sea.’³⁰³ ‘In this manner 700 ships were out in the sea.’³⁰⁴

Shivaji took up the task of constructing multiple naval bases across the coast of present-day Maharashtra. The Maratha navy was formed into two squadrons of 200 vessels each and commanded by two admirals- Darya Sarang and Mai Nayak.³⁰⁵ The Maratha Navy consisted mostly of the native Konkani sailors, however it was commanded mostly by mercenaries including Siddis and Portuguese. Circa 1659, the Maratha Navy consisted of around 20 warships. Hiring mercenaries was something not uncommon to the Maratha military culture and the Navy was not an exception to it. Shivaji hired a Portuguese naval officer named Rui Leita Viegas to command his fleet; the Marathas wanted to get an insight into the Portuguese naval technology and capabilities. Probably that was the reason of employing Portuguese officers; further, the Marathas were fully aware of the Portuguese naval capabilities. It is worth mentioning that the Portuguese managed to convince their mercenary officers to discontinue the service of the Marathas, however the Portuguese allied with the Marathas when the latter were engaged in a war with the Mughals.

The Battle of Surat of 1664 was a well-coordinated one, whereby the Marathas utilized their Army as well as Navy in synchronized fashion. In 1679, Shivaji annexed the island

³⁰³ Surendranath Sen, *Siva Chhatrapati*, p. 89-95.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 89-95.

³⁰⁵ Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times*, p. 252-254.

of Khanderi, which was 11 miles off the entrance to Mumbai. In response the English and the Siddis repeatedly attacked the island but were unable to oust the Marathas from the islands. It was a stark reminder for the British, the Portuguese, and the Mughals that Shivaji was not only powerful on land, but was equally powerful at sea.

In 1674, during Shivaji's coronation, the Portuguese at Goa noted and acknowledged the Maratha Naval power and sent their emissary to Shivaji with gifts and signed a treaty of friendship. The Maratha navy contained five types of fighting ships. Of these the most important were the Ghurab and the Gallivat, but we also read about Pals, Shibars and Manjhusas of war.³⁰⁶ Around the same time, the Maratha Navy's strength was around 5,000 men and 57 warships. During its expedition to Karwar (present-day Karnataka), the navy possessed around 85 assorted Gallivats (war boat) ranging from 30 to 150 tons and 3 three-masted Gurabs/Grabs (warship).

Kanhoji Angre

After the death of Admiral Sidhoji Gujar in 1698, the Maratha Navy was able to survive only because of the extensive efforts of Kanhoji Angre. Under this new chief of Maratha Navy, the British naval power was checked along the western coast of India. Admiral Kanhoji Angre owed allegiance to the then supreme Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shahu and his first minister Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath and managed to get their green light for building a naval presence on the western coast of India - Konkan. Under the leadership of Kanhoji, the Marathas developed naval base at Vijayadurg featuring dockyard facilities for building vessels, mounting guns, and making them sea-worthy. Similar to an earlier treaty, even during the reign of Kanhoji Angre, the Maratha Government signed a treaty of friendship with the Portuguese in 1703. As per the treaty, the Portuguese agreed to supply cannon and gunpowder to the Marathas, something which Marathas had shortage of, considering that they had only a few cannon foundries. The Marathas signed a treaty with the Siddis as well, thus concentrating all their forces against the English East India Company.

³⁰⁶ Surendranath Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, 158.

By the beginning of the 18th century, Kanhoji Angre controlled the entire coastline from Sawantwadi to Mumbai, which is the entire coastline of present-day Maharashtra. He built fortifications on almost all creeks, cove, and harbour, such as fortress or citadel with navigational facilities. Any ship sailing through Maratha territorial waters was to pay a levy called Chauth, displaying Angre's dominance. Between 1717 and 1720, the British made at least two attempts to defeat and destabilize the Maratha Navy, but were unsuccessful. In response to a British ship being captured by Kanhoji's seamen, the British attacked Vijayadurg and Khanderi, however were not successful. The Maratha Navy repeatedly proved its strength against foreign powers. Till his death in 1729, Angre remained undefeated, despite repeated attempts by British and Portuguese.

It was, however, no easy task and Kanhoji had to contend against no less than five rivals, the Siddi of Janjira, the Savants of Wari, the English of Bombay, the Dutch at Vengurla and last but not the least the Portuguese at Goa.³⁰⁷

Maratha chronicles speak of Shivajis fleet having 700 vessels of various sizes and classes like Ghurabs (gun boats), Tarandis (large sailing vessels), Tarambes, Gallivats, Shibars (large vessel with two masts but no deck), Pagars (canoe), Manchwuas (large cargo boat with a single mast). English reports puts the figure between 60-160. (Barring ghurabs and gallivats, rest were used for mercantile purposes). Shivajis navy used to accompany and guard his trading vessels and his naval forts from European pirates. Gallivats are large row boats built like Ghurabs but of smaller dimension, largest rarely exceeding 70 tons and had one sail only.

Building ghurabs, tarandes, tarus, galvats, sibads and pagars, he appointed two subadars (a Muslim Darya Sarang and a Bhandari Mai Nayak, constituting a suba of 200 ships. In this manner was the navy equipped.³⁰⁸

Limitations of Shivaji's navy: Shivajis navy was in its infant stage. Moreover the Europeans were hesitant to supply any new technology to Shivaji (partly out of fearing Mughal wrath and partly because they didn't want Shivaji's power to grow akin to his

³⁰⁷ Surendranath Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*, 172.

³⁰⁸ R. S. Sharma, *Maratha History- Re examined*, p. 214.

inland power). The Marathas didn't even have regular access to gunpowder, as the sources to saltpetre and sulphur were inaccessible to the Marathas. Shivaji's navy was also meant only for the coastal waters. It did not have the capacity to attack warships and was based on knowhow supplied by the local fishing communities like the Kolis, Badhelas. Shivaji's navy lacked the basic armoury required for warships. There were no cannon foundries nor gun powder. Whatever cannons, Shivaji had, were the captured land ones (the lighter ones being used on his ships).

As a result Shivaji in spite of his ambitions couldn't improve his naval power. Nevertheless, Shivaji because of his foresight and military genius realised the importance of the navy, and he made up with excellent fortifications which he built around the western coast e.g. forts at Kalyan, Malvan, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg etc.

Shivaji not only laid the foundation of Maratha navy, but also utilized the geographical features of Konkan coast to his own politico-military advantages as well as for the naval defences of his Swarajya. Coastal and island forts were built anew at strategic locations and the existing ones were adequately repaired, strengthened and expanded as per a definite naval strategy.

Because of its physical features, the Malwan was used more for military and strategic purposes rather than purely economic purposes. Vijaydurg and Malwan were not only strong coastal forts but also served as important dockyards of the Marathas. Once naval bases, Vijaydurg and Sindhudurg bear testimony to Maharashtra martial supremacy during Shivaji's reign. The construction of magnificent island fortress of Sindhudurg off the Malwan port by Shivaji further speaks of the geopolitical importance of the area.

3.5 Konkan Forts: A Threshold of Socio-Economic Activity

In the following pages I will try to identify the areas of military value in the coastal surrounding of Konkan, and discuss about the various coastal and island forts which were occupied, re-strengthened and even newly built by the Maratha rulers to fit into their scheme of the projection of sovereignty over the oceanic water. There is no denying the fact that forts played a very crucial role in Shivaji's military system and he attached a special value to their defence and equipment. Though the hill forts signified more in terms

of political sovereignty and symbol of resistance on land, the coastal and island forts under his control were equally a medium of projection of the state's authority over the Arabian Sea. A survey of the naval forts held by the Marathas establishes the fact that, like the various hill forts of the *Swarajya*, the position of natural advantage and strategic value dominated the criterion for selection of the site of the marine forts too. The Konkan coast was dotted with many such fortified locations which had military as well as strategic value. Most of them are found to be surrounding the important ports, or guarding the tidal mouths of the various Konkan Rivers or even sheltering dockyards.³⁰⁹ In the Konkan waters there were a few desolate islands like Khanderi and Undheri off the coast which, though not anyway significant in terms of economic usage or otherwise attracted the attention of Shivaji. He captured and fortified them keeping in mind their geo-political and strategic value. That, his concerns were not misplaced could be judged from the fact that these solitary islands, very soon, endangered an intense naval and military contest which involved the direct participation of the European powers also.

To carry on the argument further, let us now undertake a study of the fortified settlements on the coastline, controlled by the Marathas in the 17th and early 18th century. The purpose of this survey is to understand the Maratha policy towards the sea, in addition to the challenges originating from the side in its right perspective.

On the basis of their geographical locations, the various forts in the Konkan coastal region may be classified and studied under three broad headings. They are:

I) Coastal forts

ii) Promontories or fortified headlands³¹⁰

iii) The island forts

Coastal forts: Coastal forts, as the nomenclature suggests, were located on the coast or very near to the coastal waters. It can be safely assumed that the economic considerations far out-weighed the other considerations of such forts. The river valleys were the main

³⁰⁹ Naravane, *the Heritage Sites of Maritime Maharashtra*, p. 57.

³¹⁰ Headland – this is a point of land jutting into the sea. Many of the coastal forts are built on headlands, usually on top of small rock promontories; M. S. Naravane, *Maritime and Coastal forts of India*, p. 5.

arteries along which the trade moved from the creek- ports to the interior and vice-versa. Protection to this trade and to the movement of the goods were provided by building sea forts, preferably at the mouths of the creeks, near the ports, and hill forts at suitable points along the trade routes. It is interesting to note that many of the sea forts were built by Portuguese in the early 16th century in response to their needs. It is an established fact that the coming of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean considerably altered the methods as well as the pattern of trade in the region. They furthered the concept of monopolistic trade backed by the military might in place of the peaceful trade based on equality. Hence, in the words of Pearson, 'the Portuguese earned the dubious distinction of being the people who introduced politics into the (Indian) ocean.'³¹¹ In addition they were also quick to recognize the various 'choke points and strategic places' around the Indian ocean littoral and guarded them meticulously after acquiring political or armed control over them.³¹² As a result, the Portuguese had some fifty forts in Asia by 1600 A. D. ³¹³ these forts had a special value for the Portuguese as they also claimed, as their right, 'sovereignty over the sea' in the Indian ocean after they reached Calicut.³¹⁴ Their extremely powerful naval fleet helped them to project and subsequently maintain their authority over the coastal sea for more than a century. When Shivaji came to power, he pays special attention to the defence of the coastal regions in view of the challenges he perceived on the oceanic front of his Swarajya. He was accurate in his judgement as the western coast very soon witnessed a keen struggle for mastery in which the coastal forts played major role.

Let us now examine the salient features of some of the prominent of the numerous coastal forts of Konkan, one by one.

Dahanu: Dahanu was a seaport town of considerable importance since ancient period. On the bank of Dahanu creek, the Dahanu fort was constructed, probably by Portuguese, sometimes in 1534 when the adjoining areas acquired by them from the Sultan of

³¹¹ M. N. Pearson, *the Portuguese in India*, p- 29.

³¹² M.N. Pearson, *the Portuguese in India and Indian Ocean: an Overview of Sixteenth Century*, in Pius Malekandathil and Jamal Mohammad (ed.), *the Portuguese, Indian Ocean and European Bridgeheads 1500-1800*, (chapter 4).

³¹³ M. N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, p. 31.

³¹⁴ R. S. Whiteway, *the Rise of the Portuguese Power in India*, p. 21.

Gujarat.³¹⁵ The need for fortification could be understood from the fact that it was an important port with a creek providing natural shelter and safe refuge to the boats against the fury of ocean. The same advantage must have favoured its selection as a ship building centre in the ancient past as recorded in the Nashik inscription of 1st century A.D.³¹⁶

Tarapur: Tarapur fort is located on the south bank of the Tarapur creek. The town, in the earlier times, was known by the joint name of Tarapur-Chincini. The surrounding area was taken by the Portuguese from the Sultan of Gujarat in the 1530s. The Portuguese then constructed a sturdy coastal fort which had high walls (up to 30 feet).³¹⁷ The fort, occupying an area of approximately 5000 sq. feet, faced the open sea from one side where as the three sides were given protection by digging ditches near the walls.³¹⁸ The fort withstood the attacks by the Mughals, Marathas and the Siddis for a long time. It was finally captured by the Marathas during their campaign (the Bassein campaign) against the Portuguese in 1738-39.

Mahim/ Kelve: the Mahim or Mahim Kelve fort is yet another example of the strategic planning of the Portuguese to defend and strengthen their territory in and around Bassein. The Portuguese, after getting possession of land from the Sultan of Gujarat, constructed a coastal fort at Mahim with one side of it facing the sea. The fort stands opposite to the village of Kelve about 2.5 miles south to the Mahim creek.³¹⁹ The idea was to keep a tight vigil on the Mahim creek as demonstrated by the gun holes for the musketry on the walls of the ruined fort. The possession of the fort was considered a must by the Maratha general Chimaji Appa for his Bassein campaign of 1738-39. The fort subsequently fell to the Marathas.

Vasai/ Bassein: when the Portuguese arrived in the Indian water, Bassein was under the rule of Bahadurshah, the Sultan of Gujarat. The island of Bassein seems to have attracted the notice of the Portuguese as the river or strait separating the mainland from the island

³¹⁵ W. W. Hunter, vol. IV, p. 95.

³¹⁶ Quoted by M. S. Naravane, *Heritage Sites....*p. 53.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 57, 58.

³¹⁸ J. N. Kamalapur, p. 120.

³¹⁹W. W. Hunter, Vol. IX, p. 80.

was a convenient rendezvous for shipping.³²⁰ In 1532, the Portuguese attacked Bassein again and after a weak resistance, they entered the smaller fort and destroyed it. Subsequently, the towns of Thane, Bandra, Mahim and Bombay were brought under Portuguese control.

On 23 December 1534, the Sultan of Gujarat, signed a treaty with the Portuguese and ceded Bassein along with some territory around it viz. Salsette, Bombay, Parel, Vadala, Sion, Worli, Mazgaon, Thana, Bandra, Mahim, Karanja.³²¹ The Portuguese further compelled Bahadur shah not only to obtain passes for all Gujarati ships bound for the Red sea but also to put a stop on the construction / fitting of any war-ship in Gujarat. The horse trade also became the monopoly of the Portuguese from then onwards.³²² Subsequently the Portuguese built a new fortress enclosing a whole town with in the fort walls after two years.³²³ The fort surrounded by ditch from three sides and with an opening towards the sea, had ten bastions which provided it additional strength. It kept a close watch on the movement of ships and boats passing by. This fort stands till date with the outer shell and ruins of churches. Though the importance of Bassein was reduced by transfer of neighbouring Bombay island to the British in 1665, the Portuguese successfully retained the possession of the fort till 1739, after which it fell to the Marathas.

Ghodbandar: opposite to the Bassein fort, on the southern bank of the Bassein creek, the Portuguese had constructed another fort, though not very large for strategic considerations. This fort was built sometimes in the late 16th century. Its location leaves no doubt that once it must have played an important role in controlling traffic going down the river Ulhas to Bassein creek and on to the sea. It is said that Shivaji attempted to take it by surprise with the help of Kolis in the vicinity in 1672, but attack was successfully repulsed by the Portuguese.³²⁴

³²⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 190.

³²¹ The ceded territory was estimated to bring in 30,000 Sterling-pounds annually, as revenue. See, R. S. Whiteway, p. 236.

³²² *Ibid*, p. 326.

³²³ W. W. Hunter, Vol. II, p. 91

³²⁴ Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 184.

Thane: the fort of Thane was located on the west shore of the Salsette creek. Since it was also a port of considerable economic value, it was subjected to ravages in the early 16th century by the Portuguese and the rulers of Gujarat. In 1533, it was made over to the Portuguese by a treaty.³²⁵ The fort seems to be a later addition to the chain of forts of the Portuguese Bassein which had acquired much importance to them in view of the threat of the Maratha attack on Bassein by Chimaji Appa in 1737.

Hirakot: Hirakot fort was a coastal fort built opposite to the island fort of Kulaba. It was built by Kanhoji Angre in 1720³²⁶ well after Kulaba had acquired the fame as the headquarters of the Maratha navy. It had become necessary, in view of the continuous threats of the British and the Siddis to Kulaba, to have a supporting structure nearby on the coast. The advantage of having such fort was two-fold. Such fort not only functioned as a logistic base to the main fort, but also helped in preventing any misfortune from the landward side.

Chaul: Chaul lies about 30 miles south of Bombay, on the right bank of river Kundalika on the Roha creek.³²⁷ The Bahamani Sultans who ruled from 1347-1489, held Chaul as well as other adjoining posts. A period of Portuguese ascendancy established at Chaul preceded the rise of the Angres, and was partly contemporaneous with the conquest of the rest of the district by the Mughals and the Marathas. The Portuguese first appeared in Chaul in 1505.³²⁸ It was Chaul harbour that a naval fight took place between the Portuguese and the Muslims in 1508, in which the Portuguese were defeated. In 1516 they founded a factory. Immediately afterward the Portuguese governor Albuquerque 'recognised the importance of the site for a fortress' and subsequently a fortress was built there in between 1521-24.³²⁹ It was protected by the sea on the west and Kundalika creek on the south and by a ditch and a wall in the east. Sambhaji, tried hard to capture Chaul, but failed in his

³²⁵ W. W. Hunter, Vol. XIII, p. 258.

³²⁶ M.S. Naravane, *Heritage sites....*, p. 93.

³²⁷ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 127.

