

**Kolis એ બ્રિફ હિસ્ટ્રી ઓફ:**

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## પરિચય

આ લેખ મૂળ બોડાલીના કેશવલાલ જેરામભાઈ પટેલ દ્વારા લખવામાં આવ્યો હતો - તે આપણામાંથી મોટાભાગના લોકો "KJ" તરીકે ઓળખાય છે. તેમણે 1948 માં પૂર્વ આફ્રિકામાં તેમના પિતા સાથે જોડાવા માટે ભારત છોડી દીધું, જ્યાં તેમણે કેન્યાના નૈરોબીમાં થોડો સમય અભ્યાસ કર્યો અને કામ કર્યું. 1971માં તેઓ તેમની પત્ની અને ત્રણ બાળકો સાથે યુકેમાં સ્થાયી થયા. તેઓ ચાર્ટર્ડ મેનેજમેન્ટ એકાઉન્ટન્ટ (ICMA) છે, જે હવે નિવૃત્ત છે. તેમણે નવસારી જિલ્લાના ગ્રામજનોના કલ્યાણમાં ઊંડો રસ લીધો છે અને 1983માં ભારતની તેમની બીજી મુલાકાત વખતે કંઠા વિભાગ ફેન્ડશિપ ટ્રસ્ટની સ્થાપના કરી જેના દ્વારા તેઓ તે ગામોમાં વિવિધ વિકાસ પ્રોજેક્ટોને પ્રોત્સાહન આપે છે.

કેજેએ આ લેખની પ્રથમ આવૃત્તિ લખી હતી જે 2010 માં “ભારતના ઐતિહાસિક લોકોની વાર્તા – ધ કોલીસ” શીર્ષક હેઠળ જારી કરવામાં આવી હતી જેમાં મુખ્ય જાતિ તરીકે માંઘાતા પટેલો (સંદર્ભ 1) પર ધ્યાન કેન્દ્રિત કર્યું હતું. કારણ કે તેમણે ઓળખ્યું છે કે વર્ષોથી આપણા યુવાનો/યુવાન પેઢીઓ ભારતની બહાર જન્મે છે, તેઓ ગુજરાતી ભાષા, સાંસ્કૃતિક વારસો અને પૂર્વજોની ઉત્પત્તિથી ઓછા અને ઓછા પરિચિત થતા જાય છે. તેમણે એક પુસ્તિકામાં આપણા પૂર્વજોની ઉત્પત્તિ વિશે ઘણું બધું લાવવા માટે એક વિશાળ પ્રયાસ કર્યો છે; તેમનો ભારત પ્રવાસ, ગામડાઓ/નગરોમાં સ્થાનિક લોકો સાથે અસંખ્ય વાર્તાલાપ, અને તેમના સાથીદારો પાસેથી સંશોધનની સલાહ લેવી, જેથી વર્તમાન અને ભાવિ પેઢી બંને તેમના મૂળથી વધુ પરિચિત થઈ શકે અને ઐતિહાસિક પૃષ્ઠભૂમિ અને પરીક્ષણો બંનેની પ્રશંસા કરી શકે અને તેમના પૂર્વજોની મુશ્કેલીઓ. તેમને આશા છે કે આનાથી અન્ય લોકોને આ ક્ષેત્રમાં વધુ સંશોધન હાથ ધરવા પ્રેરણા મળશે. KJ એ શોધવામાં મદદ કરી અને નૈરોબીમાં માંઘાતા મંડળના સમિતિના સભ્ય હતા. તેઓ યુકે ગયા પછી, તેઓ 1972માં વેમ્બલી માંઘાતા યુથ એન્ડ કોમ્યુનિટી એસોસિએશનના સ્થાપક સભ્યોમાંના એક પણ હતા અને પ્રમુખ અને ટ્રસ્ટી બંને તરીકે સેવા આપી છે - તેઓ આજે પણ તે સમુદાયમાં સક્રિય છે.

આકૃતિ 1 : કેશવલાલ જેરામભાઈ પટેલ - કે.જે.

અશોક ઉકાભાઈ પટેલ, લેખક, કે.જે.ની પરવાનગીથી, આ સૌથી મહત્વપૂર્ણ પુસ્તિકાને અપડેટ કરવા અને ઉમેરવાનું કામ હાથ ધર્યું છે, જેમાં વિશ્વભરમાં કોળીઓના આપણા મૂળ, ઇતિહાસ અને સ્થળાંતરની વિગતો આપવામાં આવી છે. આ અહેવાલમાં યોગદાન આપવું તે તેમના માટે સન્માનની વાત છે અને ખાસ કરીને નકશા અને ચિત્રો ઉમેરવાથી, બધા માટે સમગ્ર પંજાબમાં કોળીઓના સ્થળાંતર ઇતિહાસ અને દક્ષિણ ગુજરાતમાં તેમના અંતિમ વસાહતની પ્રશંસા કરવાનું સરળ બનાવવું જોઈએ.

આ દસ્તાવેજમાંથી કેટલાક ભાગોમાં "ભારે" વાંચન બની શકે છે, ખાસ કરીને નવા વાચકો માટે; તે વિસ્તારો પર બહુ લાંબો સમય ન રહો, પરંતુ કોલીઓએ કેવી રીતે સ્થળાંતર કર્યું અને પોતાની જાતને વધુ સારી બનાવી તેની મૂળભૂત સમજ મેળવવા અને વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે આપણે કેટલા ફેલાયેલા છીએ તેની પ્રશંસા મેળવવા માટે. તમને સલાહ આપવામાં આવે છે કે આ દસ્તાવેજના અંતે પરિશિષ્ટ અને શબ્દાવલિનો ઉપયોગ તમારા પ્રશ્નના પ્રથમ મુદ્દા તરીકે કરો.

આ બીજી આવૃત્તિનું નિર્માણ મુખ્ય સમીક્ષક તરીકે KJ સાથે કરવામાં આવ્યું છે.

આકૃતિ 2 : અશોક ઉકાભાઈ પટેલ

## કોળી એટલે શું?

નીચે ફક્ત **Google** ને પૂછવાનાં કેટલાક પરિણામો છે “કોળી શું છે” :

1. આદિવાસી માછીમારી સમુદાય તરીકે કોળી લોકોનો સમૃદ્ધ ઇતિહાસ છે. તેઓ રાજસ્થાન, ગુજરાત અને મહારાષ્ટ્ર રાજ્યોના વતની હતા. આજે, તેઓ મુંબઈ સહિત દક્ષિણ ગુજરાત અને ઉત્તર પશ્ચિમ મહારાષ્ટ્રના નવસારી અને વલસાડ જિલ્લાઓ જેવા અમુક વિસ્તારો સુધી મર્યાદિત છે.

2. ભારત સરકારે 2001 માં મધ્યપ્રદેશ, ગુજરાત અને રાજસ્થાન રાજ્યો માટે અનુસૂચિત જાતિની સૂચિ હેઠળ કોળીઓને વર્ગીકૃત કર્યા છે, જ્યારે તેઓ અનુસૂચિત જનજાતિની સૂચિ હેઠળ પણ દેખાય છે. જો કે, તેમનું જીવન સત્તાવાર વર્ગીકરણની બહાર છે; તેમનો ઉત્સાહ, જીવંતતા અને નિર્ભયતા સમુદાયને માત્ર એક માછીમારી સમુદાય કરતાં વધુ બનાવે છે.

3. કોળી લોકોના રેકોર્ડ ઓછામાં ઓછા 15મી સદીથી અસ્તિત્વમાં છે, જ્યારે શાસકોએ હાલના ગુજરાત પ્રદેશના તેમના સરદારોને લૂંટારાઓ અને તરીકે નોંધ્યા હતા **ડાકુઓ**. ઘણી સદીઓના સમયગાળા દરમિયાન, તેમાંના કેટલાક સમગ્ર પ્રદેશમાં નાના વડાઓ સ્થાપવામાં સક્ષમ હતા, જેમાં મોટે ભાગે માત્ર એક જ ગામનો સમાવેશ થતો હતો. ન હોવા છતાં **રાજપૂતો**, આ કોળીઓના પ્રમાણમાં નાના સબસેટ ઉચ્ચ-ક્રમાંકિત રાજપૂત સમુદાયના દરજ્જાનો દાવો કરે છે, તેમના રિવાજો અપનાવે છે અને હાઇપરગેમસ લગ્ન (પોતાની જાતિ સિવાયની જ્ઞાતિ સાથે લગ્ન) ની પ્રથા દ્વારા ઓછા નોંધપાત્ર રાજપૂત પરિવારો સાથે ભળી જાય છે. સામાન્ય રીતે સામાજિક દરજ્જો વધારવા અથવા સુરક્ષિત કરવા માટે વપરાય છે. સમગ્ર કોળી સમુદાયમાં દરજ્જામાં નોંધપાત્ર તફાવત હતા, તેમ છતાં, અને ભૌગોલિક રીતે અથવા સાંપ્રદાયિક ધોરણોની દ્રષ્ટિએ થોડો સંયોગ હતો, જેમ કે અંતર્વિવાહીય લગ્ન જૂથોની સ્થાપના. (વિકિપીડિયા)

4. કોળી એ પશ્ચિમ ભારતના ભાગોમાં વસતી આદિવાસી વસ્તીને આવરી લેતો અસ્પષ્ટ શબ્દ છે. જો કે પરંપરાગત રીતે કણબીઓ, આ પ્રદેશની ખેતી કરતી જાતિ કરતાં હલકી કક્ષાની આદિજાતિ તરીકે વર્ગીકૃત કરવામાં આવી હતી, તેમ છતાં, કોળીઓને હવે કેટલાક વિસ્તારોમાં હિન્દુ જાતિ તરીકે નિયુક્ત કરવામાં આવ્યા છે. શક્ય છે કે આદિજાતિનું નામ સંસ્કૃતપરથી પડ્યું હોય, કુળજનો અર્થ થાય છે "કુળ." કોળીઓમાં અસંખ્ય જૂથો અને પેટા જૂથો છે, જેઓ અંત:વિવાહીત હોય છે, એટલે કે તેઓ અન્ય પ્રદેશોના કોળીઓ સાથે લગ્ન કરતા નથી. આમ કોળીઓ એક એકવિધ અસ્તિત્વને બદલે આદિવાસીઓ અથવા જાતિઓનો સમૂહ છે. કેટલાક લેખકો સૂચવે છે કે અંગ્રેજી શબ્દ કુલી, જેનો અર્થ પોર્ટર અથવા ભાડે લેનાર, કોલી (બ્રિટાનિકા) પરથી આવ્યો છે.

કોળી ઉત્પત્તિ, સ્થાન અને જીવન વિશે અજાણ હોય તેવા કોઈપણ માટે, ઉપરોક્ત વ્યાખ્યાઓ મૂળભૂત છાપ આપે છે કે કોળીઓ છે :

- મુખ્યત્વે ભારતના ઉત્તર અને ઉત્તર પશ્ચિમ સુધી સીમિત
- મૂળ માછીમાર અને ખેડૂતો અને મજૂરી કામ કરતા હતા
- નિર્ભીક અને સામાન્ય રીતે ઉત્સાહિત

જો કે, વાચકને તેમના મૂળ ઘરથી ભારતમાં સ્થળાંતર વિશે વાકેફ કરવામાં આવતું નથી. નોંધ કરો કે ત્યાં સાહિત્ય (અને કદાચ લોકો) છે જે કોલી માટે અલગ જોડણી/ઉચ્ચારનો ઉપયોગ કરે છે - કોરી અથવા કોલ છે.

ઘણા લોકો માટે, જો આપણે બધા નહીં, તો આપણા જીવનમાં એવો સમય આવે છે જ્યારે આપણા મનમાં પ્રશ્ન ઉદ્ભવે છે કે આપણા મૂળ વિશે - આપણા પૂર્વજો કોણ હતા? તેઓ ક્યાંથી આવ્યા? તેઓ કેવી રીતે જીવ્યા? જેઓ અત્યંત અમારા મૂળને અન્વેષણ કરવા માગે છે તેમના માટે આગળ વાંચો. આ પૂછપરછનો સ્પષ્ટ પ્રારંભિક બિંદુ અમારા પિતા અને દાદા દ્વારા તેમના ગામો/નગરોમાંના તેમના અનુભવો અને જ્યારે તેઓ વધુ સારા જીવનની શોધમાં વિદેશી ભૂમિ પર સ્થળાંતર કરે છે ત્યારે તેમની મુસાફરી અને જીવન વિશે કહેલી વાર્તાઓનું આપણું પોતાનું પ્રથમ જ્ઞાન હોઈ શકે છે. અમે આશા રાખીએ છીએ કે આ દસ્તાવેજના વાચક કોળીઓનું સ્પષ્ટ ચિત્ર મેળવશે અને ભારત અને વૈશ્વિક સ્તરે ભૂતકાળમાં અને વર્તમાન સમયમાં આપેલા મહત્વપૂર્ણ યોગદાનની પ્રશંસા કરશે.

કોળી જનજાતિના ઐતિહાસિક નાયકો

ઐતિહાસિક તારણો સૂચવે છે કે આપણા વંશે તેમની સિદ્ધિઓનો એક પ્રખ્યાત રેકોર્ડ છોડી દીધો છે જેના પર આપણે ગર્વ કરી શકીએ. સૌથી પ્રાચીન રાજા માંઘાતા, એક સર્વોચ્ચ અને સાર્વત્રિક શાસક, જેમની પ્રતિષ્ઠા સમગ્ર ભારતમાં દૂર દૂર સુધી ફેલાયેલી છે અને જેમની બહાદુરી અને યજ્ઞ (એ)ની વાર્તાઓ મોહેંજો-દરો (રેફ 2) ખાતે પથ્થરની કોતરણીમાં વર્ણવવામાં આવી છે, જે હવે વિભાજન પછી પાકિસ્તાનમાં સ્થિત છે. 1947 માં, આ આદિજાતિના હોવાનું કહેવાય છે.

