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## HISTORY OF ICHALKARANJI

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### **Abstract:**

In India there are some cities which have religious importance. Benaras, Gaya, Haridhwar, Ayodhya, Kanchipuram, Jagannathpuri, Paithan, Nasik etc. are sacred cities in India, while Delhi, Agra, Pune, Panipat, Bijapur, Hyderabad, Vijaynagar etc, have historical importance. Bombay, Madras and Calcutta are the cities created by Britishers and have become leading industrial cities.

**Key words:** History of Ichalkaranji , Little Manchester , political activities.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ichalkaranji, located in Western Maharashtra and included in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra for the last hundred years has been growing fast and has become one of the leading centers of textile industry. This city has historical importance also. This city is known as the Little Manchester of Maharashtra. One Naro Mahadev was the founder of the Ghorpade family. He made Ichalkaranji the seat of his capital in 1708 AD Previously this was a small hamlet situated on the left bank of the river Panchaganga.

Ichalkaranji, remained the capital of the Ghorpade (Joshi's) from 1708 AD. to 1949 A.D. Anubai, the daughter of Balaji Vishvanath and the sister of the Peshwa Bajirao I, got married to Vyankatrao, the ruler of Ichalkaranji in about 1719 A.D and Ichalkaranji became the centre of political activities. The ruler of the Ichalkaranji built the palace and other public buildings at Ichalkaranji.

There were 11 rulers who ruled the Ichalkaranji jaghir, Some of them were farsighted and enlightened. One such ruler was Narayanrao Babasaheb Ghorpade(1892-1943) who made Ichalkaranji a textile city. Many textile powerlooms and allied industries came into existence in Ichalkaranji. A number of cloth merchants, especially the Marwadi community from north India flocked to the city and invested their capital in textile Industries. Side by side some entrepreneurs started co-operative textile industries and spinning mills, like Deccan Spinning Mills, Inchalkaranji co-operative Spinning Mills, Kolhapur Zilla Sut Girani, Nava-Maharashtra spinning Mills etc. There was a need of labour workers for textile and spinning mills.

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Geographically Ichalkaranji is located near Karnataka side. Some local workers are also involved in this work.

Due to the textile industries Ichalkaranji is known as the little Manchester of Maharashtra. In 1949 Ichalkaranji Jaghir was merged into Bombay presidency. But after independence this city has fast been developing. It is also an educational centre. Class struggle has been always going on between the rich and the poor. Here an humble attempt has been made to study the 'History of Ichalkaranji ' by using original sources.

Ichalkaranji has an important place in the urban development of western Maharashtra. It is called the Manchester of Maharashtra. It is an important industrial city where the development of textile and the powerloom industry has brought about an over-all prosperity. It is also the main place in the boundary of South Maharashtra and Karnataka State.

It's district place Kolhapur is probably one of the oldest religious and trade centres in Western India. It has ever remained the great centre of learning and culture.

Now Ichalkaranji is a great commercial, religious, educational and political centre.

### **Location of the city**

Geographically, Ichalkaranji is on latitude 16-40 North and longitude 74-25 East. It is located about 26 kms to the south west of Sangli city . Three roads branching from Kolhapur Sangli road enter into the town, one from the west and the other two from the north and south. Ichalkaranji is joined by road to Nipani and Chikodi towns of Karnataka state.

### **Railway route**

Ichalkarnji city is situated midway between Kolhapur and Miraj railway line, and it is 9.5 kms south of the Hatkanagale railway station, Hatkanagale is also its taluka place. Ichalkaranji city is 29 kms from Kolhapur railway station.

### **The origin of the name of Ichalkaranji**

It is supposed that Ichalkaranji has been founded in the first century A.D. At first there were seven hamlets. But some old people say that there were three villages : 1) Inchi, 2) Unchi, 3)Karanji. Later on these villages mixed into one single village named as 'Ichalkaranji'.

The second theory about the origin is that there was a part of a forest and there were trees of karanji on a large scale and the name of the village derived from Inch. From this the name Ichalkaranji might have come into existence.

## **Climate**

The climate of the region is characterised by different climatic conditions. During the summer season (February to May) it is hot, during rainy season (June to September) it is wet and during the winter season (October to January) it is cold.

## **The river**

The river Panchganga is very near to the city. It is 1.6 km from the city. The river Panchganga divides the two states Maharashtra and Karnataka. It is considered the border of the two states.

## **The soil**

The soil may be classified into four types : Kali or black, Tambool, red, Mulee or Malwa the orchard and khari.