³²⁸ W. W. Hunter, Vol. III, p. 376.

³²⁹ R. S. Whiteway, p. 157.

attempt 'because of regular European fortifications'.³³⁰ Marathas finally succeed and the fort was wrested from Portuguese by Chimaji Appa in the campaign of 1737-1739.

Revadanda: As noted earlier, Chaul was divided into two parts- the upper Chaul and the lower Chaul. While the old settlement of Chaul is known as the upper Chaul, the lower is known as Revadanda. Situated at 11 km from Alibagh, Revadanda was a massive fort with a circumference of about five kilometres commanding the mouth of Kundalika River. The Portuguese constructed this fort in 1558.³³¹ It had high walls, a rampart at some places, with several bastions. The fort must have served as a screen to Chaul in addition to serving the more strategic function of a major naval depot and post between the Portuguese strongholds of Goa and Daman. As per Sabhasad, the 'sea-fort' of Revadanda was a Nizamshahi dominion under the Habshi Commander (Abyssinian or the Siddi of Janjira), and that, Shivaji failed to take it.³³² Sabhasad was probably referring to the adjoining territory of the forts of Rajapuri and Janjira which were held by the Siddis. Revadanda remained invincible till 1740 when Manaji Angre captured it for the Marathas.³³³

Korlai: while the occupation of Chaul was being planned by the Portuguese, the nearby location of Korlai (better known as Cheul rock by them), on the southern bank of the Roha creek, could not escape their shrewd attention. With a fort on either side of the Kundalika river (other being the Revadanda fort), the Portuguese could have gained a tactical control over the movement in the Roha creek. What ensued, therefore, was a brief struggle between the Portuguese and the Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar over the occupation of the small fort built by the later. The Portuguese finally emerged victorious, and after occupying the fort they renovated it to suit their military and naval needs.³³⁴ Though it was comparatively small fort, the added strength to the fort (particularly the artillery) helped it to successfully defy the onslaught of the Maratha king Sambhaji in 1683. The fort finally captured by the Marathas after the Portuguese lost Bassein in 1739.

³³⁰ Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 227.

³³¹ M. S. Naravane, *Forts of Maharashtra*, p. 130.

³³² Sabhasad Bakhar, p. 84.

³³³ M.S. Naravane, *Heritage sites....*, p. 98.

³³⁴ An inscription above a doorway on the highest part of the fort records the year of construction of the fort in 1646. M. S. Naravane, *Heritage Sites....*, p. 101.

Danda – Rajapur: situated approximately 10 kms from Murud, Danda- Rajapur was a Siddi possession in the 17th century. Sabhasad refers to this fort in context of its nuisance value to the Maratha Swarajya.³³⁵ The coastal fort was built on the extreme corner of the Murud coastline before the creek which has to be crossed before going to the stronghold of Janjira. The fort's crucial location suggests that it could have served two functions: i) to regulate the traffic and movement in the Rajapuri creek, and ii) to serve as a depot for the island fort of Janjira.

Srivardhan: this coastal fort was located approximately 32 kms south of Murud. Shivaji is credited to have constructed this fort in 1679 AD after wresting it from the Bijapur rulers. Srivardhan was a thriving port and trading centre during that time. The very mention of Srivardhangad by Sabhasad as one of the newly constructed forts by Shivaji³³⁶ and its extensive fortification indicate towards the military importance attached to the fort. However, the economic motive, as another guiding principle behind the construction of the fort, cannot be ruled out altogether. It was amongst the 13 forts which was handed over to Kanhoji Angre by Shahu in 1713.

Kanakdurg: Kanakdurg was a coastal fort located a little south of the island of Suvarnadurg. It is amongst the group of coastal forts which were supposed to act as supporting partners of Suvarnadurg. The other forts were Gova and Fatehgd. The fort is a bit isolated from the main coast. In this way the sea protected it from three sides and a wall on the fourth side.³³⁷ The importance of such clusters of forts could be understood in the terminology of military strategy only. Under no circumstances the authority controlling Suvarnadurg fort could have allowed the adjacent forts, especially Kanakdurg to be taken by the enemy.

Dabhol: since it was a flourishing trading centre from ancient times, hence economic considerations could be attributed to the reasons behind its fortifications. From the ruins, it could be estimated that the port, located on the northern bank of Dabhol creek, was provided with adequate protection by the Portuguese who erected a fortification around it.

³³⁵ *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 84, 86.

³³⁶ *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 116.

³³⁷ M. S. Naravane, *Forts of Maharashtra*, p. 142.

Dabhol witnessed a continuous struggle between the powers for mastery. Shivaji achieved some success in his second attempt though the Portuguese had put up a determined resistance on each occasion.³³⁸ The control of the fort passed on to Siddi after some times, but it was finally taken by Tulaji Angre in the year 1740. Though nothing remains of the fortification now, it can be presumed that the fort might have played a subsidiary and supportive role to the Anjanvel fort, located on the southern bank of the Dabhol creek.

Anjanvel: this fort is situated on a high and flat hill on the mouth of the Vasisthi or Jog River, as it was called in the ancient period. It thus occupies a commanding position because of its height as well as strategic location on the mouth of the Dabhol creek. The fort was wrested by Shivaji from the Bijapur Sultans in 1660 and its fortifications were strengthened. This seems to be probable reason why Sabhasad has mentioned the name of Anjanveli as one of the newly constructed forts by Shivaji.³³⁹ The fort was quite large with as many as twelve bastions.³⁴⁰ It was protected by sea on three sides and by a ditch in the landward side. A portion of the renovation was supposedly carried out by Sambhaji. It had two gates, with the east gate overlooking the small harbour.³⁴¹ The Siddi captured this fort in 1699 and added to its fortification by constructing a lower fort, or *Padkot*.³⁴² The Tulaji Angre got its control in 1744 and renamed it as Gopalgad. That it served as an important naval post of the Maratha naval establishment seems is evident from the renovation work done by Shivaji and Sambhaji respectively.

Vijaygad: is a small coastal fort, built on the northern bank of the Shastri River which opened in the Jaigad creek.³⁴³

Ratnagiri: Ratnagiri, during ancient and medieval period, was an important town with a good harbour. The Ratnagiri fort stands on a rock or headland between two small bays, but they afford neither good shelter nor good anchorage, as they are completely exposed and

³³⁸ Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 130.

³³⁹ *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 115.

³⁴⁰ M. S. Naravane, *Forts of Maharashtra*, p. 160.

³⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 160.

³⁴² B. K. Apte, *History of Maratha Navy and Merchantship*, p. 20.

³⁴³ M. S. Naravane, *Forts of Maharashtra*, p. 162.

have a rocky bottom.³⁴⁴ We find a mention of the Ratnagiri fort in the Sabhasad Bakhar, as a possession of Shivaji, but no details are given regarding the plan and strength of the fort.³⁴⁵ The landing site was towards the north of the fort. It was difficult to enter or land except during the high tides.³⁴⁶ The Angres, though controlled the fort in the first half of the 18th century, preferred Vijaydurg for obvious reasons.

Purangad: it is a coastal fort located 12 miles south of Ratnagiri. It was built on a small hillock overlooking the sea on the mouth (northern bank) of the Muchkundi River.³⁴⁷ It appears to be a minor fort that might have provided safe hide out for quick raids that the Marathas could have conducted on trading ships of the enemy, to refurbish their treasury from time to time.

Yeshwantgad: the coastal fort of Yeshwantgad lies a few kilometres north of the stronghold of Vijaydurg on the mouth of the river called Arjun River. The main purpose of the fort, with seventeen bastions, was to protect the Jaitpur harbour inside the creek. The fort faced the sea from the three sides and the fourth on the landward side was protected by digging a ditch.³⁴⁸ The British records of 1862 mention Yeshwantgad as a strong and well protected fort with 28 old cannons lying within.³⁴⁹

Malwan: the entire stretch of the Malwan coast is quite rocky and equally dangerous because of numerous submerged reefs.³⁵⁰ Malwan was a famous port by the same name during the preceding years. Opposite to the port of Malwan, there were three rocky islands which Shivaji decided to fortify. The third one which was once the inner island, now a part of the mainland is the present town of Malwan and the other two are better known as Sindhudurg and Padmagad.³⁵¹ Since the adjoining areas of Malwan could not accommodate the boats of greater tonnage because of the reefs and rocks, it was ideally

³⁴⁴ W. W. Hunter, Vol. XII, p. 12.

³⁴⁵ Sabhasad Bakhar, p. 115.

³⁴⁶ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 167.

³⁴⁷ W. W. Hunter, Vol. XI, p. 321.

³⁴⁸ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency*, Vol. X, p. 384.

³⁴⁹ Quoted by M. S. Naravane, *Heritage Sites...*, p. 154.

³⁵⁰ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency*, Vol. X, p. 11.

³⁵¹ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 165.

suited to further the naval interests of the Marathas. The European records, on the contrary highlight Malwan for its dreaded piratical activities conducted by the ‘Malwan pirate’.³⁵²

Rajkot: when Shivaji undertook the construction of the island fort of Sindhudurg, he planned adequately to strengthen its outer defence by constructing forts around it on the mainland too. One such fort was Rajkot³⁵³ which stands on a rising ground within the town limits of Malwan, to its north- west coastal corner. It was surrounded by sea from three sides and the landward side was duly strengthened by strong fortifications with bastions as the ruins suggest.

Sarjekot: in the chain of forts around Sindhudurg, the second mainland fort was Sarjekot, situated 1.5 miles north of Rajkot³⁵⁴ little beyond the Kolamb creek in the coastal village of Revandi. The fort might have served as an outpost. The fort is washed on the north by sea and was once protected on the other three sides by a ditch. It was constructed on a hillock at the mouth of the Kalavali creek on its south bank, by Shivaji in 1668. The creek, running towards north for a considerable distance was once navigable. The possible use of the water could not be ruled out for a safe hide out after quick raids on the enemy ships.

Promontories or Fortified headlands:

Bankot / Fort Victoria: this fort is situated at the mouth (left bank) of the river Savitri (Sangameshwar river: navigable) with a rocky headland.³⁵⁵ The fort is locally known as Himmatgad, was almost square in shape, protected by the sea on three sides and a ditch on the landward side. It is located on the south bank of the Bankot creek approximately 10 miles north- west of the island fort of Suvarnadurg³⁵⁶, and hence was ideally placed to control the passage of vessels through the creek and also all maritime operations within its circle of control. The main fort was built by *Siddis* as the vassal of the Bijapur ruler.³⁵⁷ But the Angres added considerably to its strength as is evident by the different levels of

³⁵² For more information on the topic, please see John Biddulph, *Pirates of Malabar*.

³⁵³ J. N. Kamalapur, p. 121.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 121.

³⁵⁵ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 162.

³⁵⁶ W. W. Hunter, Vol. IV, p. 449.

³⁵⁷ M. S. Naravane, *Forts of Maharashtra*, p. 139-140.

fortifications. The later additions earned for the fort, another name *Baavankot*, probably because of *Baavan* (fifty-two) strong points in the fort.³⁵⁸ Bankot was ceded to the British by the Marathas in exchange for the conquered fortress of Vijaydurg or Gheria in 1756, and it thus became the first British fort on the mainland of Western India.³⁵⁹ The British thereafter renamed Bankot as Fort Victoria.

Jaigad: Sabhasad Bakhar mentions Jaigad as one of the fortified strongholds of Shivaji.³⁶⁰

Jaigad was an important port and an excellent harbour located in the Jaigad creek on the mouth of the Shastri River. To protect the port and harbour, a raised hillock on the southern bank near the mouth of the creek, was selected to build a fort facing the sea. It was originally built by Sultans of Bijapur in the 16th century and it passed on to the Marathas sometimes during the reign of Shivaji.³⁶¹ The fort was strategically located and enabled a close watch on the movement in the Jaigad creek which was nearly two miles long and five miles broad.³⁶²

Vijaydurg: the fame of Vijaydurg as a port and trading centre had been well documented by the early writers (Byzantium of Ptolemy). The fort by the same name which is located on the southern bank of the Vijaydurg creek commanding the mouth of river Vagathana is quite old and is curved out of rock on the sea side. Though the name of the fort was mentioned by Sabhasad in the list of newly constructed forts of Shivaji,³⁶³ it probably implies the re- strengthening work done by Shivaji, to whom it owes triple line of walls, the outermost wall having seventeen towers and massive interior buildings.³⁶⁴ Vijaydurg was the main base of the Maratha navy particularly under the Angres who fitted out and repaired Maratha vessels in the Vijaydurg dockyard. This fort was originally known by the name *Gheria* under the Muslim rule, but was renamed Vijaydurg or the ‘Victory fort’ because, over a period of time, it could successfully withstand the determined attempts of the Siddis and the British to take it. The fort was finally taken by the British in 1756.

³⁵⁸ M. S. Naravane, *Heritage Sites...*, p. 117.

³⁵⁹ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 162.

³⁶⁰ *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 114.

³⁶¹ W. W. Hunter, Vol. VII, p. 46.

³⁶² *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 165.

³⁶³ *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 115.

³⁶⁴ J. N. Kamalapur, p. 27-29.

Devgad: the Devgad fort presents yet another example of headland fort. The fort is built atop a small hillock with strong defences, which were mandatory to protect the land locked harbour of the same name. It was a massive fort, occupying an area of about 120 acres, said to have been constructed by Kanhoji Angre in 1729.³⁶⁵ The motive must have been to facilitate the Maratha control over this stretch of the coast absolute as the stronghold of Vijaydurg was situated just 20 kms north-west to it.

Island forts

Arnala: Arnala is a small island off the Arnala port on the mouth of the Vaitarna River. It was located approximately 8 miles north of Bassein and has been described in the contemporary records as a strong fort.³⁶⁶ The island is located between the Agashi port and Bassein. Because of its isolation from land mass, it proved an effective mode of the projection of authority on the sea, and commanded the coastline north of Bombay. The Marathas appreciated the strategic value of the fort and captured it from the Portuguese with the help of the locals in 1737, as a prelude to the Bassein campaign. From 1737 till 1817 the fort was controlled by the Marathas. The fort was surrendered to the British navy in 1817.

Uran /Karanja: Karanja formed a part of the Bassein province under the Portuguese from 1530 to 1740.³⁶⁷ The island is known for the production of salt, was fortified by the Portuguese with two strongholds- one at Uran and the other on the top of its southern peak.³⁶⁸ It was square in shape with bastions at four corners. It must have served as an outpost giving protection to the anchorage at the Thane creek.³⁶⁹ In 1670 it was plundered by the Marathas. In 1737, Manaji Angre finally occupied the place, and held it until 1774, when the British took possession.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ W. W. Hunter, Vol. IV, p. 233.

³⁶⁶ W. W. Hunter, Vol. I, p. 331

³⁶⁷ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 132-133.

³⁶⁸ W. W. Hunter, Vol. VII, p. 467.

³⁶⁹ M. S. Naravane, *forts of Maharashtra*, p. 126.

³⁷⁰ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 133.

Khanderi: Khanderi is a small island near the southern entrance of Bombay harbour. The name of Khanderi is mentioned in Sabhasad Bakhar as one of the forts under Shivaji.³⁷¹ It lies 2.25 miles from Kulaba mainland.³⁷² Shivaji, whom no advantage escaped unnoticed,³⁷³ in 1679, sent 300 soldiers and as many labourers, with arms and materials, to Khanderi, and began to raise breast- work at the landing place.³⁷⁴ This island fort became bone of contestation among the Marathas, British and the Siddis of Janjira. Khanderi was finally acquired by the British in 1818.³⁷⁵

Underi: this fort is located towards the north- east of Khaderi. A narrow channel separates the two islands but owing to the rocky nature of the islands, it is difficult to navigate the channel with ease. Underi was occupied by the Siddis, when the combined efforts of Siddis and British failed to wrest the fort of Khanderi from Shivaji. Siddi might have wanted to utilize this advantageous position, as a result of the occupation of the island, for future bargains with the Marathas.

Kulaba: Kulaba fort is always associated with the Maratha Admiral Kanhoji Angre who had made it his headquarter. Kanhoji retained his control over this fort and was granted twelve forts when in 1713, he joined the services of Shahu after throwing his allegiance of the dowager queen Tarabai. The fort was probably built by Shivaji in the concluding years of his life.³⁷⁶ The proximity of the site from Bombay, the mainstay of the British enterprise in India, further added to its strategic value. To the south of the fort was a ship-dock measuring 80 X 38 paces.³⁷⁷ The coastal fort of Alibag, also known as Hirakot, situated on the opposite coast, must have been used as the supply depot to this island fort.

Kamsa / Padmadurg: the fort because of its architectural designs is known as Padmadurg or the Lotus fort. The Siddis were the perpetual source of menace to the

³⁷¹ *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 115.

³⁷² *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 134.

³⁷³ Shivaji after failing to take the stronghold of Janjira, had embarked upon the policy of construction of similar island forts beginning with the Sindhudurg. He had also put the strengthening of the coastal defences on high priority thereafter.

³⁷⁴ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XI, p. 325.

³⁷⁵ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 135.

³⁷⁶ Grant Duff, Vol. I, p. 137.

³⁷⁷ B. K. Apte, p. 20.

Maratha territory in and around Murud. The main source of strength of the Siddis was the island fort of Janjira. When Shivaji failed to subdue Janjira, he thought of raising a bulwark aimed against Janjira. He selected the offshore island- some 2 kms from the Murud coast and approximately 8 kms north of Janjira fort and began its fortification. It is said that the construction of this fort was started by Shivaji and it was completed by his son Sambhaji.³⁷⁸ The fort however failed to make any impact on the Siddi depredations in the sea or even in land.