આકૃતિ 3 : મોહેંજો-દરો અને આસપાસના વિસ્તારો

આકૃતિ 4 : મોહેંજો-દરોનું ખોવાયેલ શહેર



સૌથી પ્રાચીન અને આદરણીય ઋષિ વાલ્મીકિ, રામાયણના લેખક આ જાતિના હોવાનું કહેવાય છે. આજે પણ, મહારાષ્ટ્ર રાજ્યમાં રામાયણને કોળી વાલ્મીકિ રામાયણ તરીકે ઓળખવામાં આવે છે. રામાયણના ઉપદેશો આપણી ભારતીય સંસ્કૃતિનો આધાર છે:

- મહાન રાજા ચંદ્ર ગુપ્ત મૌર્ય અને તેમના વંશજ રાજાઓ કોળી જાતિના હતા.
- ભગવાન બુદ્ધની માતા અને પત્ની બંને કોળી જાતિના હતા.
- સંત કબીર (1440-1518), એક રહસ્યવાદી કવિ અને વેપાર દ્વારા વણકર, તેમણે 'કહેત કબીર કોરી' સાથે તેમના ઘણા ભજનોનો અંત કર્યો, તે એક સ્વ-કબૂલ કોળી હતો.
- સૌરાષ્ટ્રના ભક્તરાજ ભાદુરદાસ અને ભક્તરાજ વાલરામ, જૂનાગઢના ગિરનારી સંત વેલનાથજી, ભક્તરાજ જોબનપગી, સંત શ્રી કોયા ભગત, સંત ધુધલીનાથ, મદન ભગત, 17મી અને 18મી સદીના સાની કાનજી સ્વામી બધા કોળી જાતિના હતા. તેમના જીવન અને પ્રતિષ્ઠાનું વર્ણન તેમના જીવનચરિત્રમાં અને નીચેના પ્રકાશનો - મુંબઈ સમાચાર, નૂતન ગુજરાત અને પરમાર્થ નિકેતનમાં છપાયેલા લેખોમાં કરવામાં આવ્યું છે.
- મહારાષ્ટ્ર રાજ્યમાં, શિવાજીના કમાન્ડર-ઇન-ચીફ અને તેમના કેટલાક સેનાપતિઓ કોળી જાતિના હતા. શિવાજીના મનપસંદ કોળી સેનાપતિ, તાનાજી રાવ માલુસરે હતા અને તેમનું હુલામણું નામ 'માય લાયન' રાખ્યું હતું. તાનાજી બાદમાં કોડાના કિલ્લાની જીતમાં લડતા મૃત્યુ પામ્યા જેનું શિવાજીએ તેમની યાદમાં નામ બદલીને 'સિંહ ગઢ' (સિંહનો કિલ્લો) રાખ્યું. 'મરાઠાઓનો ઇતિહાસ' (સંદર્ભ 3 જુઓ) શિવાજીની સેનાની બહાદુરીને ગર્વ સાથે નોંધે છે જેમાં મુખ્યત્વે માવલી અને કોળીઓનો સમાવેશ થાય છે.
- 1857માં બ્રિટિશ રાજ સામેના બળવા દરમિયાન, સંખ્યાબંધ કોળી મહિલા લડવૈયાઓએ લક્ષ્મીબાઈ (1828-1858) ના જીવનને બચાવવા માટે મહત્વની ભૂમિકા ભજવી હતી, જેઓ ઝાંસી ની રાણી/યોદ્ધા રાણી તરીકે ઓળખાય છે, જે અગ્રણી વ્યક્તિઓમાંની એક હતી. પ્રતિકારનું પ્રતીક બની ગયું (જુઓ ફિલ્મ મણિકર્ણિકા: ધ ક્વીન ઓફ ઝાંસી (2019)).

ભારતની આદિવાસી જાતિઓનો અભ્યાસ કરવા માટે, વિદ્વાનોએ આપણા સૌથી પ્રાચીન રેકોર્ડ્સ અને દસ્તાવેજો - વેદ, પુરાણ, વિવિધ ભાષાઓમાં મહાકાવ્યો, ઘણા પુરાતત્વીય રેકોર્ડ્સ અને નોંધો અને અન્ય વિવિધ પ્રકાશનોની સલાહ લીધી છે. ઇતિહાસ અને નૃવંશશાસ્ત્રના વિદ્યાર્થીઓએ ભારતના તમામ પ્રાગૈતિહાસિક અને

સ્થાપિત ઇતિહાસમાં ભારતની આ પ્રાચીન જનજાતિના ઝળહળતા ભૂતકાળના અસંખ્ય દાખલાઓ શોધી કાઢ્યા છે અને સંશોધન ચાલુ હોવાથી વધુને ઉજાગર કરવામાં આવી રહ્યું છે. સદીઓથી, વિવિધ વિદ્વાનોએ આ વિષય પર તેમના તારણો વિશે લખ્યું છે અને વિવિધ વિદ્વાનો દ્વારા સંખ્યાબંધ ભારતીય ભાષાઓમાં વિવિધ ગ્રંથો ચલણમાં છે. કોળી જનજાતિ, જે તેના વિવિધ પેટાજૂથોમાં આશરે 1050 જેટલી હોવાનું કહેવાય છે, તેનો ઉલ્લેખ સદીઓથી સતત થાય છે - મોહંજો-દરો (પાકિસ્તાનમાં) અને તેનાથી આગળ. ઇતિહાસકારો અને વિદ્વાનો નોંધે છે કે ક્ષત્રિય જાતિની કોળી જાતિ સમગ્ર ભારતમાં દૂર દૂર સુધી ફેલાયેલી હતી. તેમના પરાક્રમી પરાક્રમો અને સ્વીકૃત પ્રતિષ્ઠા અને તે સમયના સૌથી શક્તિશાળી લોકો સાથેના સંબંધોને કારણે તેઓને ધાક અને આદર સાથે ગણવામાં આવતા હતા. આમ કોળી સમાજે વિશ્વને મહાન પુત્રો અને પુત્રીઓ ઉત્પન્ન કર્યા છે અને તેમનો ઇતિહાસ સાર્વત્રિક મહત્વ અને આધુનિક જીવન જીવવા માટે સુસંગત છે.

## દારોના રાજા માંધાતા

મોહંજો-પુરાતત્વીય તારણો પૂર્વે 5000-3000 સમયગાળાના હોવાનો અંદાજ છે. ત્યાંના પથ્થરના શિલાલેખો મહાન કોળી રાજાઓ અને તેમના પંચાયત રાજ (પંચાયત એટલે પાંચ (પંચ) અને શાસન (રાજ))નું વર્ણન કરે છે. પરંપરાગત રીતે, પંચાયતો વયોવૃદ્ધ અને સમજદાર લોકો હતા, જેઓ સ્થાનિક સમુદાય દ્વારા વ્યક્તિઓ અને ગામો વચ્ચેના વિવાદોના સમાધાન માટે પસંદ કરવામાં આવતા હતા. પંચાયતના નેતા (મુખ્ય અથવા સરપંચ) આલાગુ કરશે તેમના સામ્રાજ્યમાં વહીવટનીપદ્ધતિ.

## આકૃતિ 5 : રાજા માંધાતા

અહીં વર્ણવેલ વિગતો શ્રી રઘુનાથ બ્રહ્મભટ્ટ (સંદર્ભ 4) દ્વારા ગુજરાતીમાં લખાયેલા લેખનું અનુવાદિત અને સંક્ષિપ્ત સંસ્કરણ છે.

રાજા માંઘાતા પૂર્વે 6000 ની આસપાસ રહેતા હોવાનો અંદાજ છે. તેમના લાંબા સમય પછી મહાન આત્માઓ શ્રી રામ, શ્રી કૃષ્ણ અને ભગવાન બુદ્ધનો જન્મ થયો હતો. જો કે, રાજા માંઘાતાની સિદ્ધિઓની મહાનતા એવી હતી કે અન્ય મહાન નેતાઓ સાથે સરખામણી કરતી વખતે એક ઘરગથ્થુ શબ્દસમૂહ આજે પણ સાર્વત્રિક ઉપયોગમાં આવે છે - 'શું તે માંઘાતા જેટલો મહાન હતો?'

રાજા માંઘાતાને બ્રહ્માની 15મી પેઢીમાં જન્મેલા સૂર્ય વંશના સૌથી તેજસ્વી તારા સાથે સરખાવવામાં આવ્યા છે. મહાન મનુ 5મી પેઢીના હતા અને માંઘાતા મનુ પછી 10મી પેઢીના હતા. માંઘાતા પછી 25મી પેઢીમાં શ્રીરામનો જન્મ થયો હોવાનું કહેવાય છે. ઈશ્વાકુ 'સૂર્ય વંશના કોળી રાજાઓ'ના બીજા મહાન રાજા હતા અને તેથી માંઘાતા અને શ્રી રામ ઈશ્વાકુ સૂર્ય વંશના હોવાનું કહેવાય છે (જે પાછળથી નવ મુખ્ય પેટા જૂથોમાં વિભાજિત થયા: મલ્લ, જનક, વિદેહી, કોલિયે, મોર્યા, લિચ્છવી, જનાત્રી, વજ્રજ અને શાક્ય) બધા તેમના મૂળ ક્ષત્રિય જાતિ (b) ને દાવો કરે છે.

ભારતીય પૌરાણિક કથા - માંઘાતાનો જન્મ.

રાજા યુવનેશ્વરને સો પત્નીઓ હતી પરંતુ તેમાંથી એકેય તેને પુત્ર થયો નથી. તેથી, તેમણે ઘણા ઋષિઓની સલાહ લીધી, જેમાંથી ભાર્ગવ ઋષિ તેમને પુત્ર પેદા કરવા માટે યજ્ઞ કરવા સંમત થયા. યજ્ઞના અંતે, રાજાને તેની રાણીને બીજા દિવસે સવારે ખાવા માટે અર્પણ કરવા માટે મંત્ર-ચારિત-પાણીનો એક વાસણ બાજુ પર રાખવામાં આવ્યો હતો. જો કે, રાત્રી દરમિયાન, રાજાને તરસ લાગી અને આશ્રમમાં પાણીની શોધમાં ગયો - તેણે વાસણ જોયું અને બળવાન પાણી પીધું. સમયાંતરે રાજા એક બાળકને લઈ ગયો, એક પુત્ર, જે રાજાનું પેટ કાપીને પ્રસૂતિ પામ્યો. ભગવાન ઈન્દ્રને આ અનોખી ઘટનાની જાણ થઈ અને તે શિશુને જોવા આવ્યા. તે સમયે દૂધ માટે રડતા બાળકને કોણ ખવડાવશે અને તેનું રક્ષણ કરશે તે પ્રશ્નના જવાબમાં, ઈન્દ્રએ કહ્યું- "રડશો નહીં, બાળક, તું વાઇન (માન ઘાતા) પીશે" અને બાળકે તેની તર્જનીને ચૂસ્યું. આ ક્ષણથી, બાળકને માંઘાતા કહેવામાં આવતું હતું જેણે પાછળથી ઈન્દ્ર પાસેથી યુદ્ધની કળા શીખી હતી અને તેના અજેય તીરંદાજનું ધનુષ્ય મેળવ્યું હતું. રાજા માંઘાતા, તેમની શ્રેષ્ઠ શક્તિ, જ્ઞાન અને સુસજ્જ સૈન્ય સાથે આસપાસના ઘણા રાજ્યો પર વિજય મેળવતા ગયા, વાર્ષિક કર ચૂકવવાના બદલામાં તે પરાજિત રાજાઓને પુનઃસ્થાપિત કર્યા, જેના પાલનની ખાતરી કરવા માટે આવા દરેક રાજ્યમાં એક રાજદૂત પણ સ્થાપિત કરવામાં આવ્યો હતો. સુશાસન. તે રાજાઓ રાજા માંઘાતાના રક્ષણનો પણ આનંદ માણશે જેમણે એક વખત તેમના પોતાના ગોડફાધર ઈન્દ્ર સામે લડવું અને હરાવવાનું હતું, જેમણે પાછળથી તેમને રાક્ષસ, રાજા લવણાસુર સામે લડવા માટે પડકાર આપ્યો.

ટ્રેક સમયમાં, રાજા લવણાસુર સાથે યુદ્ધની તક ઉભી થઈ - રાજા માંઘાતા અને તેની સેના કોઈ પણ પ્રતિકાર વિના લવણાસુરના રાજ્યમાં સીધા કૂચ કરી. જેમ જેમ સાંજ આવી રહી હતી, રાજા માંઘાતાએ બીજા દિવસે લવણાસુરને કબજે કરવાની યોજના બનાવીને રાત માટે પડાવ નાખવાનું નક્કી કર્યું. જો કે, લવણાસુરના સૈનિકો તે રાત્રે છાવણીમાં ધૂસી ગયા અને રાજા માંઘાતાને ઊંઘમાં મારી નાખ્યા.

રાજા માંઘાતાના વંશજોએ મહત્વપૂર્ણ ભૂમિકા ભજવી હતી અને આપણા પ્રાચીન વેદ, મહાકાવ્યો અને અન્ય અવશેષો યુદ્ધો અને રાજ્ય વહીવટમાં તેમના મહત્વપૂર્ણ યોગદાનનો ઉલ્લેખ કરે છે.

પ્રારંભિક ઇતિહાસ - ભગવાન બુદ્ધ

ઈ.સ. પૂર્વે 566 દરમિયાન જ્યારે હિંદુ ધર્મ ફૂર બન્યો અને સંપૂર્ણ રીતે અધોગતિ પામ્યો ત્યારે રાજકુમાર ગૌતમ, જે પાછળથી બુદ્ધ (પ્રબુદ્ધ વ્યક્તિ) તરીકે વિશ્વમાં ઓળખાય છે, તેનો જન્મ રોહિણી નદીના કાંઠે એક નાનકડા રાજ્યમાં થયો હતો. ઉત્તર પશ્ચિમ ભારતમાં હિમાલયની ખીણ. ભગવાન બુદ્ધની માતા મહામાયા કોળી રાજકુમારી હતી. જ્યારે ગૌતમ, જેઓ પછીથી ભગવાન બુદ્ધ બનવાના હતા, તેણે રાજકુમારીના ગુણોનું વર્ણન કર્યું કે તે લગ્ન કરવા તૈયાર થશે, ત્યારે તેના માતાપિતાએ નક્કી કર્યું કે આવી રાજકુમારી કોળી રાજ્યમાં જ મળી શકે છે. ગૌતમે યશોદારા સાથે લગ્ન કર્યા અને તેમને એક પુત્ર રાહુલ થયો. જન્મ પછી તરત જ, ગૌતમે 29 વર્ષની ઉંમરે ઘર છોડી દીધું, દુનિયાની બિમારીઓનો જવાબ શોધવા અને એકાંત જીવન જીવ્યું. છ વર્ષની શોધ પછી, બૌદ્ધો માને છે કે ગૌતમને બોધિ વૃક્ષ નીચે ધ્યાન કરતી વખતે જ્ઞાન મળ્યું હતું. આ આધ્યાત્મિક સ્થિતિ કેવી રીતે પ્રાપ્ત કરવી તે વિશે અન્ય લોકોને શીખવવામાં તેણે બાકીનું જીવન પસાર કર્યું. યશોદારા, પછીના જીવનમાં બૌદ્ધ સાધુ બની.

આકૃતિ 6 : ભગવાન બુદ્ધ

ભગવાન બુદ્ધ

વર્ષોની તીવ્ર તપસ્યા, અભ્યાસ અને ધ્યાન પછી, ગૌતમ પ્રબુદ્ધ બન્યા - બુદ્ધ. ભગવાન બુદ્ધના ઉપદેશોને ઉચ્ચ જાતિના સનાતન વૈદિક હિંદુઓના નિહિત હિતોના જોખમ તરીકે જોવામાં આવ્યા હતા. ટ્રેક સમયમાં જ, બુદ્ધના ઉપદેશો અને અનુયાયીઓને ભારતમાંથી સંપૂર્ણપણે હાંકી કાઢવામાં આવ્યા. એવું લાગે છે કે બુદ્ધ સાથેના તેમના સંબંધો અને લગાવ ધરાવતા કોળી રજવાડાઓએ આ સતાવણીનો સૌથી વધુ ભોગ લીધો હતો. મોટા ભાગના લોકોએ ક્યારેય બૌદ્ધ ઉપદેશોને સ્વીકાર્યા ન હોવા છતાં, તેઓને શાબ્દિક રીતે

બહાર કાઢવામાં આવ્યા હતા, જંગલો અને અન્ય દૂરના સ્થળોએ રહેવા માટે, અન્ય લોકો દ્વારા ઠંડા ખભા પર રહેવા અને શાસકો દ્વારા ઉપેક્ષા કરવામાં આવી હતી.

