

DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN MARATHA HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

According to Lois Dumont, “Caste is a psychological phenomenon.” In India Maharashtra state is one of the leading states. There is a lot of regional differences like Konkan, Vidarbha, Marathwada, Khandesh, Pashchim Maharashtra etc. So many caste and religious members are living in Maharashtra. In Maharashtra socio-economic practices are handled by agriculture as well as industrial sector. There is a political awareness and influence on local community. When we think of Maratha community then, we have to consider huge contribution and participation in politics, not just formally but local to state level politics. Maratha caste is known as upper caste in Maharashtra. So many rights, authorities and power, privileges have Maratha caste persons since ancient society. Marathas played a lead role in local as well as state level issues. As a researcher we have to find out what are the approaches to study of Marathas? How many aspects of Maratha history?

Key Word: Privileges

Introduction:

The establishment of the independent Maratha State and its expansion in the 18th century was responsible in fixing these boundary lines. Grant Duff writing in 1826 remarks, ‘Maharashtra is that space which is bounded on the north by the Sautpoora (Satpuda) mountains; and extends from Naundode on the west, along those mountains, to the Wyne Ganga (Wainganga), east of Nagpur. The western bank of that river forms a part of the eastern boundary until it falls into the Wurda (Wardha). From the junction of these rivers, it may be traced up the east bank of Wurda to Manikdroog (Manik-durg), and thence westward to Mahoor (Mahur). From this last place a waving line may be extended to Goa, whilst on the west it is bounded by the ocean.’ Elphinstone practically bears out what Duff has said.

The main characteristic of India is cultural diversity. There are so many customs, morals, ethical concepts and religions also castes. Different life styles, different values. Maharashtra State has also been known by Marathi culture. There are so many religions, castes and tribes like Brahmin, Marathas are much influenced castes in this State. M.N. Shrinivas coined the both concepts are Sanskritization and Westernization. It is applicable in Maharashtra regarding upper castes.

What kind of people occupied this tract in the 18th century and made it famous in history? To outsiders the people of Maharashtra are known by the generic term Mahrathas or Marathas, though in the State itself the term is restricted to the community which follows the agricultural profession and forms the backbone of its society. Though there are divisions of castes and sub-castes, the differences are not so sharply marked as in other States and the striking feature of the homogeneity has been remarked upon by anthropologists from the days of Risley (1908).

The reasons for this homogeneity lie in the racial composition of the people, the rise of the Maratha language and its use by all classes of people, the religious reform movement of the middle ages which attacked Brahmin orthodoxy, breathed a liberal spirit and made men feel equal, and the prominent part played in the political history of the country by the great peasant community of the Marathas, from which sprang not only Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha State but several other notable families and which in a way moulded the way of life of the people of the region.

The people of Maharashtra are of mixed origin: the migrating Aryans from the north came in contact with the earlier residents of the region and in the course of centuries came to form the Maratha people. The Aryans came in three waves as is evinced by the *Puranic*

legends of Parasuram and Agasti; they came much earlier than the Sakas or Scythians who came on the scene much later and who were supposed to be the progenitors of the Marathas.

Research Methodology:

The present research paper is dependent secondary data like articles, books, research papers, journals and internet etc.

Objectives:

1. To know the Culture of Maratha history in Maharashtra.
2. To understand the current status and position of Marathas in Maharashtra.

Culture and Status:

After Brahmin the next class in importance was the Marathas. The term had a much wider connotation than at present. It included not only the peasantry, but the shepherds and cowherds. With the exception of a few prominent families they were looked on as Sudras are the fourth class in the society. Col. Tone an officer in the *Pesva* army writing in 1798, remarks.¹ “the *Maratha* holds a very inferior situation in the scale of rank and eminence of Hindu institutions.

The Marathas, generally speaking, were an unlettered people. The priestly class studied a few religious tracts and memorized ritual which enabled it to conduct religious worship at temples and at private houses and ceremonies on occasions of birth initiation, marriage, death, etc. The Puraniks read to the gatherings the stories from Puranas and mixed their recitation with philosophical dissertations about the nature of God, of the universe and of human destiny in the scheme. The rest of the Brahmins and Kayastha Prabhus were literate, But their learning did not go beyond the knowledge of reading, writing and a little arithmetic. Good handwriting and knowledge of accounts were looked on as great assets and found for the possessor a place in the establishment of a big *inamdar*, *jagirdar* or *Mamlatdar* of the district. If he had a patron at the court he would go to the capital and be absorbed in the central secretariat, the *Dafter*.

Current position of Maratha Community:

Maratha persons are mostly involved in politics. They are also busy in political awareness and issues. State politics influenced by Marathas. A huge figure of past chief minister of Maharashtra state is Marathas as well as Member of Assembly (MLA) also most of the Marathas. Maharashtrian festivals are Gudhi Padawa, Dashahera, Diwali, Ganpati and etc. Maratha caste has a power, privileges and authorities. Maratha persons are holding on local community. They are very interested in political and social issues since ancient period. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and his *Mavales* are ideal of Marathas as well as all. When we think about current position of Marathas, than we have to consider educationally, socially, economically and politically position of Marathas. Now Marathas are struggling for reservation policy. They want to include them in reserve scheme of state government.

Conclusion:

Actions of political and social determine our status in society. Local villagers also citizens are consider their leaders like a versatile personality and Marathas are very active in political issues since ancient period. Old lead work of Marathas is Agriculture sector and Politics but now we can see so many Marathas busy in so many services and fields like corporate sectors, industrial sectors, import export business etc. The researcher trying to know the Culture of Maratha history in Maharashtra state. As well as understand the current status and position of Marathas in Maharashtra.

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