Janjira: the coast line of Janjira, bounded on the north by the Kundalika river or Roha creek: on the east by the Roha: on the south by Bankot creek: and on the west by the Arabian Sea, is divided by the Rajapuri Gulf into two main portions, northern and southern.³⁷⁹ The mouth of the Rajapuri creek, some 45 miles south of Bombay, is closely guarded by the famous Janjira fort located approximately half a mile from the mainland on the east and a mile from the mainland in the west.³⁸⁰ Perhaps the strongest fort along the west coast of India, as far as the history suggests. The fort is almost entirely intact even today. Moreover, repeated attempts of Shivaji, Sambhaji, the Portuguese and the English to capture the fort failed, and it remained invincible.

Suvarnadurg: also known as Harnai, this island fort is 13 kms from Dapoli. The fort is built on a rocky island³⁸¹ quite close to the coast and the village Harnai. This fort was with the Angres during the reign of Shahu. The Peshwa assisted the British to capture it from the Angres in 1755. It served as one of the main naval bases of the Angres.

Sindhudurg³⁸²: Sindhudurg or the ocean fortress is undoubtedly the most formidable of Shivaji's construction on the sea. It was the need to have a stronghold for his navy on the lines of the invincible Siddi of Janjira that prompted Shivaji to lay foundation of this 'Ocean fortress'.³⁸³ The foresightedness and intentions of Shivaji could be verified from the

³⁷⁸ M. S. Naravane, *Forts of Maharashtra*, p. 126.

³⁷⁹ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 488-89.

³⁸⁰ W. W. Hunter, Vol. VII, p. 141

³⁸¹ W. W. Hunter, Vol. XII, p. 3.

³⁸² *English records on Shivaji*, Vol. I, p. 73-100; Shivaji laid the foundation of Sindhudurg on 25th of November, 1664.

³⁸³ *Sabhasad Bakhar*, p. 86-87, 115.

fact that Sindhudurg was provided extra security by the construction of a chain of forts around it. The outer defences of Sindhudurg were strengthened by fortifying the neighbouring small island of Padmagad, and building the fort of Rajkot and Sarjekot on the mainland³⁸⁴. Padmagad mainly served as a centre for shipbuilding for Shivaji's navy.

As stated earlier, the region of Western Maharashtra could not attract the foreign traders and travellers may be due to the hilly land and poverty of the people and perhaps due to political instability and chaotic situations, which could be considered as an unfavourable environment for the growth of trade in the early 17th century.

However, this situation changed gradually with the rise of Maratha rule as the economic stability increased in the region. Thus, Shivaji's rule could be taken as indirectly responsible for the growth in foreign trade and relations to show progressive signs. Hence, historians like Sir Jadunath Sarkar, praised Shivaji, as a 'hero' and described him as 'the greatest constructive genius of Medieval India and also the 'greatest diplomat in the eastern part of the known world'.³⁸⁵ There are evidences that Shivaji gave careers open to talents, thus creating an open and pro-development economic environment. Thus, the role of Shivaji not only as a political revolutionary but also as an economic reformer could be studied though in a limited extent. Many a times, historians may commit mistakes in understanding the actual role played by the Maratha leader and may mistakenly consider him as a 'robber', as is experienced in the case of foreign historians. The region of Western Maharashtra was cursed with frequent occurrence of famines and the year 1630-31 witnessed the first great famine of which some details are available. It is reported that 1 million people perished in the district of Ahmednagar alone. Moreover, a series of minor famines in the region were reported to recur in Deccan in 1655, 1682, and 1684. Naturally, this deteriorated the economic condition of the region and led to slavery and epidemical plague. The rulers of those times tried to face the emergencies through imports of food grains from surplus zones, open government shops and free kitchens.

Besides, frequent wars between the Mughals and the Marathas damaged the areas

³⁸⁴ J. N. Kamalapur, p. 121.

³⁸⁵ Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and his times*, Calcutta, 1952, p. 30.

of Pune, Junnar, Udgir and AUSA regions. In 1662, nearly 70-80 villages in Pune region were burned down and plundered by the Mughals due to which the people absconded to nearby mountains. Also, Rajapur, one of the most important ports of west coast was destroyed due to the frequent wars between Adilshahi, Mughals and Marathas. Chaul, another important port mentioned earlier, was long troubled by the Portuguese and was finally reduced to insignificance by the great fire of 1674. It was witnessed that the wars between the Mughals and Marathas in the 17th and 18th centuries created anarchical situations and is believed to have caused a general economic decline all over the Deccan. Thus, the 17th century could be labelled as the period full of the Calamities, both natural and man-made led to worsening the economic conditions of the people of Maharashtra, the effect which lasted for a long time thereafter. According to Moreland, the frequent occurrence of famines in the 17th century made the people of the state poor for at least the next generation.

CONCLUSION

Within a short span of less than three decades, Shivaji had freed the bulk of Maharashtra, certainly a great achievement. Raigad, Sindhudurg and hundreds of other forts were almost newly constructed and were present as a symbol of liberty amidst the mountain ranges of Sahyadri and the coastal islands. Shivaji's period is certainly last, most notable landmark in the military architectural history of the world. Shivaji occupies the position of unique honour of being the last great fort builder in the history of military architecture of the world that is of ancient and medieval fortification, the greatest fort architect, the world has ever produced.

It is either at Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad or Sindhudurg or the other forts of Shivaji the idea and design behind the architecture and construction one can solely attribute to the inspirations of Shivaji. The main purpose and character of his forts was military in nature and were designed for defensive war. They were never so much as showpiece in nature, but their construction were simple, utilitarian and practical in nature and were strongly fortified artificially. Under Shivaji almost a new system of mountainous military architecture has evolved. Shivaji had developed passionate attachment to his country. Initially he trekked widely and purposefully to get familiar with every corner, every path of the wild tract of the Sahyadri mountain range and nearby areas of his territory. During his treks he had felt a sincere affection and admiration for the hill- folk, who were brave, loyal, hospitable and industrious these people comprises his garrison. The people were taught to regard the fort as their mother, as indeed it was, in the times of peace people around earned their living by supplying the fort with provisions, fodder and fuel, while in times of danger of alien invasion, they would take shelter in the safe arms of their 'Mother fort'. He see the situation with military perspective and better scope of hit and retreat of guerilla method of warfare. The unique relation between the hill forts and the hill- folks achieved by Shivaji proved to be miraculous integrated system of defence and offence. The enemies of Shivaji who were otherwise more in number, weapons and material methods were far more superior but with speedy military tactics Shivaji overcome it.

Shivaji focused primarily on the fort administration. It is mentioned in the *Ajanapatra* that ‘first fort, next territory’. Shivaji divided his kingdom and their administrative headquarter is placed in some important fort of that area. The secret of Shivaji’s achievements lie to a great extent in the manner in which he organised the defence and administration of the fort. He judiciously selected his garrison, providing room for the employment of all castes. He understood the fundamental difference between the field army and governance of the fort. In field he tried to emphasize on unity of command which he avoided in forts. No fort is entrusted to a single person to avoid corruption and treachery. Elaborate rules and regulations were made for the garrison like who will hold the keys of the fort, at what hour of the day the fort gate is going to be opened and closed, rounds, patrols and watches, care of water tanks, grains arms and ammunitions were most minutely supervised.

The three officers namely- *the havaldar, the sarnobat and the karkhanis* were practically of equal status and jointly responsible for the administration of the fort. Though they have complete authority in their respective departments, their duties and responsibilities are so adjusted that nothing can be done without the prior approval of the other two officers. The duties and appointments are strictly personal and non- transferrable. Shivaji took great precaution so that no groups are formed in the fort, so he keeps on transferring the officials to other forts and Shivaji personally took to inspection of forts and visits them at odd hours to test for himself the reliability of his various officers. There is also a historical record that the *havaldar* of Panhala successfully passed the test in not allowing Shivaji at wrong hours without prior intimation and so got promotion.

Forts were regarded as the key of the Maratha *Swarajya*. Aurangzeb was desirous of capturing the Maratha territory could not do so even after spending the most precious years of his life because of these strongholds always defending the king and his territory. Shivaji took utmost care of forts-their defences, fortification, administration etc., as loss of a fort will amount to loss of the kingdom. As forts were important centres of political activities, naturally the choice of capital fell on them only. This is how Rajgad and then Raigad came to prominence as the fort capitals of Shivaji. During the time of Rajaram, the fort of Jinji was the capital and Rajaram guided the destiny of Maratha state. At this moment both the capitals of Marathas that is Rajgad and Raigad were in the hands of the Mughals.

In the time of *Chhatrapati* Shahu, we find that the theatre of war has shifted to the North. The Maratha Sardars have selected their headquarters in the fertile plain. Shahu, made Satara his capital. In the age of *Peshwa*, we find that the Shinde, Holkar and Bhosle selected their centres of activities like Gwalior, Indore and Nagpur, all of which lie in the plains. The cities like Nasik and Nagpur rose into prominence during the said period.

Further it may be noted that during the reign of *Chhatrapati* Rajaram the practice of granting jagirs for military services was revived. During the period of *Peshwa* Bajirao and Balaji Bajirao, we find that the number of *jagirs* and *Jagirdars* grew prominently. This encouraged the *jagirdars* to have their strong mansions. A number of Maratha sardars were posted at strategically important places. These chiefs erected their own strongholds or *Gadhis* to protect their territories. The best example of *Gadhi* is Shanivarwada at Poona built by Bajirao.

But today most of the forts presents a picture of dissolution. They have fallen into ruins. The last battle witnessed by these forts in 1818. Then the English took the first and foremost precautions of dismantling most of the forts, they were afraid of the forts. The process of destruction was thus initiated by the foreigners and was continued by the nature and the slow but sure tactics of time and finally by the negligence of the natives. Once the bulwark of civilization, the supreme position occupied by these forts till almost the 17th century has decayed with the development of gun powder and long range artillery. Their defence capability has become meaningless with the coming of flying machines. And in the second half of the 20th century with the discovery of atomic and nuclear weapons have made not merely the entire concept of defence but, even the hope of survival of human civilization untrue.

The architectural remains of the forts used by the Marathas show the the engineers who constructed them had a very sound knowledge of the principles of military engineering. The main features of these forts were their excellent strategic locations, the very good choice of the situations, moats, scarps, ramparts, gates, storage for water and grains.

Shivaji's fame has been kept alive mainly by his forts. The glory of his name will remain well impressed upon our minds and memories by these forts which would never be

obliterate by the passing of time. With these forts Shivaji has left behind a splendid legacy, not as a conqueror but as a creator and so the last constructive genius among the Indians.

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GLOSSARY

Ambarkhana: grain store.

Ardhadala: merlons.

Bal-i-killā: the citadel or the upper fort.

Bargir: a soldier who rode a horse furnished by his employer.

Burj: bastion.

Chhatri: umbrella

Chilkhat: armour.

Darwaza: gate

Duravya: the long range guns.

Gad: a fort, preferably a hill fort.

Gadkaris: the local people supposed to carry out the various duties of the fort.

Falika: the embrasures.

Gajnalas: guns carried on elephants.

Hon: a gold coin.

Imarati havaldar: officer for the execution of building work on fort.

Janjira: a marine fort.

Khandi: a measure of weight, its value varies in different places; at Bombay it consist of 20 maunds.

Killedar: commander of fort.

Kot: a ground fort.

Mala: a rope ladder.

Mudradhikari: an officer having his own seal, like Havaldar of the fort.

Nala: an underground tunnel.

Narduban: scaling the ladder.

Sibandi: the garrison.

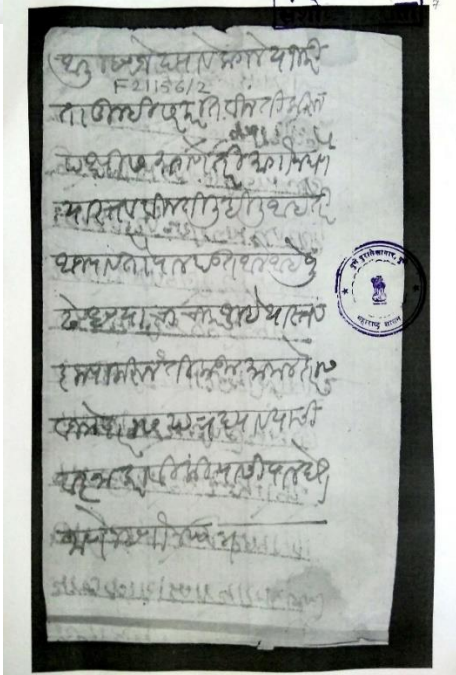
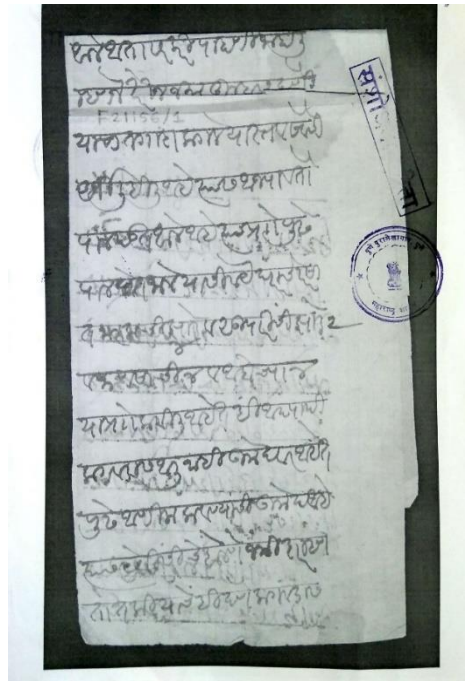
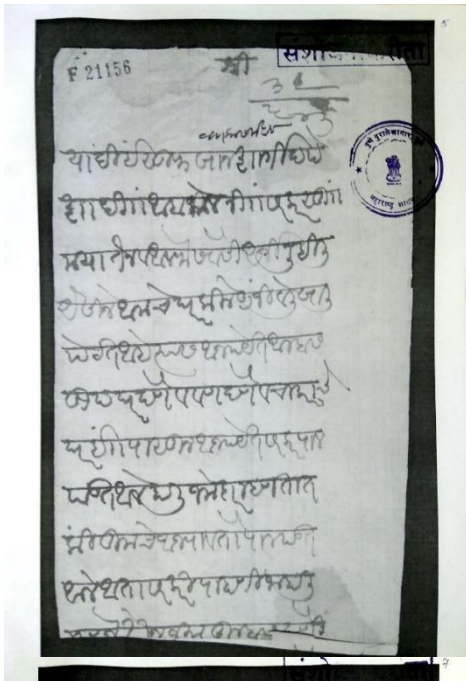
Sutarnala: guns carried on camel.

Tas: a metallic vessel for giving sound.

Zambruk: a small gun

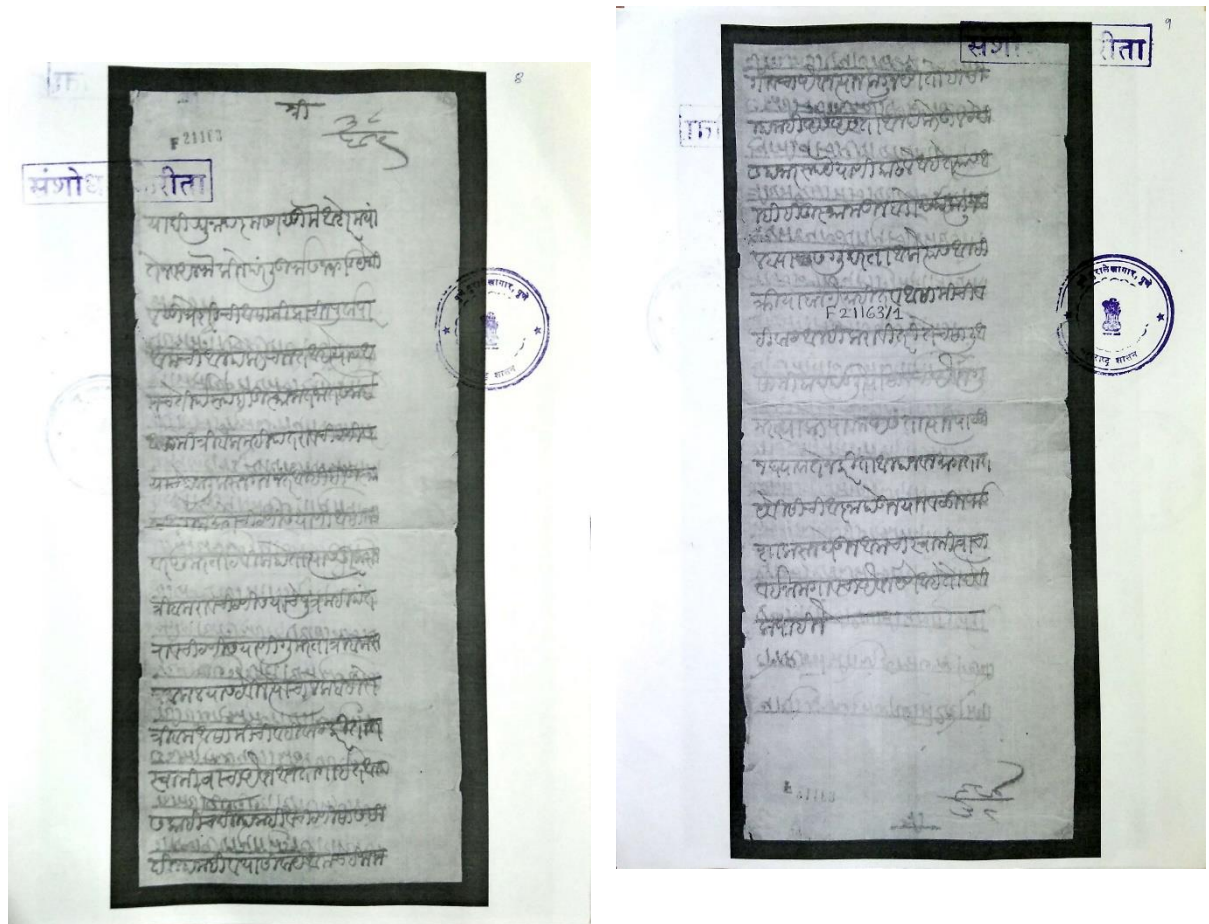
Appendix

Document 1: Letter no. F 21156, Moodi script, Poona Archives or Peshwa Daftar.