## AD 1000 પછીનો સમયગાળો

કોળી સામ્રાજ્યો માટે ખૂબ જ વધારે સાબિત થયો હોવો જોઈએ અને એક સમયે શક્તિશાળી મહેનતુ, કુશળ, વફાદાર, આત્મનિર્ભર (પરંતુ સરળતાથી યુદ્ધમાં ઉશ્કેરાયેલા) કોલીઓએ અત્યંત જટિલ હિંદુઓમાં તેમનું કેન્દ્રિય સ્થાન ગુમાવ્યું હોવું જોઈએ. સમાજ બોમ્બે (હવે મુંબઈ) ની સ્થાપના અને નિર્માણ કરનાર કોળી આદિજાતિ માટે, તેઓને રાજકીય અથવા શૈક્ષણિક પ્રભાવના હોદ્દા પર પહોંચવું આજ સુધી મુશ્કેલ લાગે છે. હવે સદીઓથી, અન્ય જાતિઓ કોળી (ક્ષત્રિય જાતિના) ને નીચું જોઈ રહી છે અને પરિણામી મનોવૈજ્ઞાનિક અસરો આ સમગ્ર સમુદાય માટે વિનાશક હતી, અપમાનજનક હતી અને 18મી સદીના અંતમાં પણ, નીચલા સ્તરે રહેવા કરતાં થોડી વધુ સારી હતી. તેમાંના મોટા ભાગના શક્તિવિહીન અને ઘરવિહોણા હતા, તેઓ સતત કામની શોધમાં હતા અને દેવાં ઉપર દોડતા હતા. ગરીબીના આ ચક્રમાં આવીને, તેઓનું હિંદુ સમાજની ઉચ્ચ જાતિઓ દ્વારા ભારે શોષણ કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું. પેઢીઓને બંધાયેલા મજૂરી(c) સાથે જોડવામાં આવી હતી અને તેમની સાથે ખરાબ વર્તન કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું; એક સમયે ગૌરવપૂર્ણ લોકો માટે, તેમની હતાશા એવી હતી કે તેઓ ગેંગ લૂટ, લૂંટફાટ, લૂંટફાટ અને ઊંચા સમુદ્ર પર ચાંચિયાગીરીમાં રોકાયેલા હતા.

પંજાબમાંથી કોળી હિજરત કરી અને પંજાબને

ઈ.સ. 1000 ની આસપાસ, અફઘાનિસ્તાનના રાજા બાદશાહેજીતી લીધું. તેણે અને તેના સૈનિકોએ હિંદુઓ પર ભારે અત્યાચાર કર્યો -

- તેઓને બળજબરીથી ઇસ્લામ ધર્મમાં પરિવર્તિત કરવામાં આવ્યા હતા
- મહિલાઓનું અપહરણ અને બળાત્કાર કરવામાં આવ્યો, જેમાંથી ઘણીએ પછી આત્મહત્યા કરી. અન્ય લોકો ઇસ્લામમાં રૂપાંતરિત થયા, અને ઇસ્લામિક વિધિઓમાં સૈનિકો સાથે લગ્ન કર્યા.

· સ્વામી સચ્ચિદાનંદ (ડી) એ નોંધ્યું છે કે એક હજાર વર્ષ પહેલાં વર્તમાન પટેલોના વડવાઓએ પંજાબમાં પ્રસિદ્ધ તક્ષશિલા યુનિવર્સિટી (આધુનિક પાકિસ્તાનમાં સ્થિત) નજીક ભારે મુશ્કેલીઓ સહન કરી હતી.

ઘણા હિંદુઓ આ અત્યાચારોથી બચવા માટે ચાલ્યા ગયા, તેઓ પંજાબ, પાકિસ્તાનના ગુજરાંવાલા જિલ્લાના લેવા, કરાડ અને અન્ય સેંકડો ગામોમાંથી હતા. આજે પણ, ત્યાં પંજાબ પાકિસ્તાન ગામો વિક્રમો (Vansavadia, Vahivanchas) Barots દ્વારા રાખવામાં દ્વારા ચકાસવામાં માં Kanbi અને Leava જ્ઞાતિના લોકો છે ભારતીય જાતિ માટેમૂળ, (ગુજરાત અને રાજસ્થાન પરંપરાગતતરીકે કામ કર્યું genealogists અને પુરાણકથાકારોએહતું).

પંજાબમાંથી હિજરતને કારણે તેઓ તેમના બળદ ગાડા પર બેસી શકે તેવો થોડો સામાન લઈને મારવડ માટે પ્રવાસ તરફ દોરી ગયા. તે સમયે, મારવડ પરમાર રાજાઓનું શાસન હતું અને ખાસ કરીને, રાજા રાજા ભોજા જેઓ એક મહાન વિદ્વાન અને નિર્માતા તરીકે વ્યાપકપણે જાણીતા હતા, તે પ્રવાસીઓના તે પ્રદેશ તરફ આકર્ષિત થવાનું મુખ્ય કારણ હતું. મારવડ ખૂબ ગીચ વસ્તી ધરાવતું હતું અને ત્યાંથી જીવનનિર્વાહ કરવા માટે પૂરતી જમીન હસ્તગત કરવી શક્ય ન હતી, તેથી થોડા સમય પછી તેઓ ગુજરાતમાં ખંભાત (ખેડા જિલ્લો) જવા રવાના થયા, જ્યાં તે સમયે સોલંકીઓનું શાસન હતું. પેટલાદ તાલુકામાં પુષ્કળ બિનખેતી જમીન હતી, અને તેથી નવા આવનારાઓએ વિનંતી કરી કે રાજા તેમને આ જમીન આપે. દરેક કુટુંબને લગભગ એક ગામ (ગામ) જેટલો વિસ્તાર આપવામાં આવ્યો હતો અને ઘણા આ જમીન પર સ્થાયી થયા હતા.

શરણાર્થીઓ, સખત કામદારો હોવાને કારણે, ખૂબ ફાયદા સાથે જમીનની ખેતી કરતા હતા અને બદલામાં રાજાને પાકનો બારમો ભાગ (આશરે 8.5%) આપવાનો હતો. જો કે, દરેક ખેડૂત પાસેથી આ હિસ્સો એકત્રિત કરવા માટેના ઊંચા ખર્ચને કારણે, રાજાએ એક કરાર કર્યો, ખેડૂતોને નિયંત્રિત કરવા અને રાજા માટે પાક એકત્રિત કરવા માટે દરેક ગામ માટે એક વડાની નિમણૂક કરી. કરારો વડાના કુટુંબમાં વડીલોની કસ્ટડીમાં રાખવામાં આવતા હતા અને રાજ્યના તમામ રેકોર્ડ અને પાકને PAT (રેકોર્ડ અથવા લોગ બુક) માં રાખવામાં આવતા હતા તેથી રેકોર્ડ કીપરને 'પાટલીખ' તરીકે ઓળખવામાં આવતો હતો. પટલીખનું શીર્ષક ટૂંકું કરીને પટ્ટ કરવામાં આવ્યું જે પછીથી પટેલ બન્યું. લેવા ગામમાંથી આવેલા લોકો લેવા પટેલ (લેવા પાટીદાર) તરીકે ઓળખાયા અને કરાડ ગામમાંથી આવેલા લોકો કડવા પટેલ બન્યા.

કડવા પટેલો ગુજરાતના ઉત્તર ભાગમાં સ્થાયી થયા અને લેવા પટેલો ખંભાતની આસપાસના વિસ્તારમાં સ્થાયી થયા.

ખેડૂતો તરીકે કોળીઓ

વસાહતીઓ મહેનતુ અને બુદ્ધિશાળી બંને હતા - તેમની ખેતી ખૂબ જ ઉત્પાદક હતી અને ટૂંકા ગાળામાં, ગુજરાત રાજ્ય સમૃદ્ધ થવા લાગ્યું. જેમ જેમ સમય વીતતો ગયો તેમ, રાજાઓ અને રજવાડાઓનું કદ બદલાયું, જેમ કે રાજાઓ દ્વારા માંગવામાં આવતા પાકના ભાગોનું કદ બદલાયું. આ પ્રદેશનો મુખ્ય ઉદ્યોગ કૃષિ હતો - તેથી ખેતરોમાંથી થતી આવક પર સામ્રાજ્યો ટકી રહ્યા હતા, અને આના પરિણામે રાજા માટેના હિસ્સાના કદમાં બમણો વધારો કરીને ખેતી કરવામાં આવતા પાકના છઠ્ઠા ભાગમાં (આશરે 17%) વધારો થયો હતો.

### આકૃતિ 7 : ખંભાત પ્રદેશ

ખંભાત પ્રદેશ મૌર્યવંશીઓનું સામ્રાજ્ય બની ગયો હતો અને ખેડૂતો પાસેથી એકત્ર કરાયેલા પાકનું પ્રમાણ દર વર્ષે બદલાતું હતું, કદાચ હવામાનની સ્થિતિને કારણે. રાજાઓની નાણાકીય જરૂરિયાતને આધારે, ઉપજ સારી હોય ત્યારે એકત્રિત પાકનો હિસ્સો વધુ હતો, જ્યારે ઉપજ નબળી હતી ત્યારે ઓછો હતો. સામ્રાજ્યનો આ ભાગ ચરોતર તરીકે જાણીતો બન્યો (ચાડમાંથી “ચડવું” અને ઉતર “ચઢવું”).

**AD 1300-1400** ની વચ્ચે, દિલ્હીના રાજા અલાઉદ્દીન ખિલજી અને તેના સૈનિકોએ મૌર્યવંશીને કબજે કરી અને હિંદુ રાજાઓના શાસનનો અંત લાવ્યો. રાજા અલાઉદ્દીને તેના સુબાઓ (કારકુનો) ને કહ્યું કે ખેડૂતોની શક્તિ તેમની સંપત્તિમાં છે અને તેથી ખેડૂતોને સંપૂર્ણ નિરાધાર બનાવ્યા વિના શક્ય તેટલો વધુ પાક લેવા માટે, ખેડૂતોને પછીના વર્ષનો પાક વાવવા માટે પૂરતો જ બાકી રહે છે. દરેક ખેડૂત પાસેથી પાક ઉત્પાદનના પચાસ ટકા જેટલી રકમ ચૂકવણીમાં લેવામાં આવી હતી જેના કારણે તેઓ અત્યંત ગરીબ હતા.

રાજા અલાઉદ્દીન ખિલજી (૯) એ 15 થી 20 વર્ષ સુધી ગુજરાત પર શાસન કર્યું અને તેના પછી મોહમ્મદ બાગડો (એફ) આવ્યા, જેમણે રાજાને ફાળવેલ ભાગને તમામ પાકોના અડધાથી એક તૃતીયાંશ સુધી ઘટાડ્યો અને કોઈપણ ચોરીને ગેરકાયદેસર ઠેરવી. પાકની ખેતી સુધારવા માટે, તેમણે દરેક ગામમાંથી શ્રેષ્ઠ ખેડૂતોની નિમણૂક કરી અને તેમને ખેતી કરવા માટે જમીન આપી, બદલામાં પસંદ કરેલા ખેડૂતોને ખેતીમાં સુધારો કરવા, તે ગામ માટે સુરક્ષા પ્રદાન કરવા, ગામને સમૃદ્ધ બનાવવા અને નિયત રકમ પર રાજ્ય ચૂકવવાનું કહ્યું. રોકડ (બંધી અવક). આમ, રાજાને પાકનો ભાગ આપવાની પરંપરા નાબૂદ કરવામાં આવી અને તેના સ્થાને રોકડ ચુકવણી અને ખેડૂતોને આપવામાં આવેલી જમીનની કાયમી માલિકી આપવામાં આવી. જમીન

માલિકને પાટીદારનું બિરુદ મળ્યું જે બદલાઈને કણબી પાટીદાર અને પછી આખરે પટેલ પાટીદાર થઈ ગયું. પટેલ પાટીદાર દરેક ગામના માલિક બન્યા અને તેમનું ટાઇટલ જાળવી રાખ્યું, જમીનની ખેતી કરવા માટે ભાડે મજૂરી લાવી, ગામડાઓને ફરી એકવાર સમૃદ્ધ થવા સક્ષમ બનાવ્યા.

**AD 1600** ની આસપાસ અકબર ધ ગ્રેટ (g) એ ગુજરાત પર વિજય મેળવ્યો. અકબર પાસે જમીન 'ટોડરમલ' દ્વારા માપવામાં આવી હતી (તેમના નાણામંત્રી, ટોડરમલે રજૂઆત કરી હતી જેણે મહેસૂલ વ્યવસ્થામાં સુધારો કર્યો હતો) અને 'વિંધોતી' (જમીન કર) સિસ્ટમની સ્થાપના કરી હતી, જે આજે 'માયશુલ' સિસ્ટમ તરીકે ઓળખાય છે.

જેમ જેમ ગામડાઓ ધીમે ધીમે વધુ પડતી વસ્તી ધરાવતા હતા, તેના કારણે આવાસ અને ખેતીની જમીન બંનેની અછત ઊભી થઈ હતી. શરૂઆતમાં દરેક કુટુંબ પાસે લગભગ 5000 વીગા (એક વીગા આશરે 1330 ચોરસ મીટર જેટલું થાય છે) અને તે જમીન અનુગામી પેઢીઓને આપવામાં આવતી હતી, અને પરિણામે, દરેક કુટુંબનો હિસ્સો ઉત્તરોત્તર નાનો થતો જશે, જેનાથી પરિવારો તેમના કરતાં વધુ ગરીબ બનશે. પુરોગામી

## આકૃતિ 8 : સુરત જિલ્લાનો નકશો

કોળીઓ સુરતની આસપાસ સ્થાયી થયા

**AD 1820 થી 1830** દરમિયાન તેમની ગરીબ પરિસ્થિતિમાંથી બચવા માટે, કેટલાક પરિવારો દક્ષિણ ગુજરાત તરફ સ્થળાંતર થયા અને અન્ય ગીચ વસ્તીવાળા ગામોમાંથી લેવા પાટીદારો સાથે જોડાયા, છેવટે સુરતની આસપાસના વિસ્તારમાં સ્થાયી થયા. સુરતની આસપાસના વિસ્તારો ગાઢ જંગલો હતા જેને તેઓ સાફ કરીને ખેતી કરતા હતા, કાપેલા લાકડામાંથી ઘરો બાંધવામાં આવ્યા હતા અને 50 થી વધુ ગામો સ્થપાયા હતા. શરૂઆતમાં, ખેડા જીલ્લા અને સુરત જીલ્લાના લોકો વચ્ચે મજબૂત કડી હતી પરંતુ નબળી માળખાકીય સુવિધાને કારણે પરિવહન મુશ્કેલ હતું અને કડી નબળી પડવા લાગી. તે સમયે વાહનવ્યવહારનું મુખ્ય માધ્યમ બળદગાડા, ઘોડા અને ઊંટ હતા (1844 પછી રેલવે આવી) ચરોતર અને સુરત વચ્ચે મુસાફરી કરવામાં ઓછામાં ઓછા 10 દિવસનો સમય લાગતો હતો. સુરત અને ચરોતરના સગા-સંબંધીઓ એકબીજાની મુલાકાત લેતા હતા પરંતુ બંને જિલ્લાના લોકો વચ્ચેના લગ્નની જેમ કમિક પેઢીઓ પર સંપર્ક ધીમે ધીમે ઓછો થતો ગયો.

