



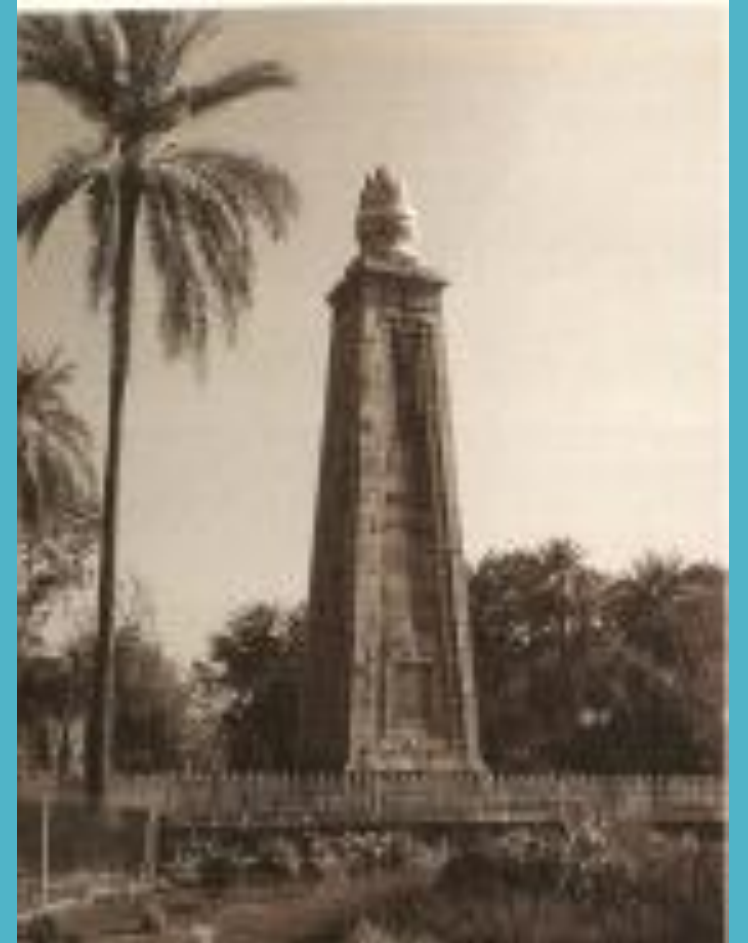
Technical session 1.  
Cultural Identity and Preservation among Parsis in Modern  
India-

# History and Contribution of the Parsis

Dr. Meher Mistry,  
Associate Professor and HOD, History  
Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College, Mumbai

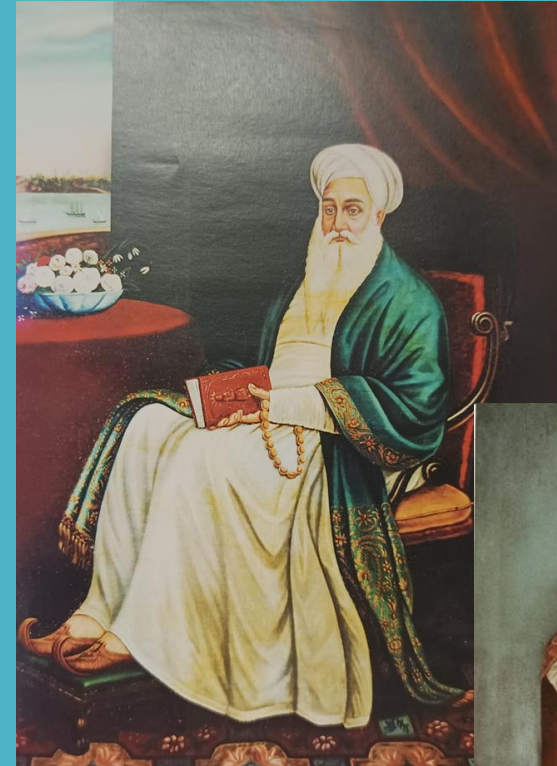
## Migration of Parsis to India

- Followers of Zoroastrianism
- Migrated after Arab Invasion of Iran
- Settled in various port towns of Gujarat
- Sanjan, Khambhat, Bharuch, Ankleshwar, Navsari –early settlements



# Rustom Maneckji Seth Family of Surat

- Traders- at Khambhat, Bharuch and later at Surat
- Revenue Collectors at Navsari (Desais)
- Agriculturists and craftsmen specially noted for woodwork and weaving
- Brokers at port towns like Bharuch in 17<sup>th</sup> century (Hirji Asa) and at Surat (Rustom Maneck Seth) by 18<sup>th</sup> Century





- Migration to Mumbai after decline of Surat
- Lowji Nusserwanji Wadia -Shipbuilding
- Raw Cotton trade
- Opium Trade
- Timber Trade
- Liquor Trade- Mahuri
- Partners with English Agency houses
- Capital Accumulation

## Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy



# Pioneers of Industry

- Adopted Modern Education
- Technical Education
- Forerunners of Industry:  
Jeejebhoy Dadabhoy  
Cowasji Nanabhoy Davar  
Maneckji N. Petit
- Temporary Setback to Cotton Textile industry during American Civil War.
- By 1870, nine of Bombay's 13 mills were Parsi owned.