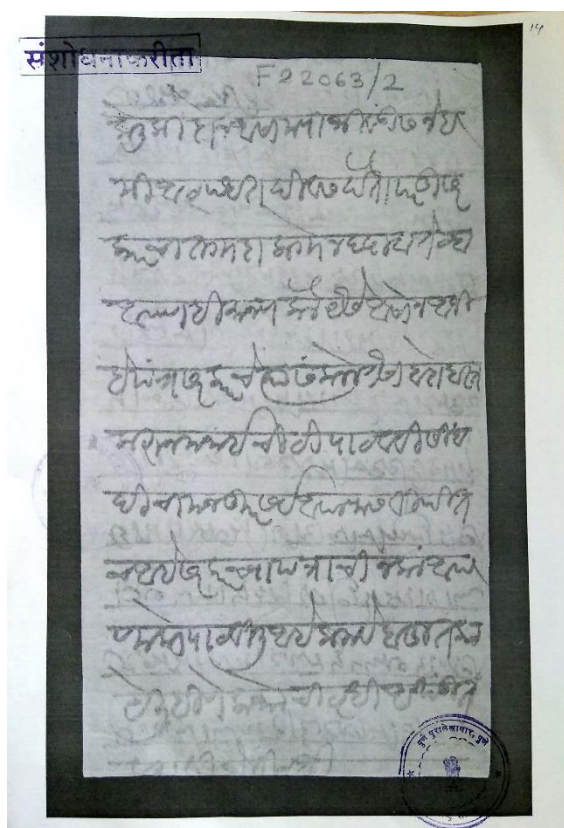
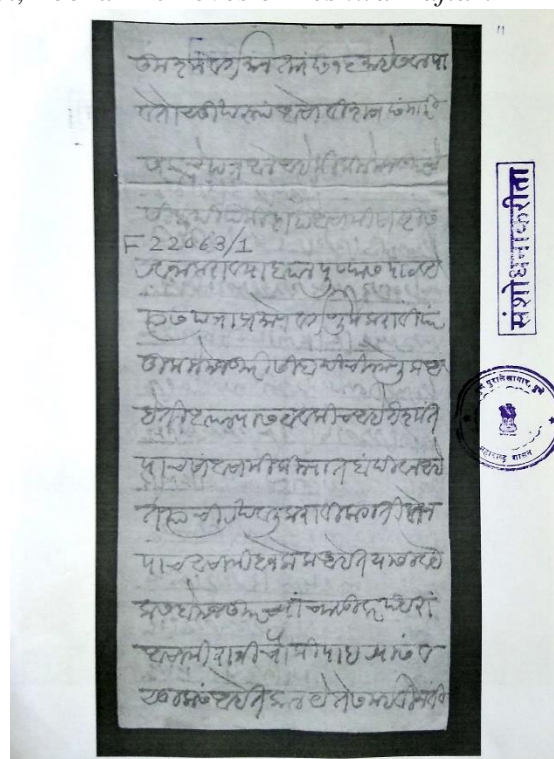
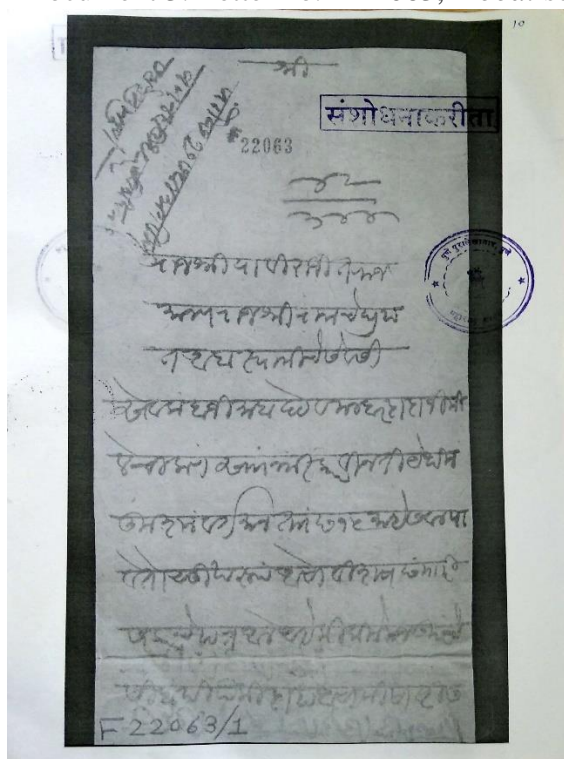
This letter gives information about the tax collected from villages near the fort, which is used for maintenance of the fort and their officials. The government also gives concession to its officials and Zamindar in matter of tax.

Document 2 : Lettter no. F 21163, Moodi script, Poona Archieves or Peshwa Daftar.



The author of this letter is Raghunath Krishna, Subedar of Parli or Sajjangad fort. He complains that how his appointed troops takes the possession of his Saranjam and imposes a fine of 20,000 rupees on him.

Document 3: Letter no. F 22063, Moodi script, Poona Archives or Peshwa Daftar.

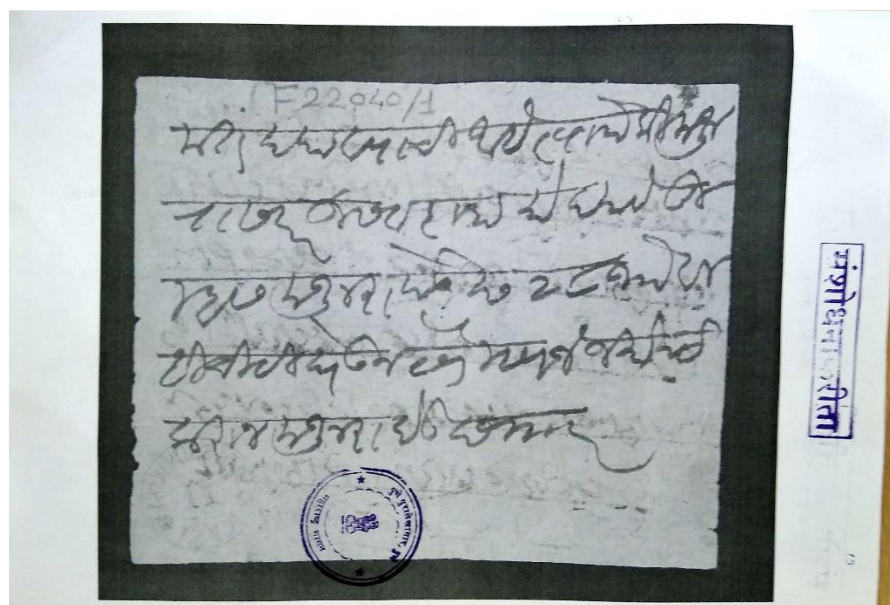


This letter is written by Baji Mahadeo and Malhar Dadaji Ramchandrapant Aaba, Killedar of Chakan fort, about the number of prisoners in Chakan fort which is 5 or 6 and the inability to send 10 sepoys to Thane district as they themselves need 15 people to look after the prisoner and village near the fort.

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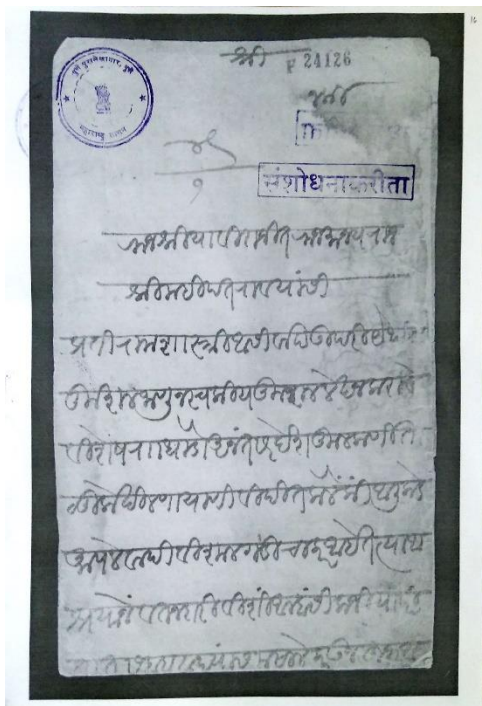
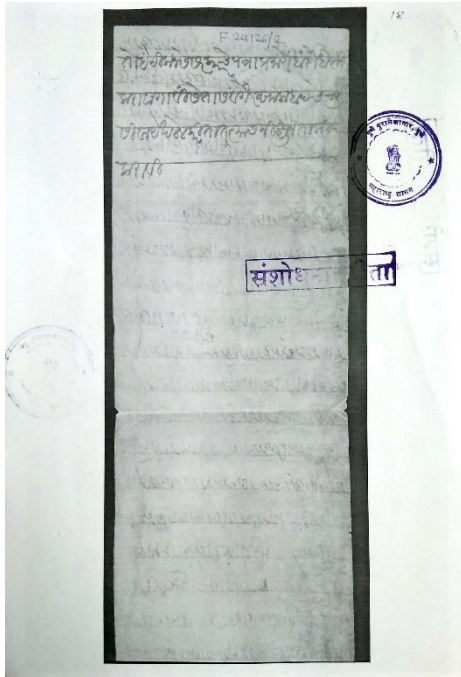
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संशोधन विभाग



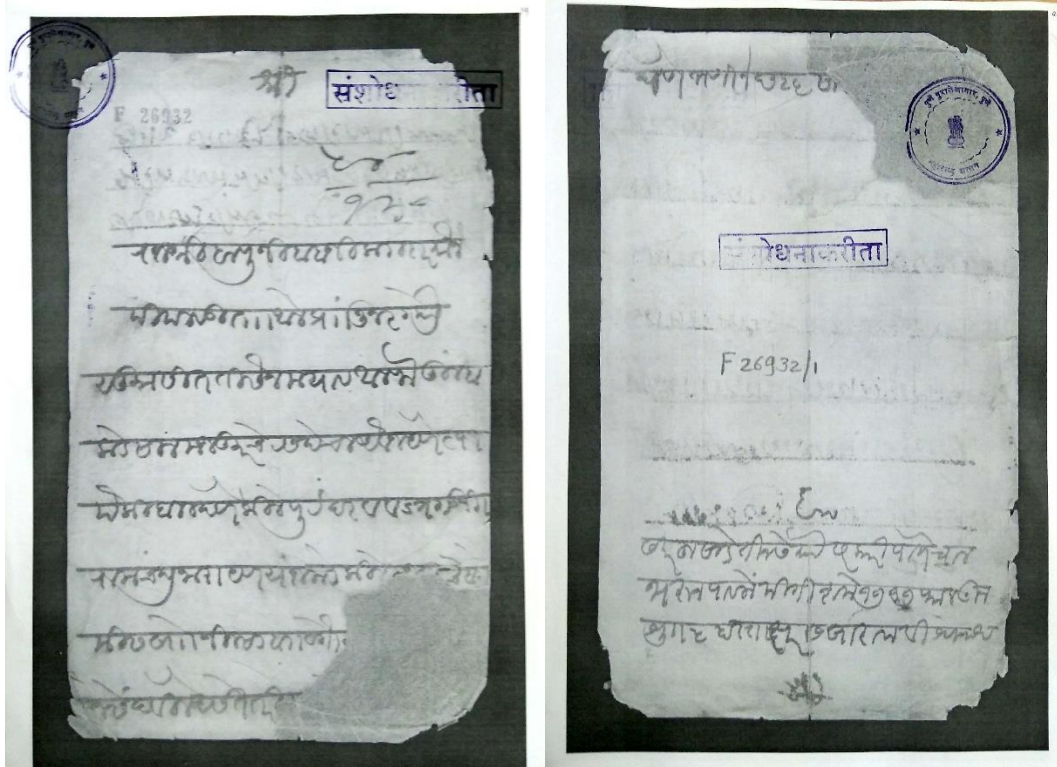
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Document 5: Letter no. F 24126, Moodi script, Poona Archives or Peshwa Daftar.



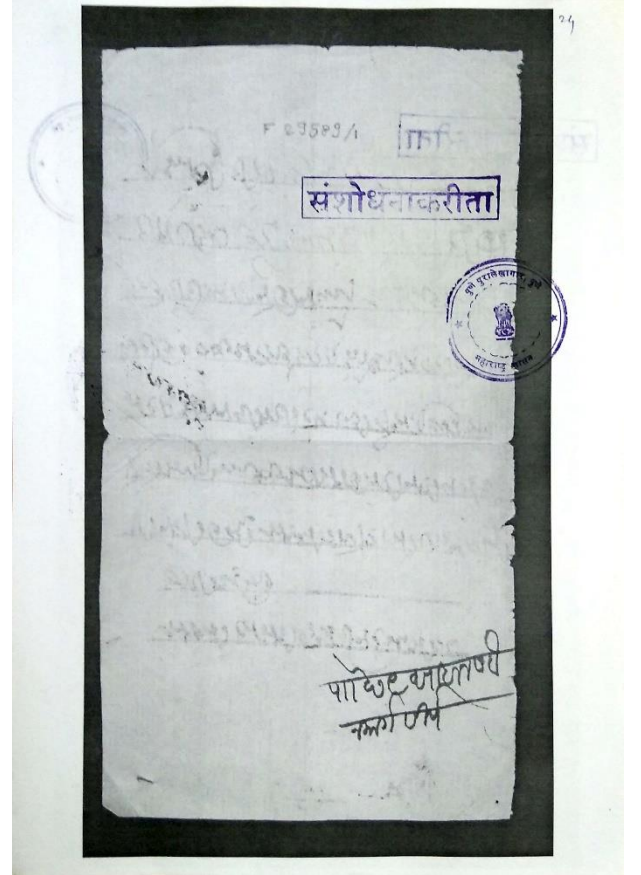
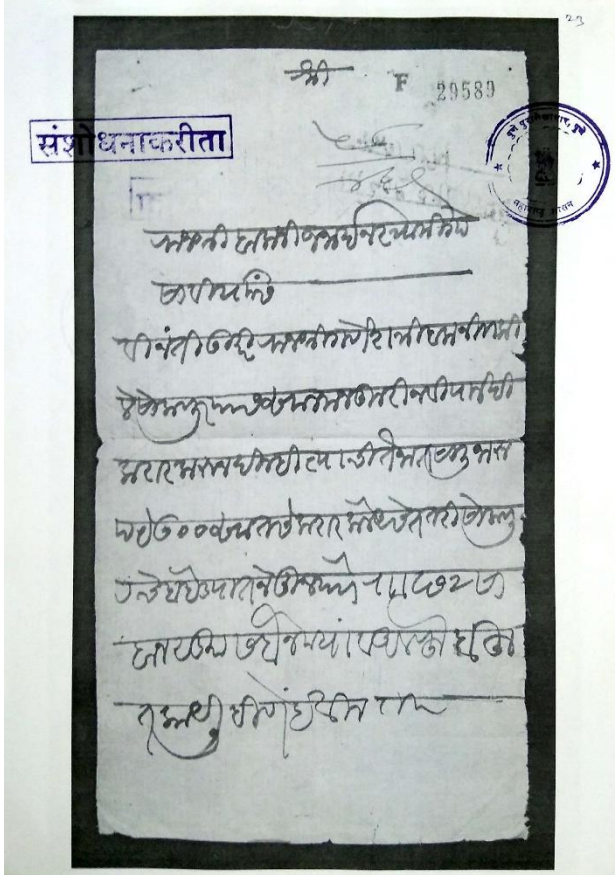
This letter is written during the reign of Peshwa Madhavrao. Chief Justice (Mukhya Nyaydhish) Ramshastri, orders the administrator of Khelna or Vishalgad fort to look into the matter of Ghondo Sardesh Kulkarni, who was posted at Vishalgad and the misuse of power by the same and other sepoys who were stationed at Vishalgad

Document 6: Letter no. F 26932, *Moodi* script, Poona Archives or *Peshwa Daftar*.