વસાહતીઓના નવા મકાનો



સુરતમાં પુષ્કળ જમીન હોવાથી તેઓએ મોટા મકાનો બાંધ્યા. 'ખાચો' (ઘરની પાછળની ખાલી જમીન) જેને સુરતમાં 'વાડો' તરીકે પણ ઓળખવામાં આવે છે, તે મોટી હતી અને તેથી દરેક ઘર પાસે પોતાના પાણીના કૂવા હતા. તેમની પાસે ઢોર માટે તબેલો પણ હતો અને ઢોરના ખાતર માટે 'ઉકરડો' હતો. તેઓએ પાક લાવવા માટે 'વાડો'માં 'ખારી' (સાદી સાફ જગ્યા) પણ રાખી હતી. આ તમામ સુવિધાઓ દરેક ઘરની યોજના માટે સમાવિષ્ટ કરવામાં આવી હતી, ચરોતર પર એક સુધારો, જ્યાં તેઓનું આયોજન કરવામાં આવ્યું ન હતું.

દ્વિ ધાર્મિક પ્રથા

એક રસપ્રદ વાર્તા કાશી વિશ્વનાથ મંદિર (વારાણસી નજીક, ઉત્તર પ્રદેશ) જોવા માટે તીર્થયાત્રા પર નીકળેલા જૂથ વિશે છે. AD 1840 ની આસપાસ. રસ્તામાં તેઓ ઇમામ શાહી નામના એક ધર્મનિષ્ઠ મુસ્લિમને મળ્યા જેમણે તેમને સ્થળ પર વિશ્વંથના 'દર્શન' આપવાનું વચન આપ્યું હતું - કેટલાકે આ ઓફર સ્વીકારી હતી, બાદમાં ઇમામ શાહીને તેમના ગુરુ તરીકે સ્વીકાર્યા અને તેથી દ્વિ ધાર્મિક પ્રથા શરૂ કરી. હિન્દુ અને ઇસ્લામના.

આકૃતિ 9 : કાશી વિશ્વનાથ મંદિરચાલતી

ઇસ્લામ અને સ્થાનિક ભારતીય ધાર્મિક પરંપરાઓ વચ્ચેની સદીઓથીક્રિયાપ્રતિક્રિયાએ સંખ્યાબંધ સુધારાવાદી સંપ્રદાયો, નવા સમુદાયો અને લિમિનલ જૂથોને જન્મ આપ્યો છે કે જેને કોઈ પણ અર્થમાં સ્પષ્ટપણે 'હિંદુ' અથવા 'મુસ્લિમ' તરીકે વર્ગીકૃત કરી શકાય નહીં. સૌથી મોટા અને સૌથી પ્રભાવશાળી જૂથોમાંનું એક ઇમામ શાહીઓ છે, જેની સંખ્યા લગભગ એક મિલિયન છે અને તેઓ ગુજરાત, મહારાષ્ટ્ર અને મધ્ય પ્રદેશના વિવિધ ભાગોમાં પથરાયેલા છે. હિંદુ અને મુસ્લિમ સ્વરૂપો અને વિભાવનાઓના સુમેળભર્યા સંમિશ્રણની દ્રષ્ટિએ અનન્ય, ઇમામ શાહી સંપ્રદાય, અથવા સતપંથ ('ધ ટૂ પાથ') જેને તેના અનુયાયીઓ કહે છે, તે આજે જમણેરી હિન્દુત્વ(h) જૂથો તરીકે ગંભીર જોખમ હેઠળ છે. તેને બળજબરીથી આકારહીન હિંદુ ફોલ્ડમાં સમાઈ જવાનો પ્રયાસ કરો.

કોળી જૂથો

હાલના ભારતમાં, કોળીઓ જમ્મુ અને કાશ્મીર (સૌથી ઉત્તરીય રાજ્ય) માં કન્યા કુમારી (દક્ષિણના રાજ્ય તમિલનાડુમાં) સુધી વિસ્તરેલા જોવા મળે છે અને પ્રાદેશિક ભાષાઓ અનુસાર થોડા અલગ નામોથી ઓળખાય છે. અસ્તિત્વમાં રહેલા કેટલાક કોળી જૂથો નીચે મુજબ છે:

કોળી ક્ષત્રિય  
ગોંડાકોલી

નાગરકોલી  
કોળી રાજપૂત

કોળી રાજા  
બાવરાય

કોળી સૂર્યવંશી  
પઠાણવાડિયા  
કોલી ઠાકોર

થરકરડા

કોળી મહાદેવ  
કોળી પટેલ  
કોચરીમાંઘાતા

મેં કોળી

અને અલબત્તપટેલ. વર્તમાન સમયના કોળીઓ સમૂહની અંદર અને સમગ્ર સમૂહમાં ખૂબ જ આંતરવિવાહનું ઉત્પાદન છે.

ગુજરાતના

આરકોળીઓએજીનાલ્ડ એડવર્ડ એન્થોવન (i) અને પ્રોફેસર જોન વિલ્સન (j) જેઓ અગ્રણી ઇતિહાસકારો હતા, તેઓ માનતા હતા કે ગુજરાતમાં મૂળ વસાહતીઓ કોળીઓ અને આદિવાસી ભીલો હતા.

ખૂબ જ વૈવિધ્યસભર વંશીય જૂથો (નાગર બ્રાહ્મણ, ભાટિયા, ભડેલા, કોળી, રબારી, મીના, ભાંગી, દુબલા, નાયકડા, અને મચ્છી-ખારવા, પારસીઓ - મૂળ પરિયાના, અને આદિવાસી ભીલ જાતિ સહિત) ગુજરાતમાં હાજર છે. ક્યાં તો :

• વૈદિક ( ધર્મ પ્રાચીન ઈન્ડો-યુરોપિયન-ભાષી લોકોનોકે જેઓપ્રવેશ્યા ભારતમાં હાલનાપ્રદેશમાંથી BC 1500માંહતા ઈરાનના)

• અથવા દ્રવિડિયન (દક્ષિણ ભારત અને શ્રીલંકામાં બોલાતી ભાષાઓના પરિવાર સાથે સંબંધિત અથવા સૂચિત કરે છે, અથવા જે લોકો તેમને બોલે છે).

ઉત્તર ગુજરાતમાં, કણબી અને પાટીદાર જાતિના લોકો પેઢીઓથી કોળી જાતિના લોકો સાથે લગ્ન કરતા આવ્યા હતા, અને તે 1918-19 હતું કે એક પાટીદારે આ પ્રથાને સ્થાપિત કરવા/ઔપચારિક બનાવવા માટે આંતરજાતીય લગ્ન બિલ રજૂ કર્યું હતું. ઉચ્ચ જાતિના દરજ્જા પર ભાર મૂકવાનો સામાજિક દંભ તેમના અહંકાર સિવાય અન્ય કોઈ કારણસર દેખાય છે; સ્વ અને જૂથ મિથ્યાભિમાન. જ્યારે કોળીઓ અને ભીલો ગુજરાતના મૂળ રહેવાસીઓ હોઈ શકે છે, તેઓ પાછળથી આવતા લોકો સામે જમીન ગુમાવી ચૂક્યા હતા અને પશ્ચિમ કિનારે અને ટેકરીઓ નજીક સ્થાયી થયા હોવાનું જણાય છે. કોળીઓ ખાસ કરીને, બુદ્ધ પ્રત્યેના તેમના આકર્ષણને કારણે સમાજમાં ગંભીર ભેદભાવનો ભોગ બન્યા હતા; ક્ષત્રિય (લડાઈ/યોદ્ધા) જાતિના હોવાને કારણે, લડાઈમાં સહેલાઈથી ઉશ્કેરાઈ જવાની તેમની લાક્ષણિકતા મદદ કરી ન હતી. તે સમયે તેઓને કઠોર રીતે વ્યક્તિવાદી તરીકે પણ વર્ણવવામાં આવી શકે છે. તેમાંના મોટા ભાગના લોકો માટે,

બેસો વર્ષ પહેલાંનું જીવન ભારે કષ્ટ, બંધન મજૂરી અને અપમાનજનક હતું; આ તે કિંમત હતી જે તેઓએ ઉચ્ચ જાતિઓને સબમિટ કરવા માટે ચૂકવી હતી.

Kolis વધુ હાડમારીપીડાય

આ પ્રકરણની આ બાકીની મુખ્યત્વે ડૉ અર્જુન પટેલ (સંદર્ભ: 5) દ્વારા ડોક્ટરેટની પર આધારિત છે.

પ્રાચીન સમયમાં કોલીઓએ જે ભવ્ય ભૂતકાળ માણ્યો હતો તે ભગવાન બુદ્ધ પછી ક્ષીણ થવા લાગ્યો. ઉચ્ચ ધાર્મિક સનાતન અને વૈદિક જૂથોના હાથે કોળીઓ પર અત્યાચાર ગુજારવામાં આવ્યો હતો અને આનાથી તેઓને જ્યાં પણ સલામત જગ્યા મળી શકે ત્યાં લઈ જવામાં આવી હતી. ભય અને વંચિતતામાં જીવવાથી તેઓ અપરાધ અને અન્ય સામાજિક દુર્ગુણોનો આશરો લેવાનું ઘટાડી દે છે. તેમના પોતાના અસ્તિત્વ માટે, કોલીઓએ 1800 ના દાયકાના મધ્ય સુધી ગરીબ, ભૂખ્યા, અકુશળ અને અશિક્ષિત હોવાને કારણે તેમની બુદ્ધિ પર આધાર રાખવો પડ્યો. સંભવ છે કે સમગ્ર ભારતમાં આવી પરિસ્થિતિઓમાં અન્ય લોકો/પરિવારો/જૂથોને પણ એકસાથે ભેગા કરવામાં આવ્યા હશે, જેને કોળી તરીકે વર્ગીકૃત કરવામાં આવ્યા છે, તેથી મોટી કોળી વસ્તી છે. જાતિ પ્રણાલીએ આ લોકોને પછાત તરીકે ઓળખાવ્યા, દલિતો અને અસ્પૃશ્યોથી થોડા ઉપર અને સામાન્ય રીતે વિલન તરીકે દર્શાવવામાં આવ્યા. આશ્ચર્યની વાત એ છે કે, આજે પણ ભારતના ઘણા ભાગોમાં કોળીઓને આ રીતે લેબલ કરવામાં આવે છે અને સત્તાવાર રીતે અન્ય પછાત વર્ગ (ઓબીસી) તરીકે વર્ગીકૃત કરવામાં આવે છે.

ઉચ્ચ વર્ગના હિંદુઓએ હંમેશા સ્વીકાર્યું છે કે કોળીનો સ્પર્શ કોઈ પણ રીતે શુદ્ધતાને નુકસાન પહોંચાડતો નથી અને શુદ્ધ લોહીના કોળી વડાઓને ક્ષત્રિય રાજપૂતો(k) થી અલગ પાડવા મુશ્કેલ છે જેમની સાથે વારંવાર આંતરવિવાહ થાય છે.

British subdue the Kolis

During the failed Indian Rebellion (1857-58) against **the rule** of the **British East India Company**, (which functioned as a sovereign power on behalf of the British Raj) in what was a major, but ultimately unsuccessful move, Koli soldiers and generals played a significant part in the Shivaji's Maratha army. However, the British respected the misguided but secretive, loyal and trustworthy band, lavishing praise on them saying, 'In these plundering parties they often display a very desperate courage; and it is to their honour that rude and lawless as they are, they do not apparently delight in bloodshed for its own sake,

and neither do they mutilate, torture, nor burn the subjects of their cupidity or revenge like the far worse dacoits'.

Kolis of South Gujarat in detail

Records suggest that Kolis have lived in Gujarat since the 1400s may even be the oldest inhabitants there. The 1931 census recorded the population of Gujarat and Kathiavad to be 1.73 million, of which the Kolis were 24%, and of this number, a quarter lived in Surat district (over 100,000). They were mostly residing in 8 talukas (an administrative district for taxation purposes, comprising a number of villages) of Surat and 6 talukas of Navsari. This large proportion is said to be because the census lumped all 1050 or so Koli subgroups into one, and also non-Kolis who settled in the plains and the coastal areas! A vast majority of the Koli tribes have very little in common with each other apart from their religion, Hinduism. Depending on their geographic location in India they may/may not dress according to their occupations, or speak a variety of languages, or observe different customs or even a combination of all.

Kolis also formed a large part of the adjacent Indian Kingdoms, particularly Gaekwad, spreading to Vadodara (formerly Baroda) and the Sachin State (a princely state belonging to the [Surat Agency](#), during the era of the [British Raj](#)). It's capital was also called [Sachin](#), and had a total of about 600-700 villages.

Among the higher castes in south Gujarat, the Kolis were seen as having both highly positive and negative reputations :

The positives - since the 1800s, they were described as brave and courageous, conscientious and hard-working, nationalistic and independent in spirit, reliable and said to be remarkably loyal.

The negatives - the old picture of thieves, robbers, pirates and plunderers of the high seas meant the higher castes looked down upon the Kolis.

**Alice W Clarke(l), a scholar who studied the peoples of Gujarat, believes that it was easy and rather opportunist to blame the Kolis for criminal activities, and David Hardiman(m), a historian of [modern India](#) also had the same opinion. Unfortunately, the Kolis negative reputation has tainted them for a very long time, and the stigma has not fully worn off. Even the fictional literature of that time described the villain characters as being Kolis!**

**In Bharuch and Surat Districts, the Talapadas (a subcaste of the Kshatriya Koli Community) form the main groups, the highest caste Kolis are called Mandhata Sororaria (or Mansororaria), Koli Patel or Mandhata Koli Patel. It is possible that they are the descendants of the Thakurs of Gujarat who fled to the hills in the time of Sultan Mahmud Begada's (1458-1511) persecutions but later returned and settled as farmers; They are distinct from the Kolis of the Deccan Plateau (southern Indian peninsula).**

**The religious beliefs of Kolis, are thought to have been based on the epics - Ramayan, Mahabharat and Puranas which were enacted by visiting troupes/travelling actors. They worshipped Siva, Ram and Krishna and were prone to the prevailing superstitions. Their belief in the Sanatan Hindu Dharma(n) made them a God fearing people and kept them on a straight path. Right until the beginning of the 1900s, their main occupation was agriculture and farm labour, in which they excelled. Most Koli farmers had 3 acres of land or less and a vast number were landless labourers. The land would be traditionally handed down from father to sons - successive generations saw the farm being divided into a smaller and smaller size. The land would usually be of a lower quality than that held by the higher castes. Agricultural labour was seasonal work, so for generations, the landless labourers were tied to bonded labour. In the off season they would settle for menial jobs and were rarely paid in money but with a bare minimum of food instead. This meant the vast majority of the Kolis were forever in financial debt to their bosses, chiefly the Kanbi, Anavils, Parsis and other non-Kolis. If they had no security to offer**

against the debt, they were charged double the interest rate. The most common forms of security would be land, domestic animals or household goods. The lender would insist on interest being paid every year, this was a lucrative source of income and defaulting on payment sometimes resulted in Kolis losing their farm animals, land and even eviction from their ramshackle house.