## **Rainfall**

The rainfall is very low in Ichalkarnji. Rainfall is below 650mm. The Industrail pollution is responsible for the poor rainfall.

## **Products**

Sugar-cane, jawar, wheat, soyabean and some rice are the main agricultural products. Ichalkaranji is strictly speaking an important cotton centre.

## **I) Ichalkaranji in ancient period**

Unfortunately very little is known about this city in ancient period. Because we have no concrete evidence which throws light on the past history of Ichalkarnji. But there are some circumstances which tell us something about the past history. Ichalkaranji, a small village, might have come into existence in third or 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Because as S. B. Deo pointed out that in Maharashtra there are a number of villages and cities which have come into existence by clearing thick forest in the third century B. C..

Kolhapur, Karad are old cities and very near to Ichalkaranji This part was controlled and ruled in ancient period by the Mauryas, Satwahanas, Vakatakas, Kadamba's, the Chalukyas of Badami and the Rastrakutas and Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Yadavas of Devgiri.

The Silahar dynasty came into existence in the 8<sup>th</sup> century first feudatories of Chalukyas of Kalyani and ruled up to 13<sup>th</sup> Century over Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli and Belgaum districts.

Ichalkaranji was close to Kolhapur and was included in Silahar kingdom. There are a number of Silahar inscriptions found in Kolhapur, Sangli, Miraj, area; Herle is a place very close to Ichalkaranji and we have found there one inscription of Gandrayaditya, the Silahar king, who ruled over Ichalkaranji and Kolhapur area, Silahar's dynasty was the ruler of this area for more than two hundred years and built some temples in this area. Bhoj- II was the last important ruler of the Silahar dynasty who was defeated by the Yadav ruler Sighan about 1218 A. D. and established Yadav supremacy over Kolhapur area including Ichalkaranji. There are a number of Yadav inscriptions in and around Kolhapur which indicate that Ichalkaranji was part and parcel of the Yadav empire. Moreover during Yadav period, Hemadpanti temples were built in this area. This Yadav empire came to an end in 1318 and this part was included in the Bahamani empire.

## **II) Ichalkaranji in medieval period**

The area around Ichalkaranji and the surrounding part was under the control of Bahamani rulers from 1347 A. D. to 1590 A.D. and it became the part of Aadilshahi kingdom after 1590 AD.

During Aadilshahi period, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj founded Hindavi Swaraj and conquered Kolhapur and its adjoining area including Ichalkaranji in about 1659. After the death of Shivaji, Sambhaji became the Chhatrapati of the Marathas. He was put to death by Aurangzeb the Mughal emperor in an inhuman way in 1689, and the Maratha war of independence started in Maharashtra which lasted upto 1707. During this war of independence Santaji Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav emerged as great Maratha Sardar and Santaji Ghorpade's family acquired the Jaghir Ichalkaranji and Miraj area.

Naro Mahadeo, the founder of Ichalkaranji Ghorpade family, earlier served under Ranoji Ghorpade, the son of Santaji Ghorpade. Ichalkaranji, which was once a small village in the eighteenth century, has now turned into a large town. It was the capital place of the Jaghir whose rise and growth forms one of the most romantic and thrilling tales that the annals of Maharashtra have produced.

## **III ) Ichalkaranji in modern period**

Ichalkaranji became the capital city of Ichalkaranjekar Ghorpade and came to prominence at once. The jaghir Ichalkaranji was one of the major feudal territories of Kolhapur state. The jaghir had two Mahals. Ichalkaranji Mahal lying in the east and Ajara in the south west of the state. The Jaghir covered an area of 241.3 sq. miles. It had 78 villages.

Ichalkaranji was the Head quarters of this jaghir. It lies in the Panchganga valley about eighteen miles east of Kolhapur and half a mile north of the river. On the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1943 the jaghirdar of ichalkaranji died at the age of seventy two leaving behind him death widow, but no son either natural or adopted. On his death, the jaghir came under the direct control of the Kolhapur darbar. But ichalkaranji record indicates that after the death of Narayanrao Babasaheb

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in 1943 his widow adopted one Govindrao alias Abasaheb as next successor. This govindrao alias Abasaheb was the last ruler who might have been minor at the time of the merger of the state. Therefore Kolhapur darbar was running the administration of Ichalkaranji Jaghir.

Later on India won independence in 1947 and subsequently Kolhapur State merged the Indian union on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1949. Ichalkaranji Jaghir was under the control of Kolhapur State. Therefore automatically Ichalkaranji was also merged onto Bombay presidency and included in Hatkanagale Talika of Kolhapur District which was newly formed in 1949.

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