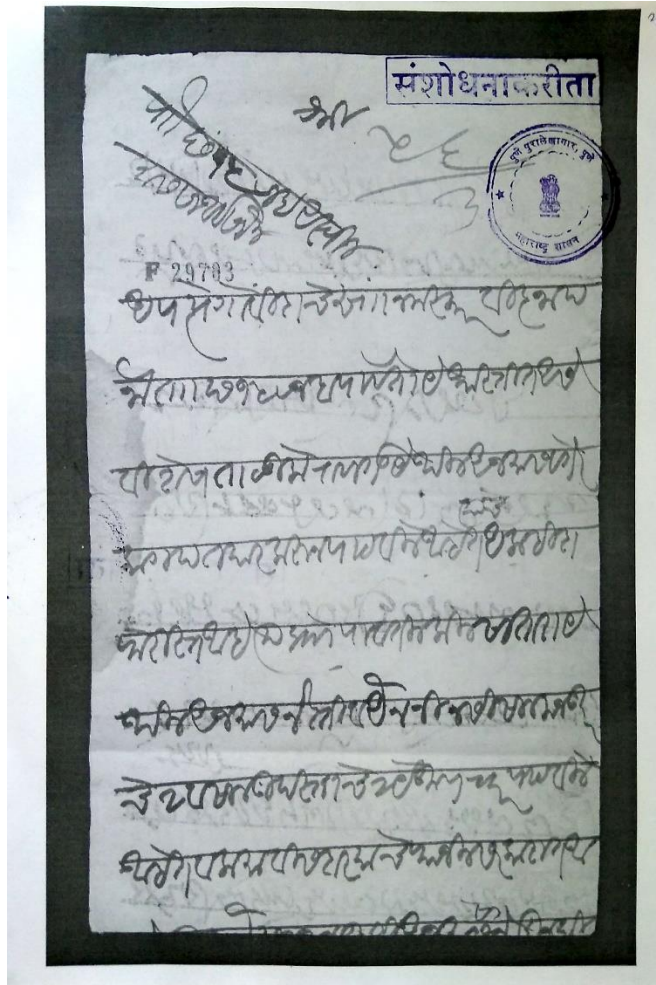
This letter is about Junnar District, taluka Pimplivandika. The Kamavisdar, Bapuji Babajise was given a sum of 300 rupees to buy goods for the fort Purandar and Vajragad.

Document 7: Letter no. F 29589, Moodi script, Poona Archives or Peshwa Daftar.



This letter is about the administrator of Solapur fort, Ganesh Trimbak, who has been given by the government a palanquin. He was also entitled for a sum of 700 rupees, yearly for the upkeep and maintenance of palanquin. This sum includes the wages of water carrier, carrier of palanquin and torch bearer.

Document 8: Letter no. F 29703, Moodi script, Poona Archives or Peshwa Daftar.



This letter is written by Govind Karkun. It gives information about the budget of each fort, which by the order of government is prepared. This letter includes the expenses of fort Rajgad and Satara. To a keep a check on the extravagant expenditure, the fort officials were inquired about the money spent. The papers of estimate of each fort are kept safely in the form of rumals, which are still in use for the research work.

Appendix 1: List of Maratha Forts renamed by Mughals in the 17th century

Forts	Renamed
Sagar ³⁸⁶	Nasratgarh
Himmatgarh ³⁸⁷	Firuzgarh
Karnul ³⁸⁸	Qamarnagar
Adoni ³⁸⁹	Intiaz -garh
Bhushangarh ³⁹⁰	Islam -tara
Satara ³⁹¹	Azam -tara
Parligarh ³⁹²	Nauras-tara-garh
Panhala ³⁹³	Nabishahdurg
Purandhar ³⁹⁴	Azamgarh
Khelna ³⁹⁵	Sakhar- ullah- lana
Simhagadh, Kondana ³⁹⁶	Bakhshenda Bakhsh
Vasantgarh ³⁹⁷	Kili – da- Fateh
Bijapur ³⁹⁸	Dar –ul- zafar
Chakan ³⁹⁹	Islamabad
Hyderabad ⁴⁰⁰	Dar –ul- Jihad
Pedgaon ⁴⁰¹	Bahadurgarh
Salher	sultangad
Wakinkheda ⁴⁰²	Rehmanbakhsh- khera

³⁸⁶ Bhimsen, p. 165.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 166.

³⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 166.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 166.

³⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 222.

³⁹¹ Ibid. p. 222.

³⁹² Ibid. p. 222.

³⁹³ Ibid. p. 227; D. B. Parasnis, *Panhala*, Lakshmi Art Printing Works, Sankli Street Byculla, Bombay, 1923, p. 4.

³⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 235.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 235

³⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 239.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 254.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 157.

³⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 30.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 160.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. p. 97.

⁴⁰² Ibid. p. 250.

Appendix 2: A list of some important and datable forts

Forts from pre- Shivaji period

Fort name	Year of construction or first mentioned	Power that erected the fort	Power that renovated the fort
Arnala	1530	.....	Portuguese
Asheri		Shilahara	.....
Azam Tara		Shilahara	Mughal
Anjanvel	16 th century	Bijapur	Maratha
Bhairavagad	.....	Shilahara	.....
Bhopalgad	.....	.....	.....
Chandan	.....	Bijapur	.....
Chakan	1453	.....	.....
Chavand	1486	.....	.....
Galana	1487	Bahamani	.....
Ghosalgad	1638	Ahmednagar	.....
Jaygad	16 th century	Bijapur	.....
Jivadhan	1490	Shilahara	.....
Koorgad	1438	.....	.....
Khelna	.....	Shilahara	.....
Kondana	1340	.....	Mughals and Maratha
Laling	1370	Faruqui	.....
Lohagad	1489	.....	.....
Mangalgad	1648	Bijapur	Maratha
Panhala	.....	Shilahara	Bijapur and Maratha
Purandhar	15 th century	Bahamani	Mughal and Maratha
Shivneri	Traceable to Buddhist times		
Sankshi	1540	.....	Ahmednagar
Suvarnadurga	.....	....	Shivaji
Vairatgad	1178	Shilahara	.....

Appendix 3 : List of fort built or repaired or reconstructed by Shivaji⁴⁰³

Fort name	Year	Built/Repaired/Reconstructed
Avachitgad	....	Built
Anjanvel	....	repaired
Bhushangad	1676	Built
Bhadragad	1667	Rebuilt
Bhirwadi	1648	Built
Bhupalgad	.....	Built
Bhumandangad	....	Repaired
Govalkot	1670	Repaired
Hadsar	1637	Repaired
Harishchandragad	....	Repaired
Jinji	1677	Repaired
Kolaba	1662	Reconstructed
Khanderi	1679	Repaired
Lingana	1648	Built
Machindragad	1667	Built
Makarandgad	1665	Built
Mahipatgad	....	Unfinished
Mangalgad	1656	Repaired
Mahimangad	....	Built
Pratapgad	....	Built
Prachandagad	.....	Built
Prakshagad	.....	Built
Prachitgad	....	Built
Prabalgad	.....	Built
Pravalgad	.....	Built
Prasannagad	....	Built
Prasidhagad	.....	built
Rangna	1659	Rebuilt
Rajmachi	1648	rebuilt
Raigad	1662	Built
Rajgad	....	.....
Samangad	1676	Rebuilt
Kondana	1678	Repaired
Suvarnadurg	1660	Repaired
Sindhudurg	1665	Built
Vishalgad	1659	Built
Vardhangad	1674	Built
Varugad	.....	Built
Vijaydurg	1653	Rebuilt
Vallabhgad	.....	Built

⁴⁰³ M. S. Mate, *Maratha Architecture*, p. 63.

Vasantgad	.....	Built
Vishramgad	.....	Built

Appendix 4 : Forts of the Peshwa Period⁴⁰⁴

Fort name	Year	Built/repaired/reconstructed
Arnala	1737	Repaired by Baji Rao I
Bahadurwadi	.....	Built by Madhavrao I
Bharatgad	1701	Phonda Savant
Devagad	1700	Anger
Khanderi	1683	Repaired by Sambhaji
	1706	Repaired by kanhoji Angre
Kolaba	1816	Repaired by Raghoji Angre
Lohgad	1789	Repaired by Nana Phadnavis
Malegaon	1740	Built by Naro Shankar
Malhargad	1775	Built by Panse
Narayangao	.....	Built by Balaji Vishvanath
Visapur	....	Balaji Vishvanath.

⁴⁰⁴ M. S. Mate, *Maratha Architecture*, p. 64.

Appendix 5 : Forts and name of the main gates

Fort	Name of gates
Singhad	Kalyan, Poona ⁴⁰⁵
Raigad	Nana, Maha, Wagh
Rajgad	Pali, Gunjavane, Alu, Kaleshwari or Dindi ⁴⁰⁶
Purandhar	Bini, Delhi, Ganesh ⁴⁰⁷ , Konkan
Bijapur	Shahpur, Mecca, Fateh, Alipur, Bahmani ⁴⁰⁸
Bidar	Kalnadgi, Mandu, Cardanic kalyani, Delhi ⁴⁰⁹
Golconda	Mecca, Fateh, Moti, Banjari, Bala Hissar ⁴¹⁰
Galana	Parkot, Lokhandi, Kotwal, Pir, Lakh
Mahipatgad	Kotwal, Lal, Pusali, Yashwant, Khed, Shivaganga
Panhala	Char, Tin, Wagh or Tiger gate ⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁵ Kamalapur, *the Deccan Forts*, p. 34.

⁴⁰⁶ A. R. Kulkarni, *Medieval Maratha Country*, p. 60.

⁴⁰⁷ Sidney Toy, *the Fortified Cities of India*, p. 39.

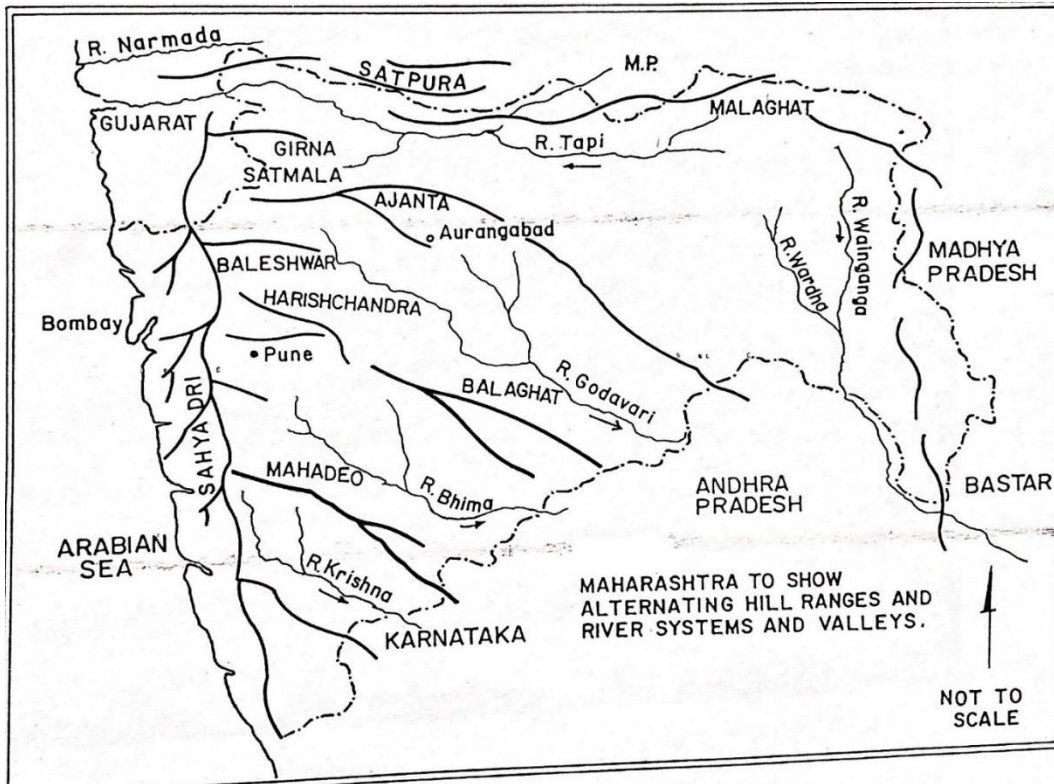
⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 25.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 41.

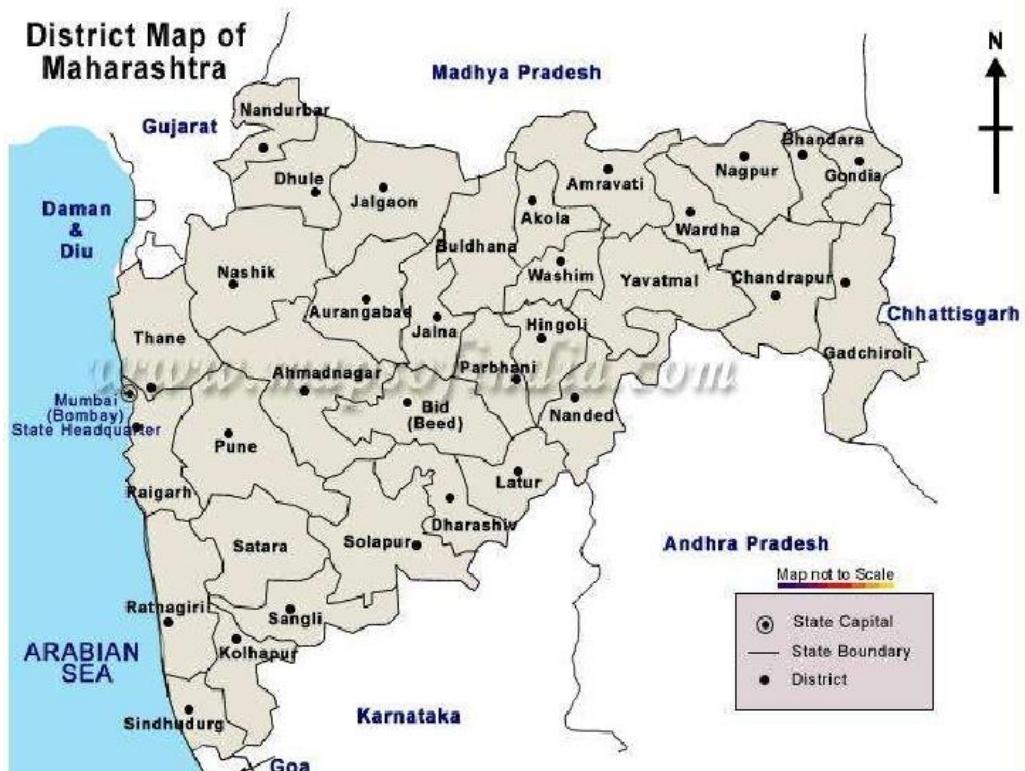
⁴¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 54.

⁴¹¹ Sidney Toy, *the Fortified Cities of India*, p. 28.

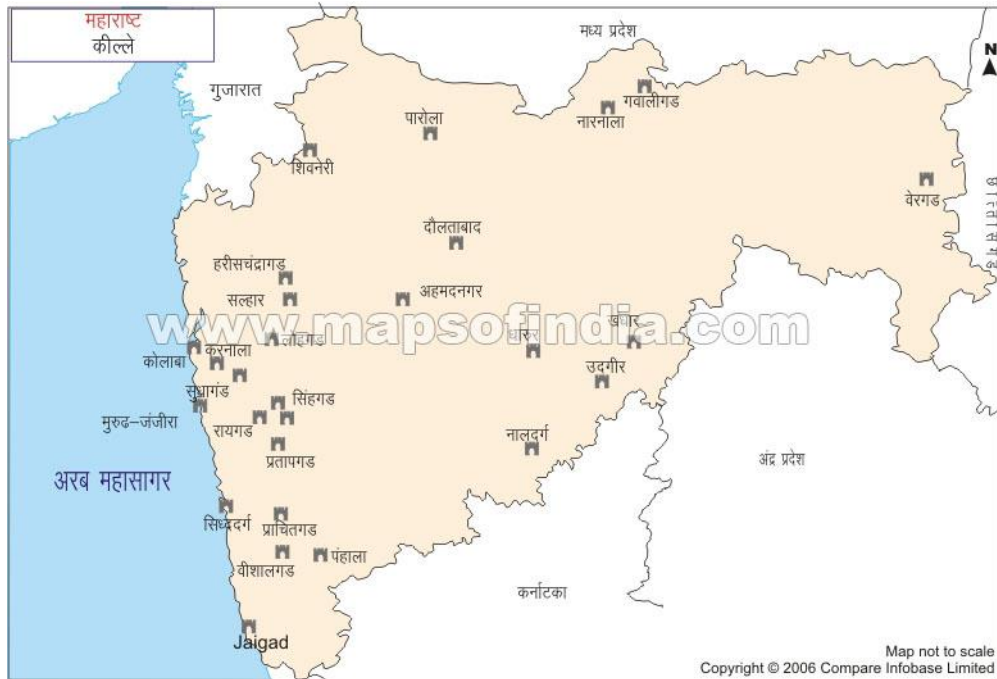
Map 1 : Hill and river system of Maharashtra.