Those living on the coast developed fishing and shipping of goods by sea. In general, right until 1925, Kolis and other lower tribes were exploited by other higher castes not just in Gujarat but all over India. Alice Clarke has recorded that it was this exploitation that drove Kolis to criminal activities adding that the British Raj introduced what is thought to be the Fugitive Offender's Act in 1831 to thwart the Kolis further, but enforcing it allowed the rich and powerful to make it easier to take advantage of the Kolis, which led to a large number of them becoming enslaved, living in pitiable conditions.

Up until the 1850s, few Kolis could read or write. There were no schools in the villages and only a few available in the bigger cities; however, only a handful could afford to send their children to city school. Thus the largely uneducated Kolis mainly worked in/as :

- Farming and farm labour (seasonal )
- Fishing
- Transporting goods by sea
- Procurement of juice (palm wine/toddy) from palm trees - this was a skilled and dangerous job, but poorly paid. It involved climbing high up, ensuring the trees remain undamaged when cut to extract the juice and carrying down the filled pots
- Delivering milk door to door
- Spinning cotton

· Textile mills and ginnery (cotton) employed many women and young girls in the cities and towns. They worked long hours in unhygienic conditions, breathing cotton lint (leading to lung infections such as **byssinosis**/brown lung disease) and quite often sleeping rough in the factories, others would return home in ill health, suffering from exhaustion. Another common disease was tuberculosis (TB). These dangerous jobs were poorly paid.

· Construction work and civil and mechanical engineering - job opportunities opened up in 1844 after the Governor-General of India permitted private entrepreneurs to set up a rail system in India. The construction of roads and bridges also brought in work and the Koli Patels of Navsari District were particularly sought after.

**Kolis as worthy workers**

Some of the famous bridges (eg Narmada Bridge in 1881) were built by Kolis, mention the name 'Patel' and he was immediately given such a job. For landless Koli labourers however, there were long periods of unemployment. Many went to distant cities and towns, firstly on their own and later when they had a secure job, the family would follow. Eventually, large numbers settled in these towns and cities doing a wide variety of jobs. Bombay was a popular destination - it is often said that the initial settlers were Kolis. They established their goddess Mumba Devi as their icon in Bombay (hence the city later renamed to Mumbai) In 1918, Kolis numbered just over 3000 living in Kolaba, Kalbadevi, Bhuleswar, Bangalipura, Mandvi Bazaar, Khadak Majgam, Tardev Grant Road, Girgam, Chopati, Valkeshvar, Parel, Kot districts in Mumbai. As the years passed, more and more Kolis from villages joined their relations and friends in the big cities, including Ahmedabad and Vadodara and settled there. A number of Koli fishing villages were set up in Bombay, and those not skilled in fishing or transport were engaged in occupations such as in horse/carriage transport, printing works, semi-skilled work, clerical work and primary school teachers. Later, they trained themselves to become turners, fitters, joiners, metal workers, getting better paid jobs.

## **Figure 10 : Mumbai districts**

**From the late 1700s and early 1800s, the South Gujarat Kolis travelled in search of work and a better life in India and overseas. The bold among them did achieve their dreams - in 1918 Shree Vallabhbai of Viraval in Navsari District founded a company called 'Japan Bazaar' and had branches in Shanghai, Burma, Kobe and Hong Kong.**

**Prior to the start of a railway line construction between Mumbai and Vadodara (completed in 1864) most large scale transport of goods by sea, Surat being the main port. All along the South Gujarat coast there were many more small Koli port villages - Vansi, Borsi, Umbhrat, Dandi, Onjal, Sultanpur, Dumas and Suvali for example. A two-way transport of goods operated between the ports of South Gujarat to places as far as Calcutta, Java, Sumatra, Malabar, Singapore, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and to the West as far as Abyssinia. Building of the railways however, later curtailed much sea transportation of goods. Kolis therefore had some knowledge of distant lands. In the later part of 1800s, many stayed for long periods in those countries and some settled for good, later bringing their families over. However, a vast majority of the Kolis in Gujarat and elsewhere in India still continued to suffer serious penalties and discrimination at the hands of higher caste Hindus and others. Bonded labour was common among Koli labourers and lasted well into the 1920s.**

**Kolis had little political power until the arrival of Independence. From the 1960s some of the educated among them gained greater political support and power as a result of their large numbers. Steadily, they started taking responsible positions in villages and towns - today, Kolis are to be found in both the State and National Parliament.**

**Kolis of Navsari, Surat and Surrounding Areas**

**The Koli people who settled in the coastal area of Jalalpore and Navsari District (formerly a part of Surat District) area are a tribe**



known as 'Koli Patel' or 'Mandhata Koli Patel'. The author, KJ traced his own ancestry to six generations back (from the most recent Keshavlal – Jerambhai – Somabhai -Morarbhai – Valia – Makla, the oldest) going back about 150 years and believes his great-great-great grandfather Makla Bapa put his roots down in a village now called Bodali. Makla Bapa's home developed into a falia called Dhuna Falia where his descendants lived in the houses now standing there. For many Kolis today, this is perhaps a similar background. Whether this area was virgin land or there were other inhabitants there he does not know, but as the villages developed, a few families of Kanbi and Desai probably migrated there (Desai Falias are present in a number of villages). The Barots visited all the villages every two years in Gujarat recording births and deaths and any noteworthy events or incidents.

There are no records of bonded labour so we may assume that the Kolis in these villages had a slightly different background than the remainder Koli population in South Gujarat. Disappointingly, the overall financial position of the people spread over some 50 villages was poor. They were mostly uneducated and a majority of them led a simple life, often in debt. For the vast majority of them work was confined to their own farm or labour at another. The nearest town to Bodali was Navsari, 10 miles away and Surat, the main city some 30 miles away. Transportation was tediously slow by bullock cart, and their financial and geographic constraints meant life for the majority of them was confined within the limits of their surrounding villages. Thus, in the early 1900s, social contact among people living more than 10 miles away was very limited. Any parent deciding to give their daughter in marriage to a suitor in a distant village would have to consider not seeing her again for years on end. For a family, marriage, birth and death of close ones were the main events in life. Most importantly, death of the head of the family/income earner in the family would cause a time of great stress, plunging the families not just into grief, but also financial debt and worry – indeed, religious festivals and events must have provided welcome relief for them.

Late 1800s and early 1900s

**Around this time, a slow but sure change was taking place for the social and economic progress of the Kolis - it seems a giant had awoken. Slowly at first, but gradually picking up speed, over the course of time men and women found the courage and strength to realise their talents. More and more of the youths of these villages ventured further afield looking for work and fortune.**

**Shree Ashokbhai Patel (Kanbi) discovered from the records of people who had left the villages that there was a general exodus of Hindu people from this area.**

**For overseas travel, the larger sail boats still required wind power and for many, their journey usually started from Calcutta. The travelling youths first had to make the journey from Gujarat to Calcutta (approx 2000 km/1250 miles) before boarding a boat, usually as a paid work hand to help fund their passage. Yet many set off that way to Burma, Fiji, East Africa, South Africa, New Zealand, UK, Brazil and West Indies.**

**Impact of Gandhi Bapu on Kolis**

**The catalyst for a change of life in the 50 or so villages in the Jalalpure and Navsari District came about as a result of Gandhi Bapu's return to India from South Africa. After what Gandhi had achieved in South Africa, he was hailed as a leader in India. One important programme in the fight against the British for Independence of India was the awakening and motivation of people in the villages, and as part of this, he sent out volunteers to promote education, home crafts and general awareness in preparation for Independence. The villages had become aware of Gandhi's work in South Africa through correspondence with their relations who had settled there. As a result, when the Independence movement gathered speed, the Koli people were informed and ready before anyone else in Gujarat. The period between 1910 and 1920s was one of great awareness, despite**

the problem of poverty, there was a delicate balance with the need to participate in the Independence Struggle. In this respect the idealism of the youth was unstoppable. Clandestine groups were operating in the villages, the network of news and information lines informed of the latest developments and movements of the leaders and their thoughts. Letters and visits from relations in South Africa kept people informed of developments there. Gandhi returned to India from South Africa on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1915 with supporters, a number of them were Kolis, such was the rapport Gandhi had with them. When the time came to decide the destination of the 1930 Salt March it was no accident that he chose the Koli village Dandi, despite pressures to choose other towns. This was because he was convinced of the courage and understanding of Kolis in completing this project successfully, and so it proved during the 1930 Salt March and thereafter until Independence.

The National Salt Satyagraha Memorial/Dandi Memorial in [Gujarat](#), honors the activists and participants of the salt march, an act of nonviolent civil disobedience in [colonial India](#) led by [Mahatma Gandhi](#). The memorial is spread over 15 acres (61,000 m<sup>2</sup>) and is located in the coastal town of Dandi, where the Salt March ended on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1930 and the British salt monopoly was broken, by producing salt by boiling sea water.

**Figure 11 : Dandi Memorial Salt March museum**

The fight for Independence takes pace

**In 1942 any assembly of public meetings was prohibited under rule 56 of the Defence of India Rules. The arrest of Gandhi and Congress party leaders led to mass demonstrations throughout India.**

**Thousands were killed and injured in the wake of the 'Quit India' movement when the British forces opened fire on the peaceful demonstration. Many demonstrators filled the jails and three of them lost their lives. They were :**

- Morarbhair Panchabhai Patel of Karadi aged 45**
- Ranchodbhai Lalabhai Patel also of Karadi aged 22**
- Maganbhai Dhanjibhai Patel of Mokhla Falia, Matwad aged 16**
- Another 10 suffered serious bullet wounds and had to be treated in private hospitals; one of them was KJ's maternal grandfather, Ranchodbhai Lalabhai Patel of Vahan Falia, Matwad, who carried him on his shoulder to the demonstration.**
- Another 11 who were wounded were treated locally. There is a memorial in Matvad dedicated to their heroism.**

**In South Gujarat, Mandhata Koli Patels played an important role in the struggle for Independence. Dandi, Karadi, Matwad and other nearby villages were central to this effort and thousands of people of this area made supreme efforts, many suffered severe police brutality and long jail custody. Hundreds interrupted their studies becoming actively involved in the fight for Independence. There are hundreds of names, and stories of valour and bravery are recorded in a number of books written in Gujarati (Refs 8,9,10 and other books on the Dandi Salt March). Their contribution in the struggle for freedom is unique and one such individual is Shree Panchakaka whose personal Satyagraha(o) was hailed by Gandhi. Quietly and staunchly sticking to his vows, Panchakaka became an inspiration to Indians all over India.**

**Panchakaka**

**Panchakaka is not a well known person; he did not leave a string of achievements to account for his long life, yet he got the highest accolade from Gandhi for the one vow he adhered to throughout his life. Panchabhai Dajibhai Patel was born in 1876 in Karadi, he probably never went to school but taught himself to read and write Gujarati. Like most of the people in the area he farmed the one acre of land he owned and to make ends meet he did some tailoring of garments. He was a religious man and organised satsang at his home on Saturday evenings. Bhajans by Kabir, Narsih Mehta and Mirabai were his favourite and he would recite them from memory. He came across a book translated by Balubhai Parekh on Gandhi Bapu's life story and instantly took to both the Gandhi Way and Philosophy.**

#### **Figure 12 : Panchakaka**

**In the programmes that Gandhi presented to the Indian Nation on his arrival from South Africa in 1915, Panchakaka was at the forefront in participating and implementing in his village. From the 1923 Nagpur Zanda Satyagraha to the 1930 Salt March to Dandi episode for which he went to jail, Gandhi knew him personally and admired his courage.**

**In 1921 Gandhi was to start Satyagraha from Bardoli where he was to suggest land owners withholding payment of land tax but because of an incident the demonstration was called off. However, Panchakaka took a vow not to pay the land tax on his small holding until Independence (or Ram Rajya) came to India. Indian Congress workers argued with him that since the programme where Gandhi was going to suggest non-payment of land tax had not taken place he should therefore pay the tax. Panchakaka was not convinced and so he went to Sabarmati Ashram where Gandhi lived to consult with him. Here is a short dialogue :**

**Gandhi : Why did you take this vow?**

**Panchakaka : You have written in “Navjivan” that anyone who stood up against injustice could not be subdued, so decided it for myself.**

**Gandhi : Would carry on with the fight even if no one is with you?**

**Panchakaka : Yes. I am quoting Rabindranath Tagore's 'Go Alone' poem - "I will fight alone".**

**Gandhi : You have my blessing, I am impressed and don't pay the land tax.**

**At that time, Panchakaka was the first and only Satyagrahi in India. His land which was his main source of livelihood was taken away by the government.**

**After 17 years in 1939 when Congress Ministers were appointed, it was decided to hand back land taken away from freedom fighters who had refused to pay the land tax. Panchakaka refused to take his land back.**

**In 1946 when Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel joined the Delhi Government, a further request was made to Panchakaka to take back his land he again refused saying that India was still not fully Independent.**

**On 15th August 1947, Panchakaka unfurled the National Flag in Karadi to mark the Independence of India. He was again asked to take back his land but he refused again saying that as long as the country has to be dependent on the army, it was not the Swaraj of his dreams and added that even Gandhi Bapu did not return to Sabarmati. Panchakaka never took back his land – he toiled on his spinning wheel to earn a living until he died on 15th February 1951.**

**Panchakaka requested Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (Home Minister in 1947 and was the first Deputy Prime Minister of India) to see that the**

**Independence they got for India ensured that the poor earned enough to eat, but to this day, the problem still exists.**

**This is one of many stories, which symbolises the bravery and iron resolve of Mandhata Samaj Koli Patels of Kantha Vibhag.**

**Kantha Vibhag**

**The Kantha Vibhag area comprises of approximately 53 villages (gams) and sub-villages (falias) including – Avada Falia, Bodali, Dandi, Jalalpore, Machhad, Matvad and Viraval etc, the full list is available in Appendix A.**

**Figure 13 : Kantha Vibhag region**

## **Education in Kantha Vibhag district - Local Developments**

**Most of the details of local educational developments and early overseas settlements described below are taken from the articles written by Shree Maganbhai B Karadia (see Ref 15). At the beginning of the 20th century, there was great surge in the awareness of the people in both national and local developments. Letters from those who had emigrated to South Africa reported the great foundation in the work of Gandhi. When Gandhi returned to India many were eager to hear and learn from him. Several teams from a number of villages attended Gandhi's meetings in cities such as Ahmedabad and on their return, they were bubbling with enthusiasm to put into action what they learnt from Gandhi who was proposing actioning the following programmes:**

- Communal Unity**

- **Abolition of Untouchability**
- **Swadeshi (one's own country) clothes made from Khadi**
- **National Education.**

**These programmes were enthusiastically welcomed by the villagers. Spinning cotton for a few hours a day became a regular activity for everyone, schools were started in people's homes with one or two teachers, people were encouraged to keep one or two buffalos for milk production and it formed a large part of the family income. Solving social and family problems the non-violent way started to become the norm. Gandhi and Indian National Congress (also known as the Congress Party or INC) were seen to be united as one; many were said to have become Gandhians. The villagers were fast becoming part of Gandhi's army of freedom fighters. The main thrust of village development was in the field of education. People donated land to build schools and steadily schools started becoming an important feature of village life. Most schools were basic, but a few villages ventured to set up Rastriya Shala(p). The villages of Karadi, Bodali, Matwad and Onjal developed their own schools but they relied heavily on voluntary funding and donations. As a result, Karadi was the only Rastriya Shala that remained and in 1935 it was named Bharat Vidyalay, based on the curriculum set by the Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad, founded by Gandhi to action the National Education Programme. This institution also played an important role in educating and preparing students from all the nearby villages for India's Struggle for Freedom, particularly after the arrival of Acharya Manibhai Patel in 1928. The following pioneered the establishment of the original Rastriya Shala in Karadi :**

- **Unkabhai Mankanbhai**
- **Naranbhai Bavabhai**
- **Ramabhai Gosaibhai**



- **Kanjibhai Chhibabhai**
- **Vallabhbhai Punabhai**

**To accelerate the emancipation of villages Gandhi called upon able and educated youths to go out and live among the villagers and put into practice his proposed programmes. The arrival of these volunteers high in Gandhian skills proved to be a catalyst for the programme - Acharya Manibhai Patel became the Principal of Bharat Vidyalay, Karadi in 1928 and Dilkhushbhai Diwanji who developed the spinning and weaving activity in the villages. They both carried on their great work until the end of their lives; their contribution in our emancipation is invaluable.**

**After over 50 years, the school buildings in Karadi were showing signs of wear and tear and perhaps no longer suitable for modern day facilities. So on the initiative of UK-based Karadi Sangathan Mandal, a new school was constructed on a nearby site with full teaching and extra-curricular facilities. Science and computing subjects became compulsory, and a library, swimming and drama facilities were made available to all students. This project became possible due to the foresight and hard work of volunteers such as Babubhai Rama, Maganbhai Karadia, Maheshbhai Karadia, Ranchhodbhai (RC) and others native to Karadi.**

**The example of schooling in Karadi has been a typical story of the development of education in the other 50 or so villages in Kantha Vibhag. There were pioneers in each village who set up schools, developed dairy farming, encouraged spinning and weaving, kept the Talavs (lakes of fish) regularly maintained, started Bhajan Mandals and local Gam Seva Mandals to ensure that the village was well kept and provided arbitration services so that the residents enjoyed fair play in any contentious issues.**

**Further development of Karadi and other gams was initiated by their natives settled overseas, and simultaneously other villages were also**

helped by their respective gam people overseas. Names of most of these original pioneers and later groups are enshrined in the Gujarati books mentioned above and are also to be found in the records of each of the Gam Mandals either in India or overseas countries. Their supporting hard work and fund raising have made what the local villages are today.

#### **South African Contribution**

It was around 1875 that Koli villagers began emigrating to South Africa. There, many of them met with Gandhi Bapu and even stayed with him in the Ashram he had established where they actively participated and supported him. A few even returned with him to India, giving up their residency in South Africa. Although they had little education, they were perhaps the first to realise the need for education for their fellow villagers. They formed the 'Transvaal Koli Hitwardhak Mandal' in Johannesburg and collected funds to promote education of their villagers in India. In 1917 they bought a property in Navsari, converting it into a residence which they called The Koli Vidyarthi Ashram, for students from the villages to stay while studying in Navsari schools.

They also set up an annual scholarship and student loans scheme. During the first thirty years, Koli Vidyarthi Ashram played a crucial role in the development of the students – over time, hundreds stayed and studied there. The Ashram was also the hub of the Freedom Movement in the area; those very students led the Freedom Movement programmes and later became the leaders of their communities.

In the early 1970s the Ashram Building was knocked down and replaced by a five storey complex with shops and offices on the ground floor with student and visitor accommodation and community hall on the upper floors. By this time, however, the need for any

accommodation was much reduced and the with the community hall being on the top floor, the building is little used. The South African emigres made great personal contributions both monetary and supportive, to help uplift the local Koli Patel Samajs in Kantha Vibhag.

Later in 1946, they bought a four acre plot of land at Chhapra Road and the title deed was registered in the name of a Trustee of Daxin Gujarat Keravani Trust. Alas, this plot remains undeveloped and is locked under internal disputes.

In 1947, a plot of land of more than one acre was bought near Nutan Society and was registered in the name of Navsari Vibhag Keravani Trust. This plot too remains undeveloped. Disappointed at the performance of the local management, the South Africans bought another four acre plot of land with a substantial building on it and registered this in their own branch organisation 'Transvaal Koli Hitwardhak Trust – Navsari'. They reserved the right to appoint the local Trustees for day-to-day management under their guidance. This organisation has continued giving out scholarships and loans to students and also started a magazine - 'Nav Pragati'. Over the years however, the heavily committed South African Leadership gave way to a more relaxed local resident Navsari management, which proved to be not as efficient, and this site too is now run down, dilapidated and mired in internal disputes. It's a pity that the local management has failed to generate any useful income from the land and properties invested by our South African forefathers which are presently worth several crores (10s of millions) of rupees; this is a great letdown of their dreams.

## **Mandhata Koli Patels Abroad**

From their own lips we have heard how a few young men from the Koli villages found construction jobs building railways in Surat and

other nearby cities in the mid-1800s. They would return to their villages for holidays and report that more work was available which led to more youths joining them. At work they came in contact with other peoples and particularly the English who valued their construction knowledge. This broadened their horizons - when opportunities came their way to work for railways in East Africa and plantations in South Africa and New Zealand, many packed their bags and went looking for work abroad.

The period prior to the Second World War (1939-45) saw many emigrating in large numbers. Passports had become easily available, so hundreds of youths left home, boarding sea-going clippers in search of a better life. Some perished during the dangerous journey but for the many who made it, life was very, very hard in every respect; many suffered from homesickness.

#### The Big Wave of Emigration

The catalyst for a large social and economic change was the arrival of the British in Surat. In the 1830s/40s men confidently ventured out not just to the nearby cities but to the far corners of India and overseas to New Zealand, South and East Africa in large numbers, the turning point was the requirement for skilled people in construction, especially in large civil engineering and bridge building projects. From 1850 into the early 1900s, young men from the villages proved their worth working Indian Railways projects. More and more joined them; this was a time when a Patel from Navsari or Surat would be hired without questions being asked. The work experiences prepared them to take on larger construction projects. In between jobs, these young men would return to their village, fired with ambition and ideas; they spoke of education as a key necessity, and financed by wealthier farmers in the community, they introduced schools. A Renaissance had begun.

British agents in Surat were recruiting for railway construction workers for East Africa which would involve a 2000 mile journey

**across the Indian Ocean in a 30 foot boat relying on nothing but favourable winds! This was also the time when many sailed for South Africa and New Zealand. In New Zealand Indians were not eligible for Government/administrative jobs and other employment was just as difficult to find. Over there, their natural survival skills and practical talents led them to self-employment and eventual prosperity.**

**In South Africa there was the additional handicap of the apartheid system; they struggled hard to make a living and suffered the apartheid indignities. Many joined Gandhi and became his close associates in the struggle for Independence.**

**Thousands of young men from the villages migrated initially to South Africa, East Africa and New Zealand then later to UK, Canada and the USA. The 1950s saw their wives and children emigrate to join them. In all these countries they were left to live their typical Indian way of life. Each Indian group lived their own enclosed life surrounded by their Gods and ceremonies; they found the caste division and the associated status preceded them in these countries also. The lower caste groups found some way of hiding their identity and raising their status in the eyes of other Indians. Some gave themselves fancy names, mixed with other groups, changed their diets and pretended to be of a higher caste.**

**United Kingdom**

**Following the Second World War, many of the youths who worked with reputable companies in India obtained recommendation/reference letters, which entitled them to passports. Work permits were not required, so as soon as they could raise enough money for their passage, they boarded steamships, which took after a journey lasting around two months would dock at the ports of Portsmouth, Southampton or Liverpool. Others paid large fees to passport agents to ensure their travel. Most of the early arrivals started their life in UK in Coventry. Many worked in the mines as this absolved them from doing compulsory National Service(q).**

Life was most basic, few earned more than five pounds a week, but they would contribute one pound to the pool to send to a family in India each week mainly to repay their travel debts. Many of the people who ventured overseas to the UK and other countries could not have made it without the financial and other help from their relations, friends and neighbours. Indeed, for many descendents residing overseas, they are most fortunate to have had relations who supported their cause.

Here are some of the first to arrive in UK from Navsari District in 1930s:

- Shree Mankanbhai Parshottambhai (known as Lakhoti) of Matwad
- Dayalbhai Dahyabhai from Bodali.
- Vallabhbhai Unkabhai of Matwad, Vallabhbhai Bhagal of Machhad, Lalbhai Jerambhai of Bodali.
- During the World War II years Shree Vallabhbhai Fakirbahi (Vilas) of Bodali came to UK from New Zealand. He started a business exporting bicycles to India.
- In 1942 one of the first students to come to UK was Shree Parhubhai Parshotbhai of Kothamadi. He studied Law and returned to India and practiced there. After the end of the war many more students came to UK.
- During the years 1949/52 :

**Shree Narshibhai Hirabhai (Matwad)**

**Shree Bhanabhai Lakhkhubhai Budhia and Bhanabhai Lakhkhubhai Sukha (Aat)**

**Shree Gandabhai Parbhau, Shree Keshabhai Master, and Shree Lallubhai Narshibhai (Kothamdi)**

**Shree Dayalbhai (Aat)**

**Shree Gopalbhai Ravjibhai and Shree Chhaganbhai Bhagabhai (Maroli). Brothers Shree Morarbhai Unka Chhapi and Shree Chhimanbhai Unka (formerly of Matwad and then West Bengal).**

**These were just some of our main pioneers in UK and kindly accommodated the large number of arrivals from East Africa in the late 1960s. Some of the early arrivals started their life in UK at Coventry, where two brothers who had bought houses welcomed the new arrivals. It is said that these two houses were home to 28 people at times, sharing a single communal kitchen! Beds were almost always occupied as the day and night shift workers came and went. Many worked in the mines, as this absolved them from doing compulsory National Service.**

**There followed a mass emigration of families leaving Kenya, in a hurry due to the forthcoming immigration controls in 1969(r). These fairly large numbers of arrivals from Kenya at UK airports were left to their own devices to settle the best they can.**

**The families came with a reasonable knowledge of English, some with skills and a little money but suffered discrimination and had to take up jobs much below their skill and capacity. Housing the families was difficult, in some cases a family would live in one room with a shared kitchen, but it was tolerable – they were both patient and understand of the situation. In a year or so most managed to buy a home. This generation of immigrants suffered many difficulties and made the necessary sacrifices to make for an improved life for their children both materially and educationally, as proven by what we see today. Accommodation for the new arrivals was the biggest problem, and it was to the credit and efforts of their relatives and friends who had settled earlier and bought homes in which they were invited to share. The resilience of the people shone through against the challenge of unfamiliar weather, language, job and accommodation, but they managed to settle in very quickly.**

**In Uganda President Obote was ousted by General Idi Amin(s) in 1972 who soon ordered all Asians to leave the country and gave them just two days to do so, giving up their homes and allowed to take very little money with them. In a matter of just one week thousands of Uganda Asians landed at UK airports.**

**In spite of a very large number of East African Asians having come to Britain in the last few years, the British government in a very statesman like manner, welcomed the Uganda Asians and helped them settle. This was, however, a politically very difficult time as various politicians like Enoch Powell (**Conservative** MP 1950–1974), were making inflammatory speeches of 'Rivers of Blood' times to come, suggesting that mass immigration would cause numerous social and welfare problems etc. Unlike the first generation of Indians who came from East Africa mainly being labourers, the first generation of Indians who came from Uganda were educated, well versed in English, skilled and experienced and many had run thriving businesses. Yet they had to prove themselves in the job market, suffering much discrimination. Many of the skilled and well educated had to take up factory floor jobs to make ends meet. However, it was not long before their employers realised their abilities, and eventually a number moved into positions of responsibility.**

**The women took up jobs in local shops and factories and their children settled down in their schools, proving to be successful in their studies. Within a few years of arriving in the UK, most of those families could afford a mortgage for their own homes. In a relatively short span of time, there was a large Indian population in many cities; it was as though the East African communities had replanted themselves in the UK.**

**The community associations set up in East Africa started emerging in the UK too. The communities were hundreds strong and boldly asserted their identity, building a platform for celebrating Hindu religious festivals, cultural programmes and sports clubs.**



**Within a few of years after arriving from Kenya, they set up 'Mandhata Association/Mandals' in each of the cities/towns they lived in; there are some 22 active Mandals in the UK. West Bromwich were probably the first community to have their own premises - a church which was converted to a Shree Krishna Temple. A few years later, an umbrella organisation, 'The Association of Mandhata Samaj UK (AMSUK)' was set up to bring together all Mandhata Samajs at least once a year. Almost all our Mandals now have premises of their own, run Gujarati Language and cultural classes for children, celebrate religious festivals and arrange trips bit locally and abroad. Luncheon clubs have been established, well supported by the retired folk. Many Mandals have a youth section to promote and run sports activities, and AMSUK(t) has a subsidiary, AMSUK Youth Forum, who do this on a national level, as well as supporting Matrimonial and Professional networking services.**

**The Mandals set up here fund major projects for building Temples, roads, schools and various other projects to help Gams in India. Similar financial help has also been flowing from Koli communities settled in other countries. Some years ago, a project to develop Navsari Assets (acquired by our forefathers in South Africa) has been taking shape. This could take off quickly if the people now managing these assets in India were more cooperative and take necessary suggested action.**

**Today, many of the current generation will not have faced the hardships and discrimination that their fathers and mothers had to endure, but will be better educated, most of them graduates and professionals, confidently running their own businesses and practices, some on an international scale. Some have progressed in politics, becoming MPs and ministers in government. In business and finance, Indian Asians are an important force in Britain, to which our Koli community has made a significant contribution.**

**A visitor from India to UK and to other overseas countries is most likely to get the impression that our Koli community has truly arrived.**

**They will find that each household boasts graduates and professionals, a large number of whom hold positions of great responsibility and power. Unlike their parents, the youths/current generation have completely shed their inhibition of caste, creed and colour. They live life with complete confidence and shoulder to shoulder with any other citizen. They have integrated into the cosmopolitan British way of life and intermarry both within caste, religion and race, integrating into their environment.**

**On a personal note, KJ believes that period from the 1970s in the UK is only a partial success, achieving financial independence is just one pillar, aside from our material gains, saying “We need to come out from our limited pond and explore the ocean. We need to be more committed to the problems of our Samaj, and our local society as well as the general problems affecting other communities and the world we live in”.**

**A typical emigrant's story**

**Here is a story of Ashok's father who emigrated to the UK in search of a better life - Ukabhai Maganbhai Patel (of Chutta Moholla/Potaliyawad, Navsari) gave up study at the age of 15 when his father died aged around 40, leaving 9 children, so he took up work to help feed the family. His main wish was to go and find work abroad, either in South Africa or the UK, opting for the latter where he had more friends. He left his factory job as a machinist and sailed from Mumbai in 1954 leaving his wife and only child, a son aged 3 months at the family home. He sailed via the port of Aden to Liverpool. Like many, having never made such a journey before, the seasickness took some getting used to, with the boats heaving to and fro. After disembarking at Liverpool, he took the train down to London, having very little knowledge of English.**

**He was fortunate to have a friend who received him and put him up for a short while and then moved onto accommodation in Whitechapel. At the time, there were no shops selling Indian foods,**

the weather was cold, and there was much to adapt to, and just a Sunday cricket game with friends to look forward to in the summer months. Inevitably he became very homesick, but on departing from India, a relative who gave him a loan for his passage to UK instructed him not to return but to make a life at his new home. This stuck in Ukabhai's head every time he contemplated coming back! Indeed, he knew of others who returned homesick to India, but some would then return again to the UK at a later date!