Map 2 : District map of Maharashtra



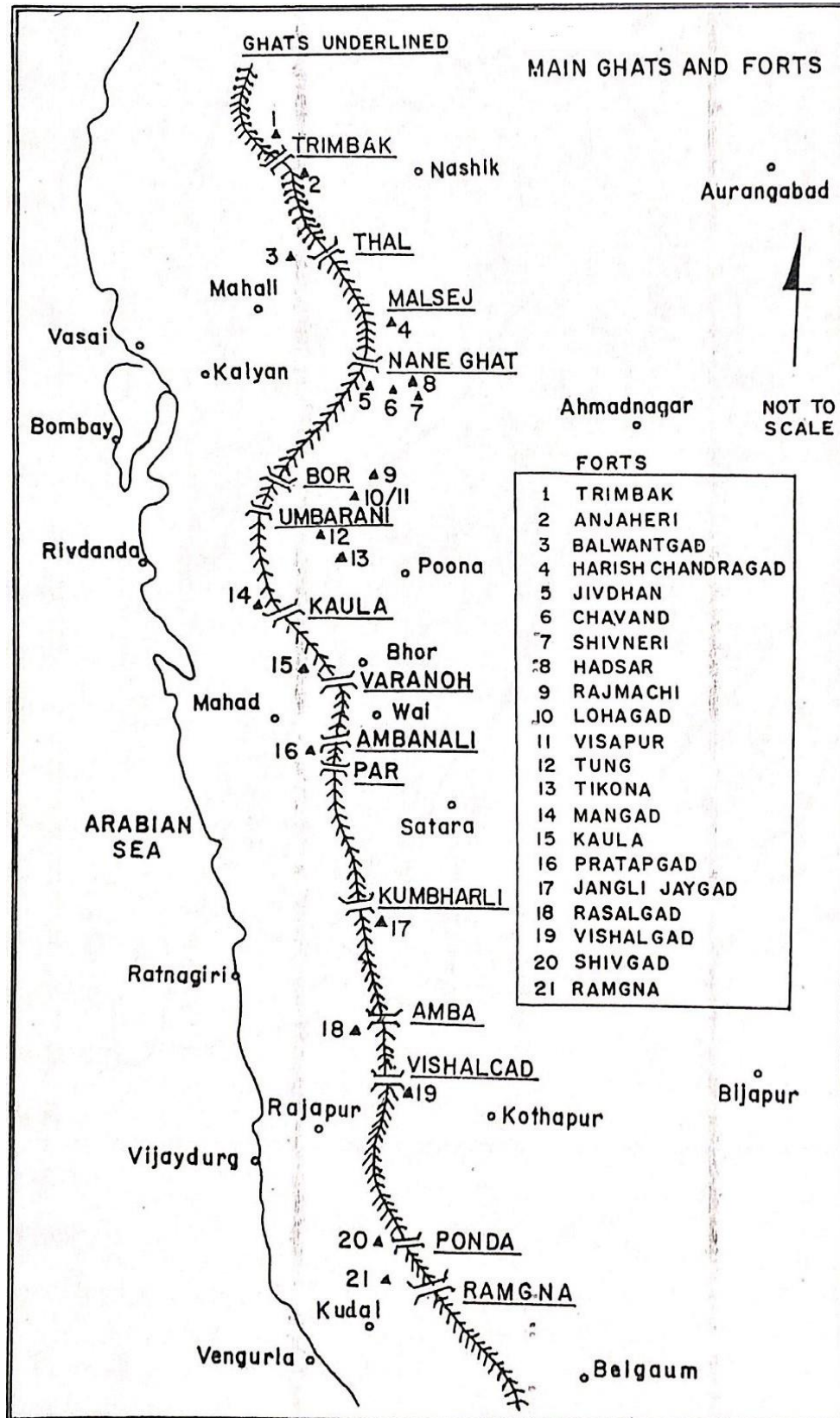
Map 3 : Map showing important forts of Maharashtra



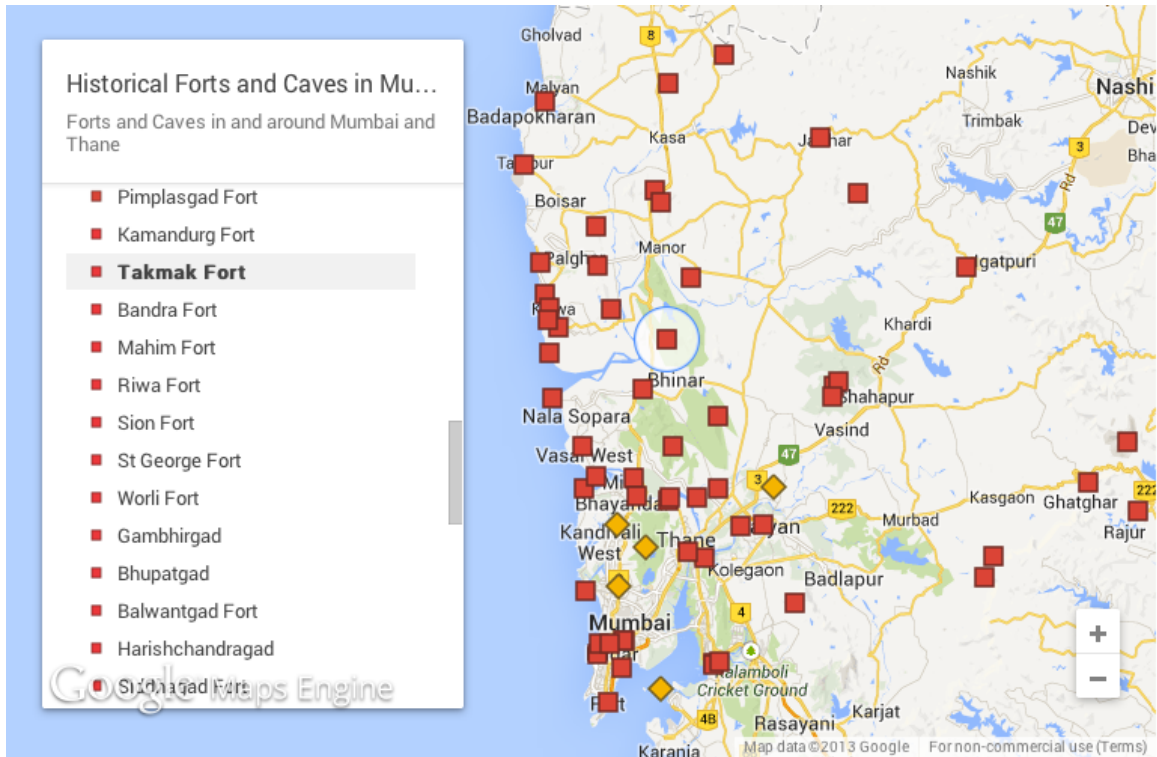
Map 4 : Forts in Maharashtra



Map 5 : Main ghats and commanding forts.

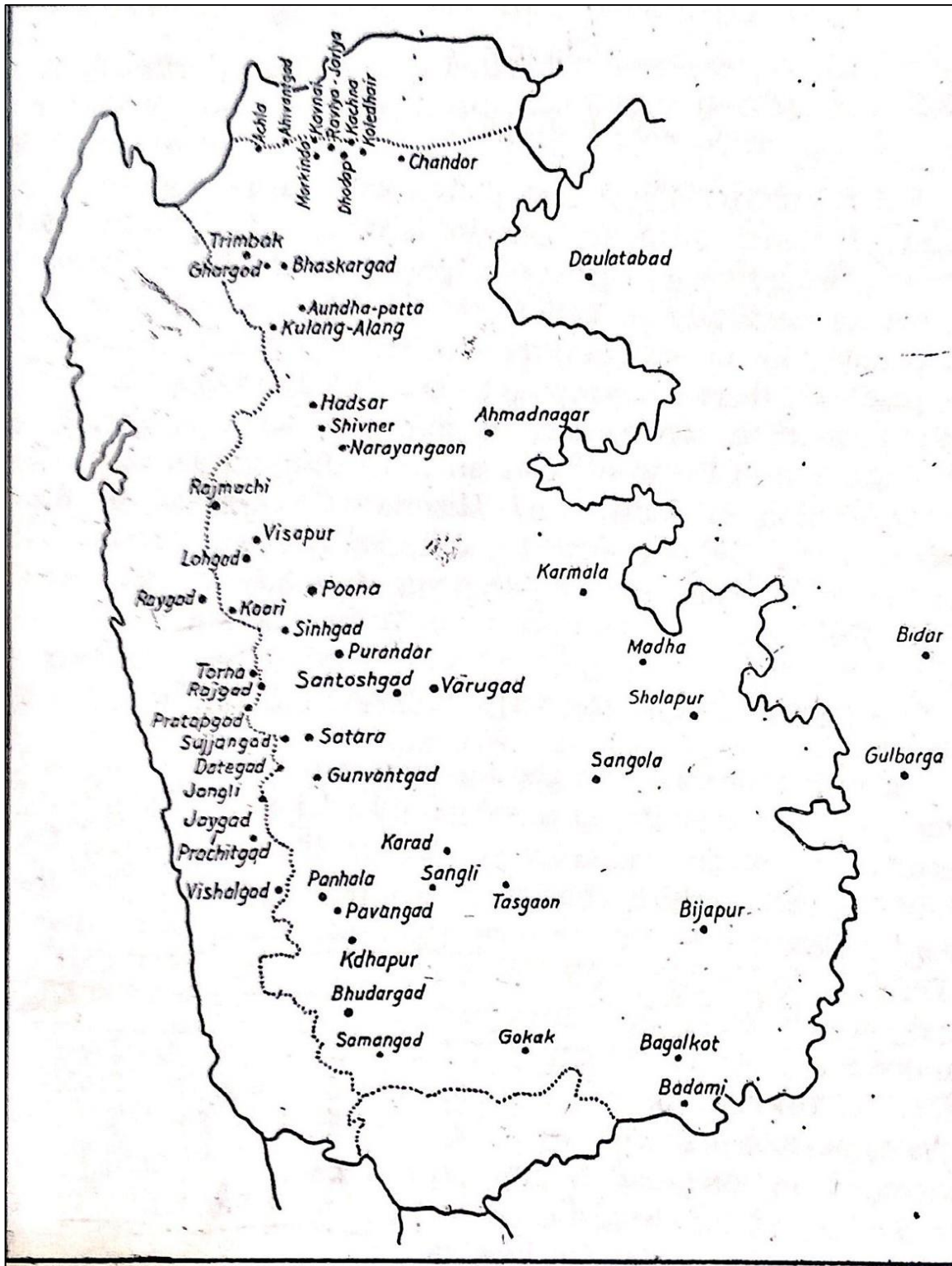


Map 6 : Various forts and their location in Maharashtra



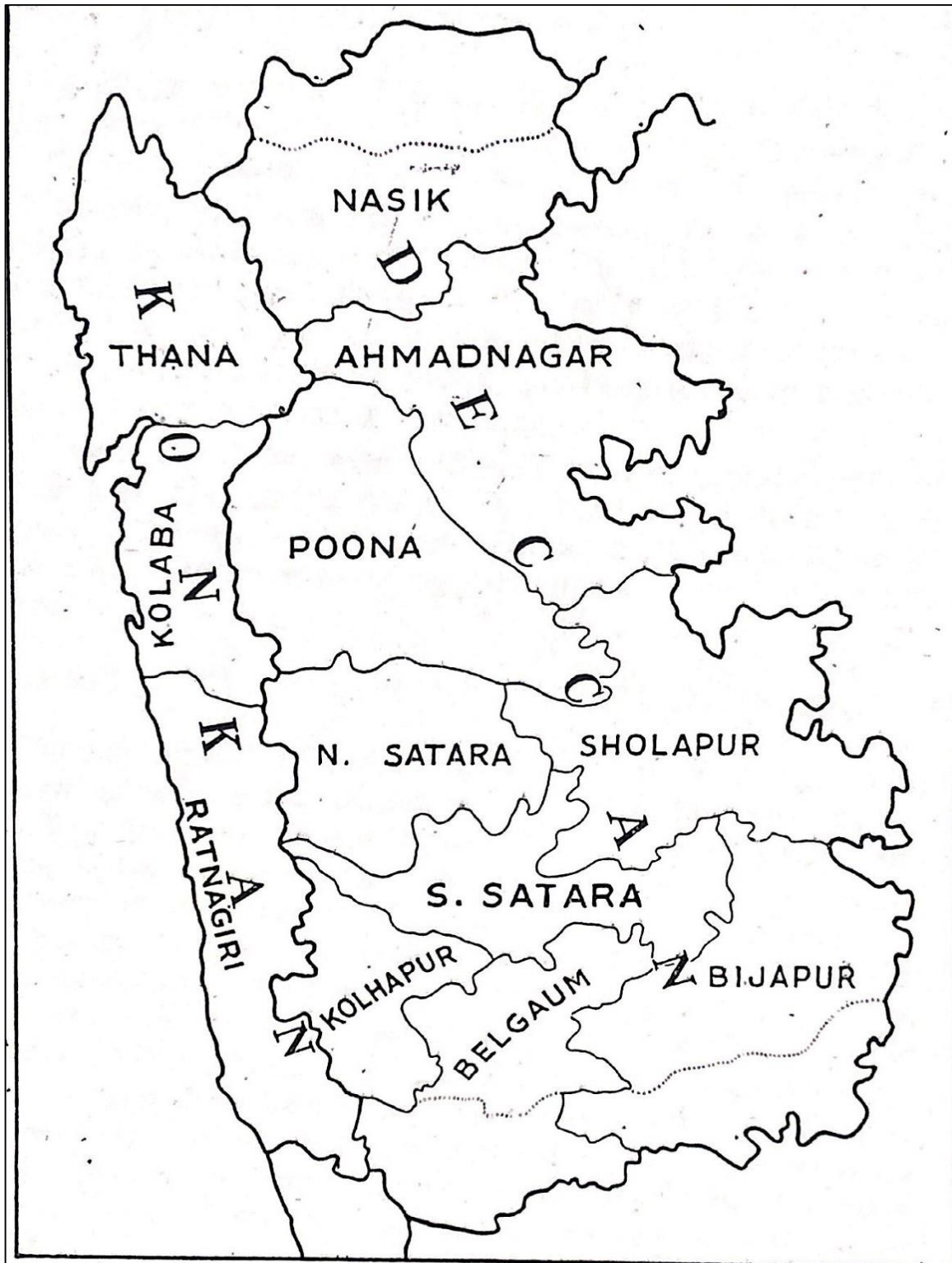
Source: internet

Map 7 : Map showing some important forts of Deccan



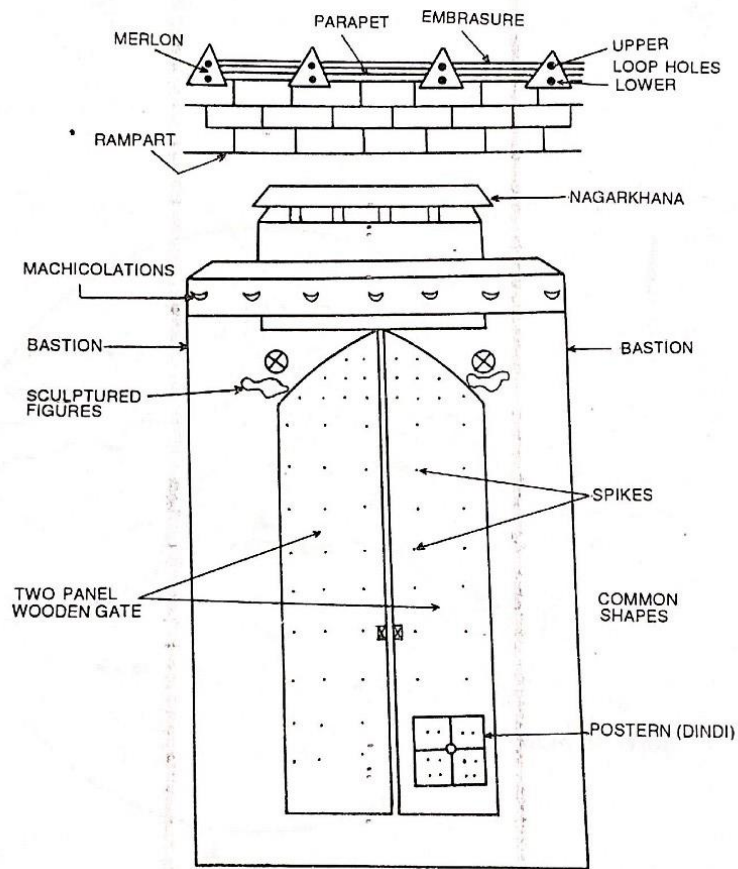
Source. : *The Deccan Forts* (Book).

Map 8 : Map showing districts of Deccan

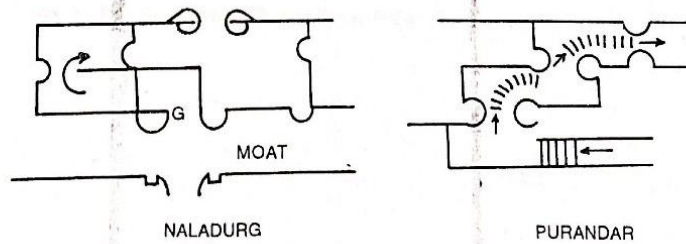


Source: *the Deccan forts* (Book).

Map 9 : A typical arrangement of gateways.