**Figure 14 : Sunday cricket at Hampstead Heath late 1950s/early 1960s**

**Figure 15: Multiple families in a 6/8 room residence in Belsize Park**

He saved enough money from his job, ironing garment linings and called Ashok's mother and brother over from India in 1959. They moved to a flat in Belsize Park, Camden, the local area was popular with Asians. After Ashok's birth in 1961 he bought a house and settled in Neasden. The house had 2 reception rooms and 2 bedrooms upstairs, and a garden. All rooms were used as bedrooms, his family in one and the remainder 3 were used to accommodate a number of friends and relations temporarily, who, like Ukabhai had left their families back in India in search of a better life here in the UK. A few years later, he moved his family to Wembley. This story is typical of many immigrants not just here, but around the world. Through family and friendship ties they supported one another and this smoothed the way for a better educational and family life for the immigrants who took that opportunity.

Many arrivals settled in towns where there were big industries – from the post war decade of the 1950s and into the early 60s the UK was a manufacturing giant, work was easier to find, such as Bolton and Leicester (cotton and textile industry) and Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley (manufacturing metals and components industries).

**Figure 16 : Teatime in a London factory**

**It became common practice for the mothers to go to work in the factories once the children were of schooling age - the extra wage was most important in making families lives more comfortable. It was common to see members of a family working in the same factory.**

#### **South and Central Africa**

**India is surrounded by sea on the south, east and west, hence the transport of goods to nearby and distant lands was by sea and provided work for many people. They were familiar with many countries of the Far East and Africa. Well into the twentieth century even the bigger ships were dependent on wind power to carry them to their destination, such as Durban in South Africa. Most of the ships going to Durban at that time sailed from Calcutta. Some of the first Indian settlers in South Africa were the people of Madras including a large number of Muslims.**

**One of the first Mandhata Koli Patels go to Durban was Shree Vallabhbai Parshotbhai from Viraval in 1875. Many soon followed him from the villages of Karadi, Matwad, Bodali, Samapur etc but they all had to travel to Calcutta first to commence their sea voyage which must have taken a week and more in those days.**

**Gandhi had relocated to South Africa from Bombay in 1893 after accepting a year-long contract position with an Indian business firm based in Durban in the province of Natal. There was already a large settlement of Indians there but South Africa was fast sliding into a socially segregated society and practising strict apartheid based on the colour of peoples' skin.**

**Gandhi stayed on after the end of his assignment to fight against laws legalising apartheid. Many Kolis joined him including Nana Sita (Matwad), Jasmat Nana (Karadi) and Fakira (Aat). They and others suffered jail sentences also and it is said that Fakira carried out guard duties at the Ashram where Gandhi stayed near Ahmedabad. In return, after Gandhi when he came to Dandi at the end of the Salt**

**March in 1930 he visited Fakira's home in Aat. Fighting for their human rights in South Africa during the time of Gandhi and afterwards, Nelson Mandela, Kolis contributed with great heroism :**

- Maniben (Rupen Talav near Aat) spent 22 years in jail**
- Naranbhai Jasmat spent 18 years in jail.**
- Dahyabhai Govind (Bhatpore) died in the struggle.**
- Jasmat Nana, Chhotu Makan and Ramlal Bhulia were close associates of Nelson Mandela. The Kolis, as in India proved fearless and reliable freedom fighters.**

**Many who arrived in Durban and found life in South Africa not to their liking moved further north to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Zambia.**

### **Figure 17 : South African subcontinent**

#### **Transvaal Koli Hitwardhak Mandal**

**The Koli settlers in South Africa were the first to take an enlightened view of the Community and were instrumental in uplifting their kindred back in India. They formed the Transvaal Koli Hitwardhak Mandal, in Johannesburg in 1914, collecting donations from Kolis locally and in Rhodesia. The money raised was used to purchase land in Lunsikui, Navsari where they built a residential home for students from the villages to stay during their study in Navsari schools and colleges. An unnamed couple from Samapur who had returned home permanently from South Africa managed the student accommodation and named it 'Koli Vidharthi Ashram'. A trust was set up to fund scholarships and loans to encourage higher studies and also the printing of a monthly magazine, 'NavPragati'. This was indeed an act of far reaching vision and this philanthropic work continues today.**

**Today there are a large number of Kolis in Johannesburg, Durban and various other towns and cities of South Africa. In the earlier days they toiled in all sorts of skilled, unskilled and menial jobs but today, they and their descendants are substantial businessmen, professionals and politicians.**

## **East Africa**

### **Kenya**

**Mombasa was the main port of call. From here many continued to other large cities like Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, Kisumu etc in Kenya, Kampala in Uganda and Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania. As the main thrust of Koli Patels from Surat district started to come to East Africa, other communities from the Punjab and business people from Gujarat were already there in large numbers and had built their own homes. In the earlier years, those who came leaving behind their families would rent rooms which were quite often unoccupied shops or stores and often lived in groups of 10 to 15. These dens were called meshes. People from the same gam in India often lived together and so the dens would be called Matwad Mesh or Bodali Mesh accordingly. As the men progressed to better paid jobs and earned enough to rent for rooms/homes for themselves, their elder children would be called over and then their wives and other younger children.**

**The first generation Kolis in East Africa were mainly labourers or semi-skilled workers. Life there was lived almost exactly as in their home villages in India. One member of the family would go out to work leaving them dependent on a single wage. After their wives and children arrived, the children studied to perhaps matriculation level and entered the job market mostly as clerks; few had the resources or knowledge to start a business. Financially, the majority of the families lived a frugal, mostly debt free but materially poor life, and even fewer owned a house.**

**Most of these families had been settled in East Africa for over thirty years held British passports. In East Africa the Koli Patels from**

**Navsari district (Surat District at the time) adopted 'Mandhata' as the their community name. They identified themselves as belonging to the Mandhata Community and so all the Community Mandals were named as Mandhata Mandals. Some decided to hide their Koli roots, even changing their diet so they could pass as holy people of a higher caste.**

**KJ travels to Kenya**

**Both sets of KJ's grandparents – Ranchhodbhai Lala of Vahan Falia, Matwad and Somabhai Morar of Dhuna Falia, Bodali, went to Mombasa in 1919/21. This was soon after the First World War (1914-1918) when there was an intense political power struggle among the European countries and the British, while maintaining their Empire, were also digging in their feet wherever they went. KJ's grandparents went to work on the building of the Railways and stayed there for about three years and returned to India. They were perhaps among the first there and in their own words “life was terrible”, living in tents in fear of the wild animals. For the first year or two they survived on boiled lentils with some pepper and salt and then later they grew chillies and ginger. Apart from singing bhajans under the dim light of a lantern, there was no other entertainment.**

**Until about 1935, East Africa was not the preferred destination for Kolis, but after that, more and more youths in their late twenties and thirties set sail for Mombasa. Their travel by sea was fraught with danger and during wartime even more so. Ships were mainly sail boats reliant on favourable wind and often took more than a month to travel from Bombay to Mombasa. KJ's father was on one such boat with many others from Bodali. In 1943 during World War II, the Japanese sank a steam ship carrying a load of passengers from Bombay to Mombasa. A few were drowned but most swam to safety. After the war a large a number came to East Africa and settled there. KJ arrived in Kenya in 1948 at the age of twelve with two other colleagues from Bodali aged 12 and 15.**

**Origin of Mandhata community title**

**How did the name 'Mandhata' come to be connected to our community? KJ had not heard of a credible explanation but it appears that someone from our community had read or heard that the 'Puranas' identified us as the descendents of the ancient powerful King Mandhata. This is now the name used by all our people residing in overseas countries – it is a strong trait within us that wherever we find ourselves in a fairly big group we unite as a Mandal, informally perhaps to start with, but formalised later. This is what he understands happened in Nairobi. A few people informally started to meet as far back as 1925, maybe over a social event or drink. They came to be known as 'Mandhata Mandal' although community work was rarely in their mind!**

**Formation of a Mandhata Mandal**

**Around 1951 however, some community spirited people came together and under the leadership of Shree Keshavbhai Bhikhabhai Patel of Matwad met formally and formed 'Mandhata Hitwardhak Mandal'. Hirabhai Vala, who had recently qualified as lawyer, was asked to prepare a constitution after which a working committee was elected.**

**Prabhubhai Rattanji was one of the founder members of that Mandal and KJ too, was a committee member for a few years from 1959. Keshavbhai Bhikhabhai provided a strong leadership and collecting donations of a few shillings from community members, built Mandhata Hall in Grogan Road in 1961.**

**Figure 18 : Grogan Road, Nairobi in 1950s**

**The hall was not used for long because from 1968 more and more people started emigrating to the UK ahead of the Independence of Kenya because it was feared that afterwards, those entering UK would come to a close as they were classed as British Protected persons and not British Subjects. The Mandhata hall was later sold for a song**



**and the £10,000 received was repatriated to UK, handed over to the Association of Mandhata Samaj UK.**

**Mombasa had a big Indian community there and Shree Makanbhai Budhia Patel was instrumental in starting a community Mandal, donating land to build a hall and some accommodation. Visitors and those coming from/returning to India made use of this facility.**

**Exodus**

**The period between 1965/70 brought in a sea of political change; one by one the East African countries became independent. The eventual aim of these countries was the Africanisation(u) (the transfer/ownership of property, business and jobs to natives of that country) within the lower and middle classes of society. Apart from the businessmen and professionals, the vast majority of the Asians were middle class. The British Government, fearing a big influx of immigrants quickly passed legislation to limit entry to Britain by a quota allocation. In 1969 the weeks before the quota system was to be implemented in Kenya, there were almost panic conditions to rush to Britain to avoid missing their chance to emigrate. Thousands just fled leaving everything except perhaps their prize possessions. Those left behind were stuck for over a year in Kenya without jobs or any official help.**

**Uganda & Tanzania**

**In Uganda there was no immediate pressure under President Obote but he was ousted by General Amin in 1972 in a military coup. Soon after, Amin ordered all Asians to leave the country and gave them just two days to do so. In Tanzania there were no such political or economic pressures on the people to leave; they were much smaller in numbers.**

**Mandals were also formed in Kampala, Dar Es Salaam etc. Unlike South Africa though, there was no major all-embracing project to help their home villages in India undertaken. What help was given was organised ad hoc by individual Gam Mandals for the benefit of their**

**own Gams in India. In the main, financial assistance sent was sent for the welfare of the family members in the Gam and perhaps some contribution for the mandir or local school.**

#### **East Africa today**

**There are now perhaps only about fifty or so families remaining in the East African countries. Even then the remainder are usually just two or three family members, who are mainly there because of their business or professional connections; their wives and children would have settled in the UK or other country. The political climate/instability in some East African countries does not favour settlement there, for some, their personal safety is in doubt hence not an ideal place for family life.**

#### **Burma**

**Originally Burma, now known as Myanmar was a part of India until it was separated by Britain in 1937 and made into a colony. During World War II the Japanese invaded and occupied the country in 1942, but was then reoccupied by Britain in 1945. Many construction workers from Koli villages area went to Burma to build railways and railway bridges - Shree Lakhkhubhai Budhia and Khandubhai Manga both of Aat Gam were subcontractors there and took many to work for them. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League were fighting the British for their Independence. In 1948 when Independence granted, the Military Junta took over and all the foreign workers were driven off in a hurry. A number of these workers perished during their escape through the thick jungles, including many originally from Samapore Gam.**

#### **Fiji**

**A number of Kolis also went to Fiji and set up businesses there. Of the population, approximately 30% is made up of Indians. However, a**

number of military coups in the 1980s made it an uncomfortable place for the Koli business owners and community, this resulted in a number of them emigrating to New Zealand.

### **Figure 19 : Family business in Fiji set up in 1927**

#### **New Zealand**

**Shree Keshavbhai Daji at the age of 19 was the first man from Kantha Vibhag to go to New Zealand in 1902. He was followed in 1903 by Narottambhai Babar of Bodali and Keshavbhai Chhiba. They were followed later by the brothers Gulabbhai and Makanbhai Jivan of Amadpur. Looking back it seems amazing that these youths just passed their teens uneducated and could only speak Gujarati, travelled to Calcutta to board ships not knowing their final destination. In fact the same could be said about all the early pioneers who travelled anywhere at all. Their courage and resourcefulness had to be experienced to be believed. They were of course not the first Indians in New Zealand - Punjabis had already arrived a few years earlier. New Zealand was a British colony, but Indians were not allowed to take up government jobs at the time, so most survived on odd/unskilled jobs. Keshavbhai Daji is said to have landed his first job of scrub clearing for plantation. Later, migrants to New Zealand were able to go travel from Bombay, so by 1920, hundreds from Kantha Vibhag left for New Zealand. The early years were of great hardship, surviving on odd jobs like hawking, door to door selling fruit and vegetables etc and spending the nights in a railway shed etc. Early settlers as everywhere else even after fifty years of residence were severely discriminated in all fields. As time passed many started fruit and vegetable stores and other general merchandise and started spreading their roots in New Zealand. New Zealand was too far to make a quick return journey home in India. Most returned after many**

years and stayed much longer when home. KJ when only 6, remembers mother's uncle, Dheda Lala (Dhhok) of Vahan Falia, Matwad who was on his second visit. Today Kolis in New Zealand are in business, in professions, as large-scale agricultural producers and in positions of influence. They are generally prosperous. The later generations are very well educated and have also carved out their name in sports at national level especially in hockey and cricket. Of particular note at national level are :

- Mohanbhai Maganbhai Fakirbhai of Karadi, Rameshbhai of Bodali, and Peter Daji of Tavdi who played in the 1972 Montreal Olympics New Zealand Hockey team which went on to become champions.
- Miss Shanta Patel who surfed at national level
- In cricket, Narottambhai Puna of Machhad and Dipak Patel of Dandi (formerly of West Bromwich, who played for New Zealand in the 1992 cricket world cup).