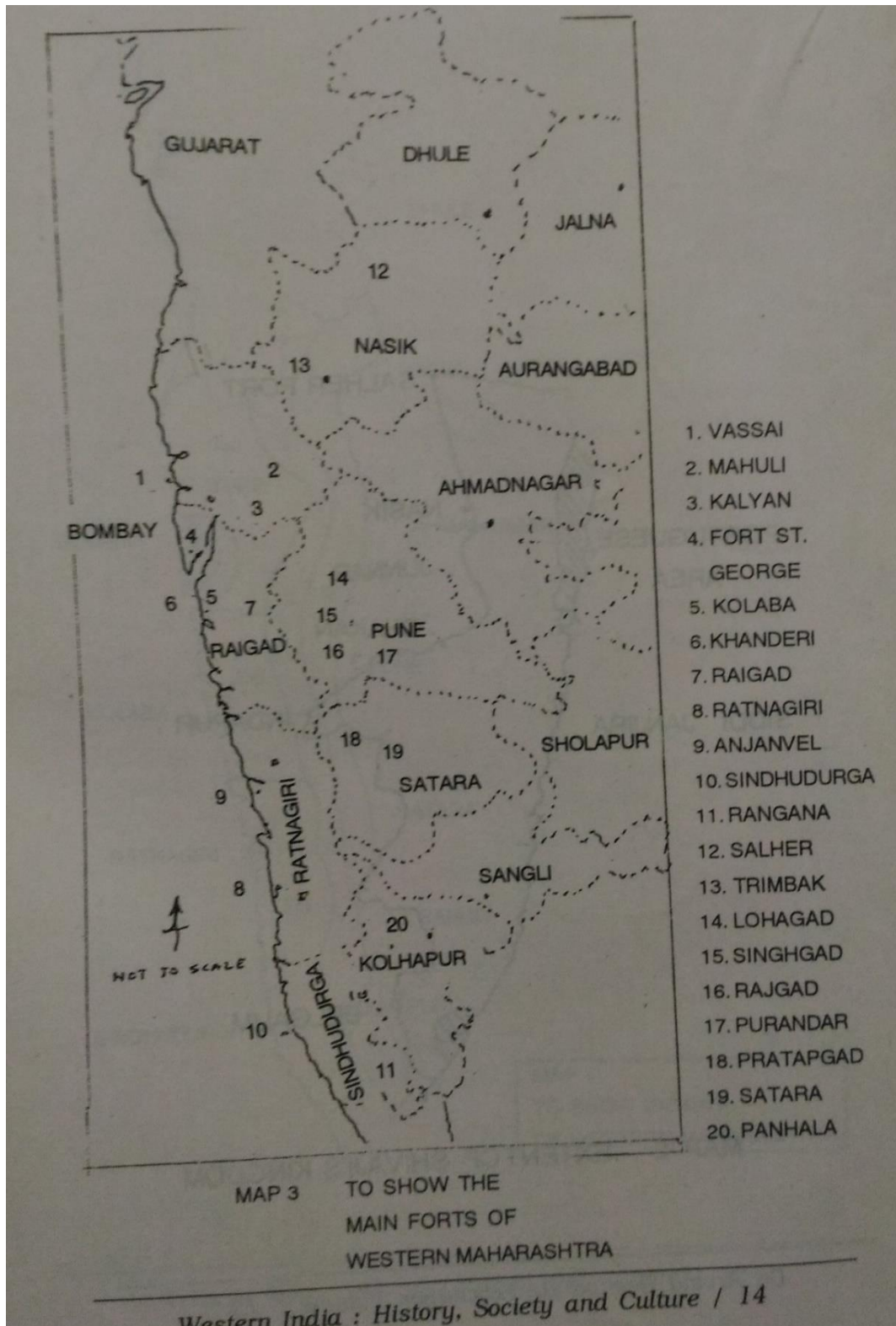


A TYPICAL GATEWAY



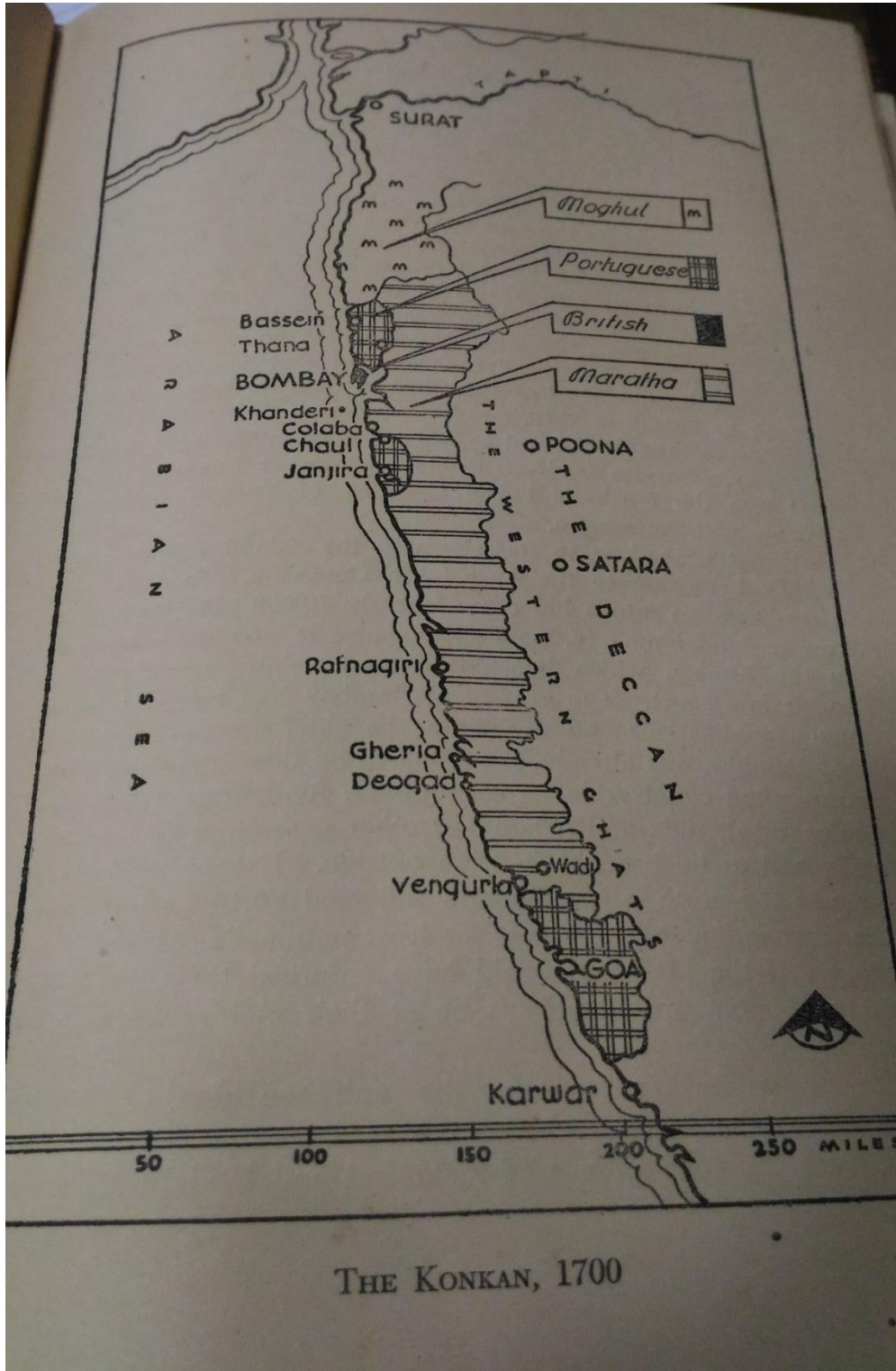
Some Features of Fortification and to Illustrate Arrangement of Gates

Map 10 : Major forts of Shivaji.



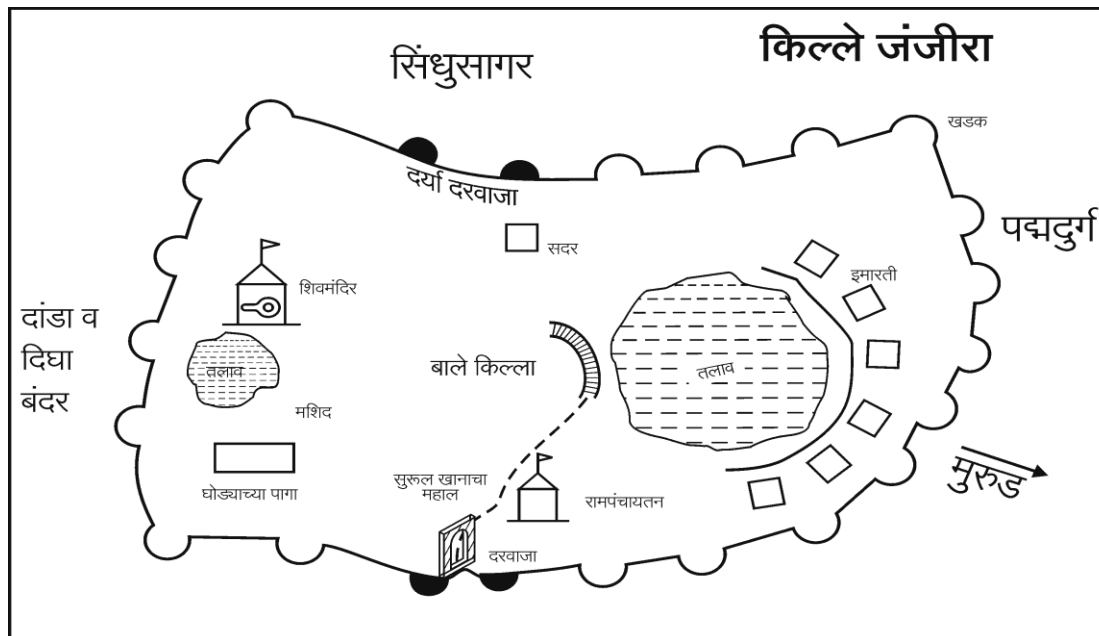
Source: seminar paper.

Map 11 : Map of Konkan in the 17th century



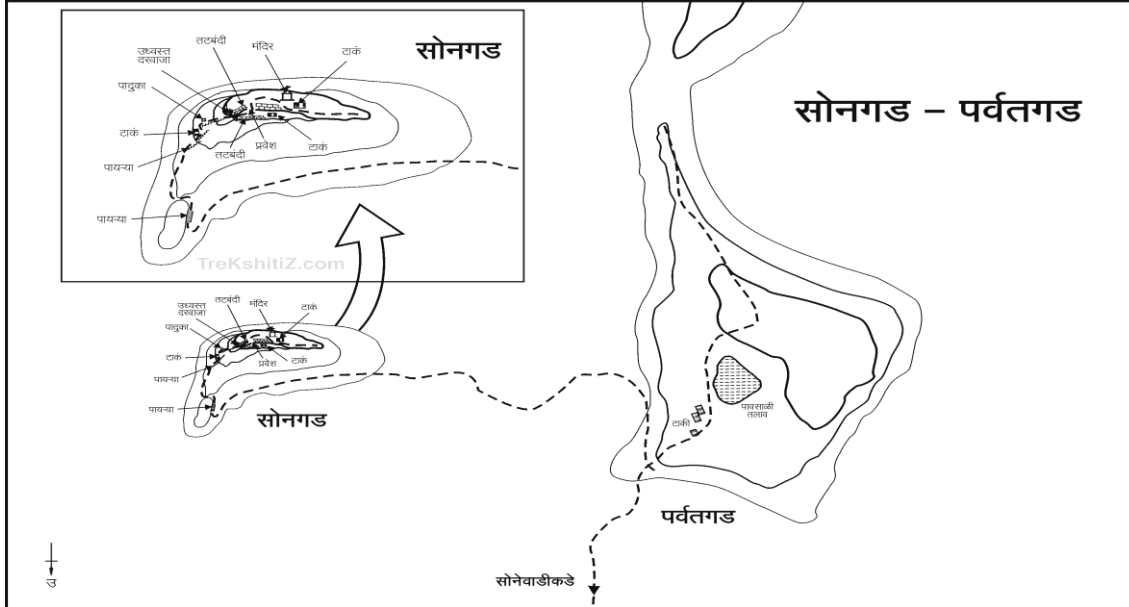
Source: Kanhoji Angre (Book).

Map 13 : Fort plan of Janjira



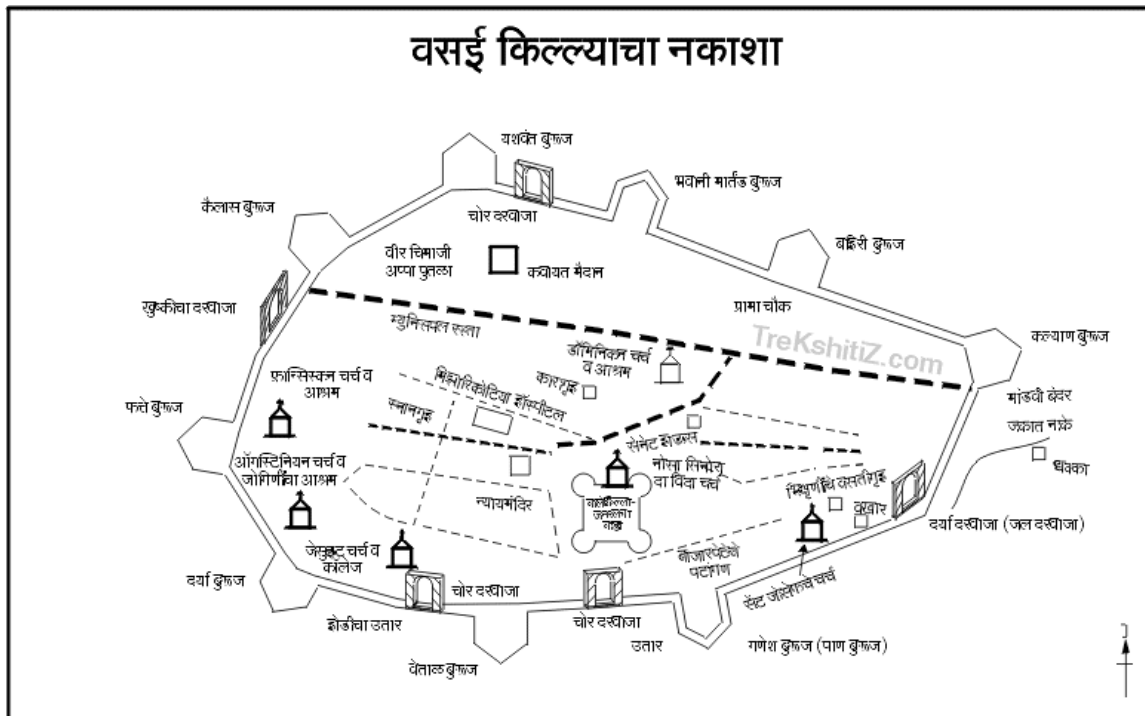
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Map 14 : Fort plan of Soangad and Parvatgad

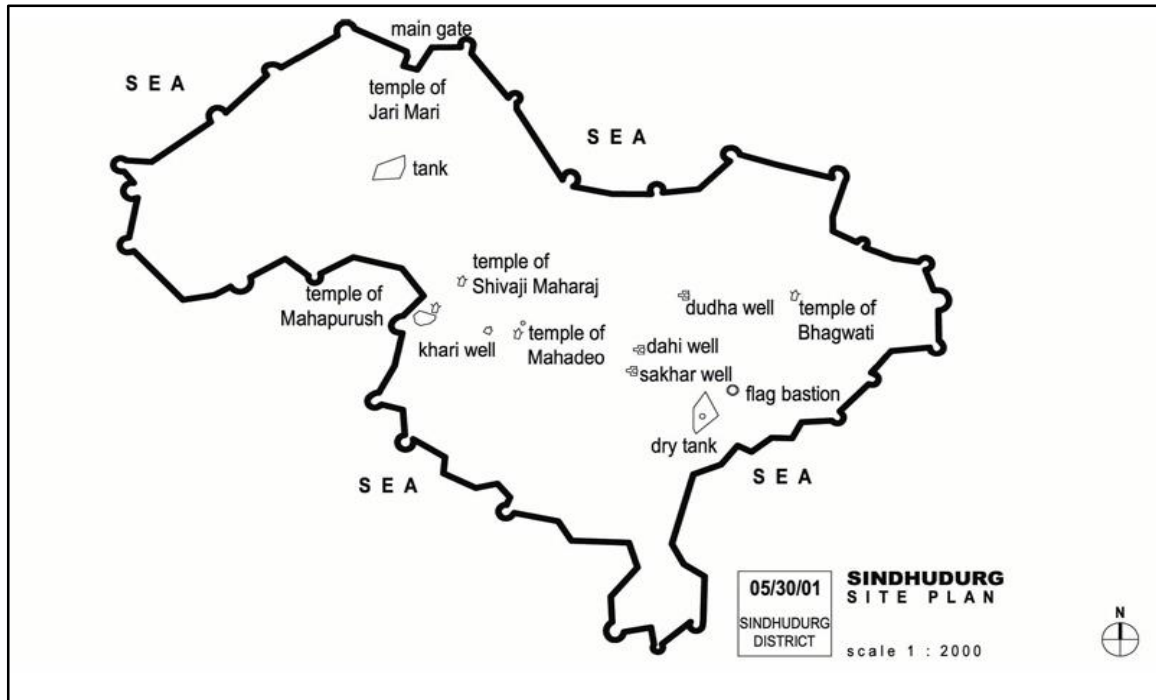


Source: internet

Map 15 : Map of Vasai fort.

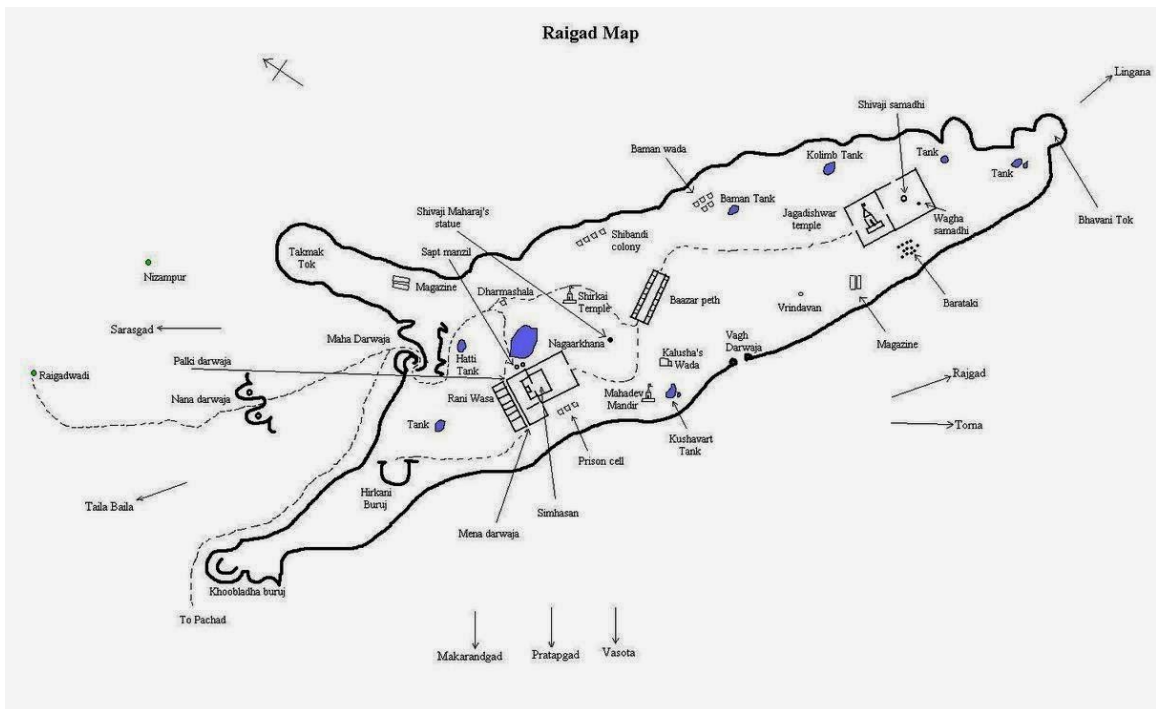


Map 16 : Site plan of Sindhudurg



Source: internet

Map 17 : Site plan of King's fort- Raigad.



Map 18 : Fort plan of Lohagad.

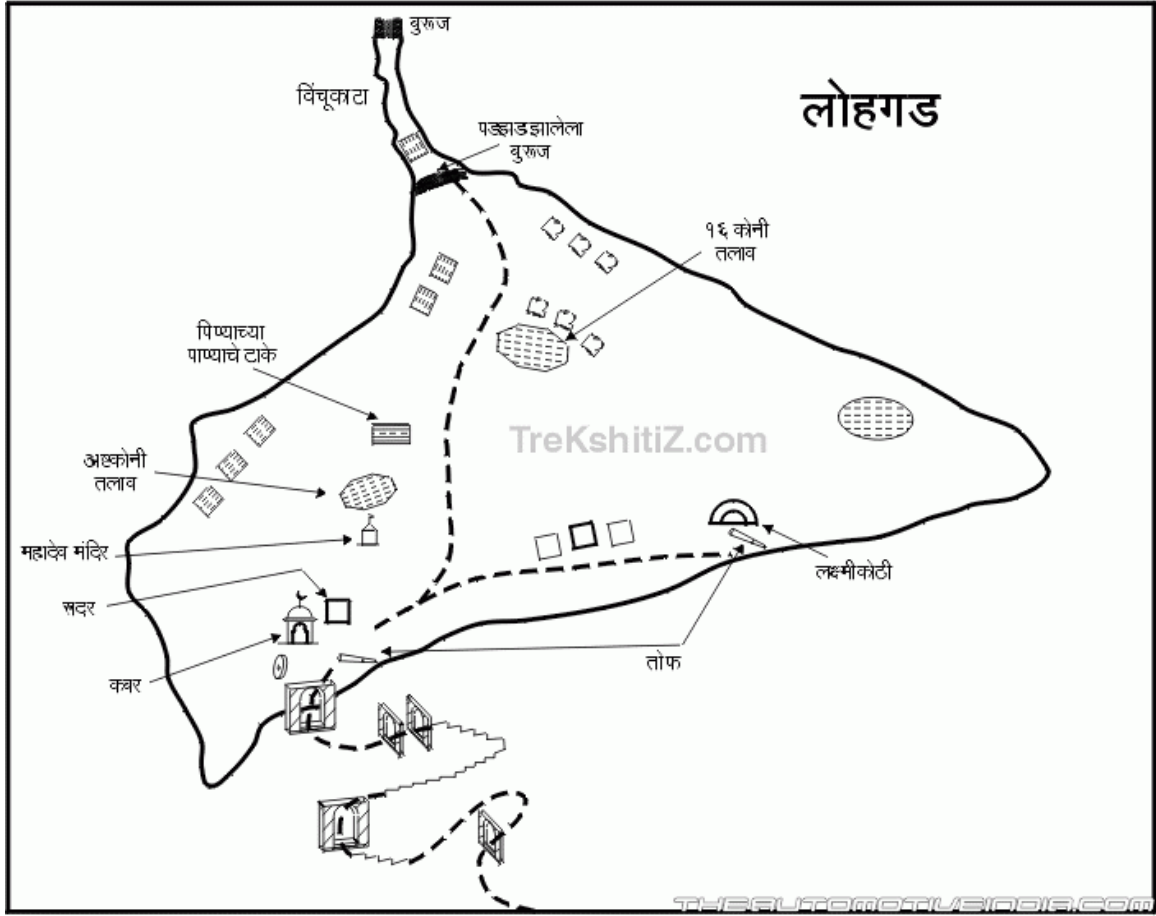


Image 1 : A typical Land fort or *Bhuikot*.

BHU DURG – LAND FORT

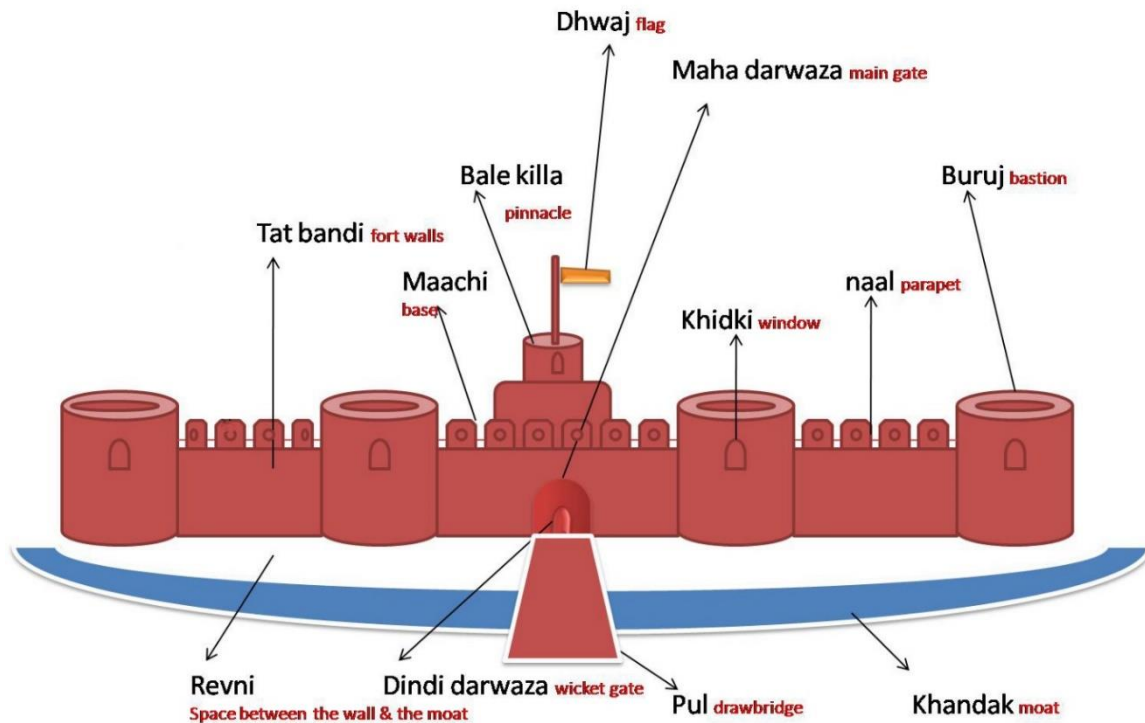
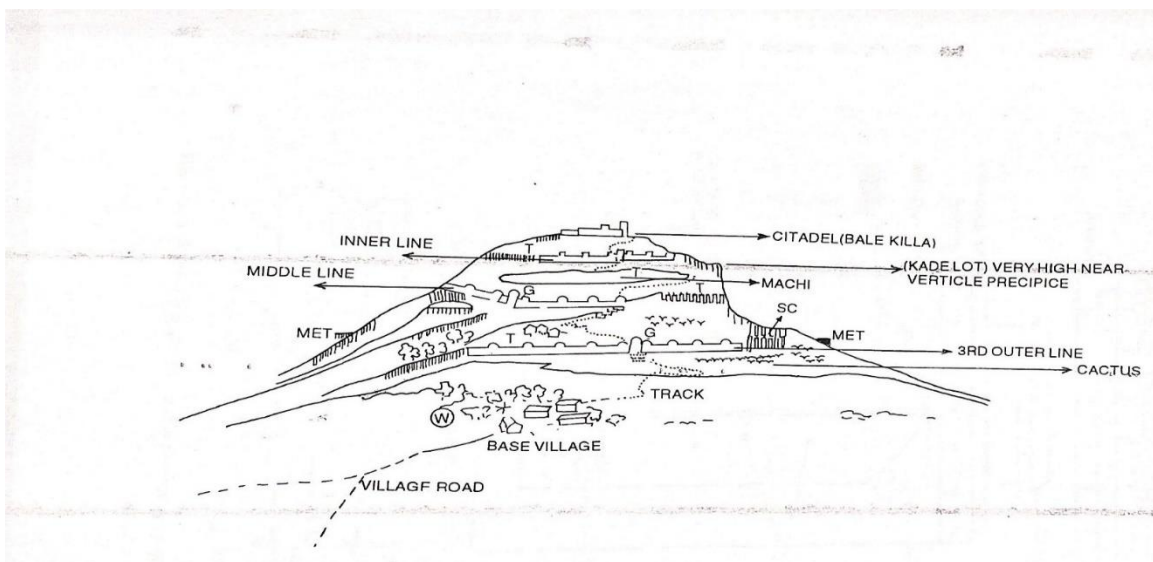
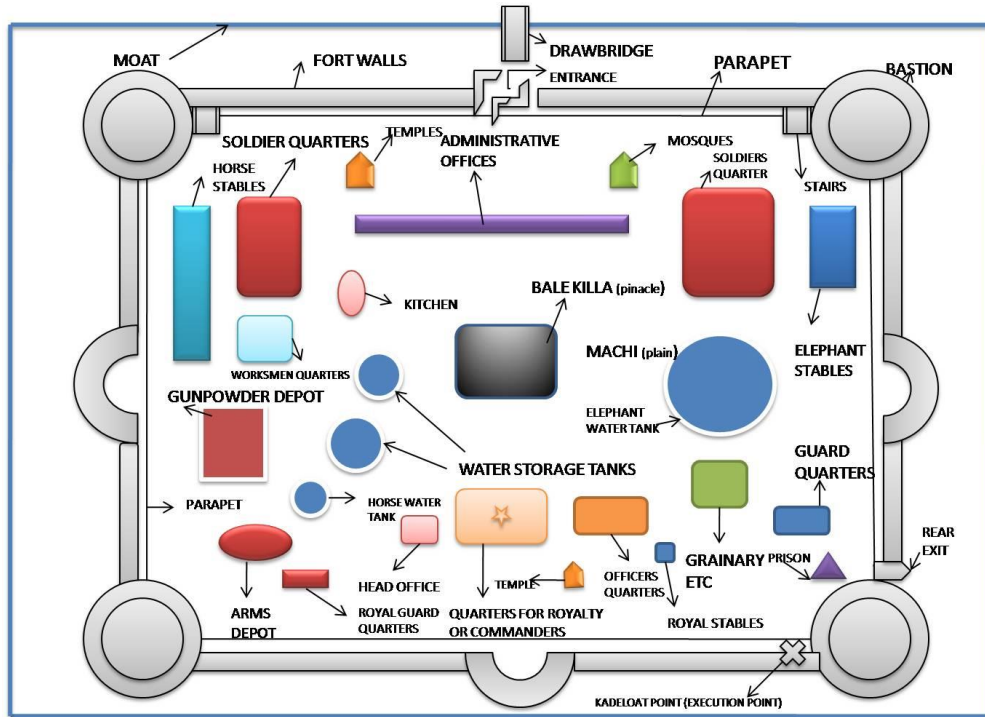


Image 2 : Diagrammatical representation of a hill fort



Source: *Forts of Maharashtra* (Book).

Image 3 : General plan of a Maratha fort.



CRUDE PLAN OF A FORT

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Image 4: Plan of Vellore fort- Karnataka forts.

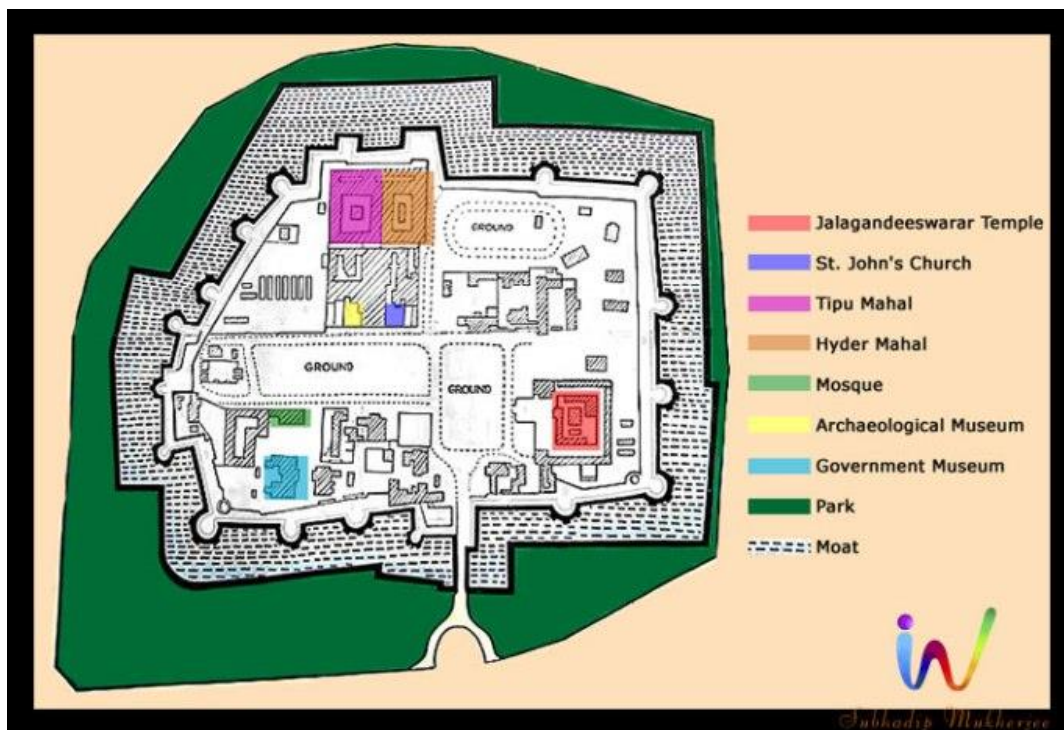
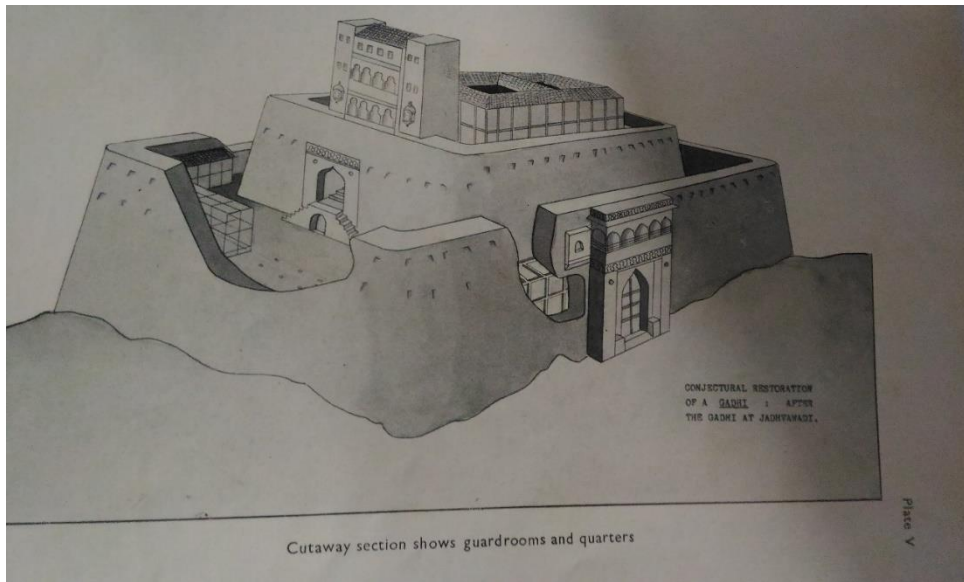


Image 5 : Image of a Maratha *gadi*



Source: *Maratha Architecture* (Book)

Image 6 : Simhagad fort, Poona Darwaza



Source : author

Image 7 : Way to Simhagad Fort



Source: author

Image 8 : Remains of *ghodyanchi paga* (Horse stable-inside and outside view), Simhagad fort



Source: author