Most of our Kolis have settled in either Auckland or Wellington where they have active Indian community Associations. In Auckland they have built a magnificent Radha Krishna Mandir and next door the Mahatma Gandhi Hall with a capacity of over two thousand people. In New Zealand Rameshbhai was noted for the essential services he performed of the Indian people there. He served as a Pandit conducting weddings and death rites for all Indians there. He also taught Gujarati to the young children. His family is well noted for bringing Indian cultural awareness in New Zealand. Over the years many many people have served the community in various capacity such as Dayalbhai Kesery, Chhotubhai Chhima, Pratimaben. Here are two important books have been published detailing early settlement of Kolis in New Zealand :

- 'Indian Settlers – The Story of a New Zealand South Asian Community' (see Ref 6)
- 'Machhad to New Zealand' (see Ref 7)

## Canada

The emigration of Kolis to Canada and USA happened much later, both these countries offered great opportunities. When Canada started advertising for people to immigrate there and help work the great wheat belt many Europeans and Indian Punjabis – Sikhs in particular, took up the offer.

South Africa born Shree Chhibubhai Bhanabhai is credited to have been the first Mandhata Koli to go to Canada in 1960, having studied in India and then returning to South Africa he decided to emigrate to Canada, accepting a teacher's job in Toronto. He also became active in community work and was a regular host to Morari Bapu whenever he came to Toronto. Other emigrants include Shree Gijubhai Patel from Bori Falia (1964) followed by Ramanbhai B. Mulchand of Karadi in 1967 followed by more people from South Africa. In 1972 (when the Olympic Games were hosted in Montreal) a recruitment drive by Canada which resulted in entry and residential visas granted relatively easily saw a large number emigrate to Canada and Shree Chhibubhai Bhanabhai is said to have helped them to settle. The Canadian government allows immigrants settled there to sponsor their blood relations to come to Canada. The children of these the immigrants would return to India to get married and the sponsoring system enabled many families to settle in Canada.

Today, there are large numbers settled both in Toronto and Montreal and have active Gam Mandals. Montreal is in the French speaking Quebec State, yet a large community there settled comfortably and have constructed a multi- million dollar Shree Ramji Temple. The Mandhata Association there actively serve the social, cultural and religious needs - youths from each Gam have a thriving cricket team. Many of the immigrants from our Gams who were not qualified or technically trained had to take up manual factory jobs etc. and even the educated ones willingly took up manual work. However, their children are now very well educated and qualified with a fine job or very profitable businesses.

## USA

One of the first to go to the USA is said to be Shree Kalyanjibhai Patel from Kothamdi. He went there for further studies and later settled there. After that some of our better educated people qualified on the points system that the USA operates to control immigration and admitting those with skills in demand. Some are resident in New Jersey but most of them are spread out as far as New York, San Francisco, Houston and Florida. Another previous method of gaining residency in the USA for a number of people who had emigrated there for that purpose was to prove they had been living there for 3/5 years after which they would be granted a green card. One way of doing this was to purchase and run a motel business for 3/5 years (a 24 hour facility for which there is a demand) for a statutory 3/5 years and then apply??. As with Canada, USA also has a blood relation sponsorship system and this paved the way for many families being reunited.

## Conclusion

This document is a brief and sometimes sketchy history of the Kolis - their origins, standing in society, movements in India and settling abroad. We Mandhata Patels are just one of the 1050 Koli sub groups. Much of the research has been based on a number of books and articles written by people who researched out of their personal interest or for their doctorate study. There has also been much interaction with the local village people and KJ has recorded his own knowledge both in the origins and migration of Kolis overseas. According to the inferences from the Shastras(v) and Puranas(w) we may have had a glorious past. If that was true, then we too have suffered the ravages of history where civilisations all over the world have been and gone; the once powerful races brought down by other more powerful races and made to serve the victors.

**The period from the 1800s is of great importance in Koli evolution and the following points can be agreed on :**

- The Kolis were overpowered and made to suffer the indignities meted out to a loser in those times; the conditions of slaves and bonded labour and it took many, many decades to make even small progress.**
- Our forefathers took great courage in breaking from the shackles of discrimination against out caste and hearsay to make a better life**
- Kolis were courageous in emigrating for work with little money and in many cases, little education**
- Kolis are industrious**
- We cannot continuously blame the upper castes for our present conditions.**

**As with many civilizations, history records the downfall of once powerful people who may have completely disappeared or been reduced to insignificance, but the Koli people still remain.**

**Mandhata Koli Patel diaspora (a scattered population whose [origin](#) lies in a separate geographic locale) spread around the world is now a multi-talented, multi-skilled group :**

- We have thousands of graduates and professionals, highly qualified doctors, dentists, lawyers, and skilled technocrats, living in their adopted countries and in India. In a number of the overseas countries we have created third and fourth generations.**
- The current generation is now growing up in a completely new and different environment. Their values are somewhat reduced/leaner version of their parents values and are more akin to the western civilisation and beliefs where perhaps the individual is in the forefront rather than the family.**

- **The current generation born and brought in the western country has no caste or creed inhibition. They travel the world and stand shoulder to shoulder with any and everyone. They respect ability rather than birth.**
- **In a vast number of cases the more recent generations do not see India as their motherland, perhaps this is natural progression with successive generations? In such an atmosphere, the older generation can be grateful that the newer generation still remember and/or observe Indian culture.**
- **The older generations had a nostalgic emotional bond with their home and village, so much so that in the last twenty years or so many families went back to their villages and repaired or rebuilt their homes at exorbitant cost so they can visit the Gam every year. It is debateable if the sons and daughters will ever go to the Gam on their own - indeed, in many cases they only visit when accompanied/received by their parents.**

**As a community however, we must recognise that we also have a much deprived large population particularly in the gams consisting of our relations and distant nieces and nephews whose parents and grandparents our parents and grandparents. Substantial help has much improved their conditions somewhat but more need to be done to enable them to fully stand on their feet. The older generation see a duty to continue to help, but the same cannot be expected from the new/current generations; let us hope they will see this as a responsibility and take up the challenge.**

**A personal view from Ashok**

**With the economic position India and especially Gujarat towards the end of the 1800s and into the 1900s those living in large families had to make the decision to go further afield to make a living and as a result once settled, helped improve the lives of their immediate family**



by both sending money to them and also bringing them over to live with them and the same goes for extended families.

The families remaining in Gujarat have also moved on greatly in the last 30 years –

- Children are better educated and becoming well versed in English
- Further education is encouraged and a number have MBA degrees, for example
- They are computer literate and a thriving IT industry has been established
- Many apply for jobs abroad using their skills base to satisfy visa entry requirements
- Many also move to the bigger cities both inside and out of Gujarat for skilled work
- Generations no longer live in a single home but move out and acquire their own homes

As with progress, generations are leaving the villages and moving out for work which, for many, brings in a better/regular income based on a salary with paid holidays and benefits, than farming which can be a daily effort and is also challenged by weather conditions. That generation does not have an urgency to emigrate to look for work, they are making a good life for their families which was not possible by their forefathers. The villages are becoming depleted, with many empty houses, some which are occasionally used by visiting expatriates. Gam life is being exchanged for city life.

The cultural change in living abroad has impacted successive generations such that it is highly likely that they will never relocate back to their motherland. For many, they may never see their ancestral villages/homes which may be closed up or derelict/neglected. Let's hope they visit from time to time and take an

interest in their forefathers' home and culture and pass on the knowledge to their families and descendants.

**Figure 20 : Jay Mandhata Koli emblem**

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank You to KJ for permitting me to update the first edition you wrote after much research, and for providing encouragement and making yourself available to answer my queries. It has been an honour to carry out this work – I feel more enlightened and proud of my ancestry and can now speak of my roots with greater knowledge and dignity. In doing my investigations I also found more historic detail about my own father and grandfather's hardship and efforts in migrating for work and settling down.

As well as updating and adding text to the original version, in this second edition I have and added maps, images, Appendices and a Glossary of terms to enhance the reader's awareness.

**Ashok Ukabhai Patel**

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## Glossary of Terms, People and Places

(a) Yajna - is to purify the atmosphere and the mind of the performer and those who join in it. It serves to elevate the human mind by enabling it to bless, praise and adore the divine giver of life and happiness.

(b) Caste – a system used within a society (hierarchical in some) classifying purity and social status. The 5 castes in Hinduism are : Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudra and Untouchable and are listed in order descending order ie Brahmin is of higher status than Kshatriya and so on - See Appendix B for further information on Hindu castes.

(c) Bonded labour - also known as debt bondage and peonage, happens when people give themselves into slavery as security against a loan or when they inherit a debt from a relative.

(d) Swami Sachidananda - is an eminent thinker and a preacher in his own right with a deep faith in Universal truth and science. He is a social reformer, a humanitarian, a philosopher, a welfare activist and many more.

(e) Alaudin Khilji - 1296–1316), was an emperor of the Khalji dynasty that ruled the Delhi Sultanate in the Indian subcontinent. He instituted a number of significant administrative changes, related to revenues, price controls, and society. He is noted for repulsing the Mongol invasions of India.

(f) Mohammed Bagdo

- (g) Akbar (1542 – 1605) popularly known as Akbar the Great, was the third **Mughal emperor**, who reigned from 1556 to 1605. Akbar succeeded his father, **Humayun**, and as a young emperor expanded and consolidated the Mughal empire in India.
- (h) Hindutva – a concept of "Indian cultural, national, and religious identity".
- (i) Reginald Edward Enthoven (1869–1952) was an administrator in the **Indian Civil Service** of the **British Raj** and an author of publications related to India.
- (j) Prof. Jon Wilson was a Senior Lecturer in British Imperial & South Asian History, King's College.
- (k) Rajputs – they are a large multi-component cluster of castes, kin bodies, and local groups, sharing social status and ideology of genealogical descent originating from the **Indian subcontinent**.
- (l) Alice W Clarke - Independent Scholar, History Ph.D. based in Berkeley **Gender and Society in India, Indian Historical Demography & Modern World History**
- (m) David Hardiman – David Hardiman is a historian of and a founding member of the **subaltern studies** group. Born in **Rawalpindi** in **Pakistan**, Hardiman was brought up in **England** where and graduated at the **London School of Economics** in 1970 and received his D.Phil. in **South Asian History** from the **University of Sussex** in 1975. He is presently a professor in the Department of History at the **University of Warwick**.
- (n) Sanatan Hindu Dharma - in Hinduism, term used to denote the "eternal" or absolute set of duties or religiously ordained practices incumbent upon all Hindus, regardless of class, caste, or sect.
- (o) Satyagraha - is a particular form of **nonviolent resistance** or **civil resistance**. Someone who practices satyagraha is a satyagrahi.
- (p) Rastriya Shala – Commissioned in 1921 by Mahatma Gandhi, Rastriya Shala is a learning center started with a purpose to impart new national concepts.
- (q) National Service - After the Second World War (1939-45), the young men of Britain were called upon to meet new challenges in a rapidly changing world. National Service, a standardised form of peacetime conscription, was introduced in 1947 for all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 30.
- (r) Kenya immigration controls 1969 – The 1960s were a turbulent time for Kenya's South Asian community. As the decade dawned Kenya was fast moving to Independence. The Asians were apprehensive of their future in Kenya. In 1965, the imposition of exchange controls hit the community hard as many had their savings in British banks, or were educating their children in Britain or the US. Soon, they had to decide whether to take up Kenya citizenship as the two-year grace period was fast coming to an end. Some Asians took up citizenship but the majority remained unmoved. They thought the "lifetime" stamp to stay in Kenya on their British passports was enough security. In 1967, the Kenyan government passed the Immigration Bill requiring all non-citizens to get work permits. British Asians now had to decide whether to take Kenyan citizenship or emigrate to Britain. In January 1968, the Asian Exodus to the UK was building up; the story hit international headlines a month later. Britain announced quota vouchers for South Asians. The Asian Exodus was in full swing. The British High Commission in Nairobi was flooded with voucher applications from Asians.
- (s) General Idi Amin – In 1971, General Idi Amin overthrew the elected government of Milton Obote and declared himself president of Uganda, launching a ruthless eight-year regime in which an estimated 300,000 civilians were massacred. He expelled all Indian and Pakistani citizens in 1972.
- (t) AMSUK – The Association of Mandhata Samaj UK, was established in 1972 as an umbrella organisation of the 15 or so Mandhata Samaj Mandals in the UK who are representative of the community of Koli Patels originating from the Navsari District in Gujarat, India, a number of whom had initially migrated to East Africa. (Website <https://www.amsuk.org/>).
- (u) Africanisation - is the process of defining or interpreting African identity and culture. It is informed by the experience of the African Diaspora and has endured and matured over time from the narrow nationalistic intolerance to an accommodating, realistic and global form.
- (v) Shastra – is a Sanskrit word that means "precept, rules, manual, compendium, book or treatise" in a general sense. The word is generally used as a suffix in the Indian literature context, for technical or specialized knowledge in a defined area of practice.
- (w) Purana - The Puranas are Hindu religious texts. They contain narratives about the history of the Universe from creation to destruction and the genealogies of kings, heroes, sages, and deities. Some of the Puranas are discourses on cosmology, geography and Hindu philosophy. They are usually written in the form of a dialogue.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

List of 53 Gams comprising Kantha Vibhag :

Aat Abrama	Alura	Amalsad	Athan/Ethan	Avada Falia		
Balafir Dargah	Bhutsadgam		Billimora	Bodali	Bori Falia	Butlav Gam
Chhapra	Chhinam Gam (near Maroli)		Chijgam			
Dabhalay	Dandi Dantej	Delvada	Dumas			
Eru/Eroo	Jalalpore	Jespor	Jogeshwar			
Kachholi	Kakrad	Kalthan	Karadi	Khambhlav	Kothamadi	
Machhad	Machhiwad	Majigam	Mandalia	Mandir	Mandria	
Masa Gam	Matvad	Mokhala Falia	Moti Pethan	Movasa Gam		
Nani Kakrad	Nani Pethan	Onjal Rupan Talav				
Sagra	Samapore	Simalgam	Sultanpur			
Tavdi	Vasan Vijalpore	Viraval				

## Appendix B

1. The name Mohenjo-Daro is reputed to signify "the mound of the dead." The archaeological importance of the site was first recognized in 1922, one year after the discovery of Harappa. Subsequent excavations revealed that the mounds contain the remains of what was once the largest city of the Indus civilization.

### 2. Hindu castes –

2.1 Brahmin – the highest class, single spiritual power that Hindus believe lives in everything.

2.2 Kshatriya – the 2<sup>nd</sup> class of the caste system; Warriors/Soldiers.

2.3 Vaishyas – the 3<sup>rd</sup> class of the caste system were traditionally cattle-herders, agriculturalists, artisans and merchants. They are now associated with the middle-class and social advancement and make up around one fifth of India's population.

2.4 Shudra/Sudra – the 4<sup>th</sup> class in the Hindu caste structure. Their jobs consist of artisans, labourers landowners, maids, cooks and blacksmiths.

2.5 Untouchable/Harijan/Dalit – the lowest caste in the hierarchy.