# From Trade to Enterprise

## Contribution to economic Development

- J. N. Tata- Established the first steel plant, Hydro Electric project, Institute of Science at Bangalore
- Believed in economic nationalism



## Contribution to economic Development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Godrej
- Pallonjis
- Khambhattas (Rasna)
- Poonawalas (Serum Institute)

## From Trade to Enterprise



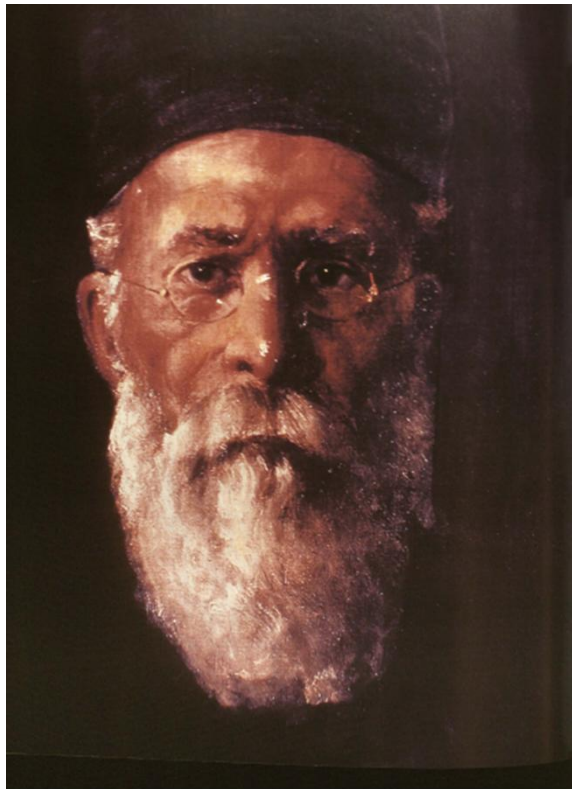
# Parsis and Philanthropy

- Contributed to infrastructure development of Bombay- constructed wells, tanks, fountains, Panjrapols (Animal Shelters)
- Established educational institutions and hospitals for the public. Eg. J.J School of Art, JJ Hospital, Tata Memorial Hospital, polytechnics etc.



# Pioneers of Political and Social Reform

DADABHAI NAOROJI- GRAND OLD MAN OF INDIA



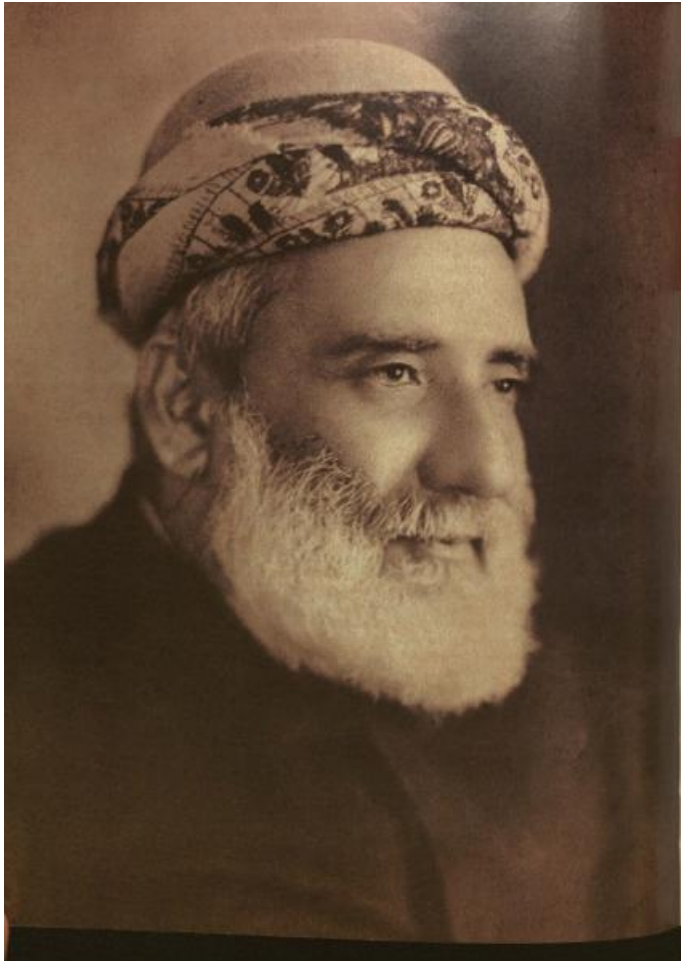
SORABJI SHAPURJI  
BENGALEE- FACTORY  
RIGHTS



# Emancipation of Women

- Promotion of Education of women
- First to enter higher education and professions like law and medicine.
- Fought for Women's right to vote
- Part of the Freedom Movement



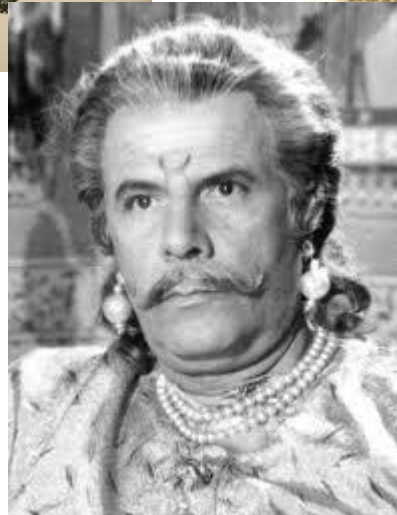
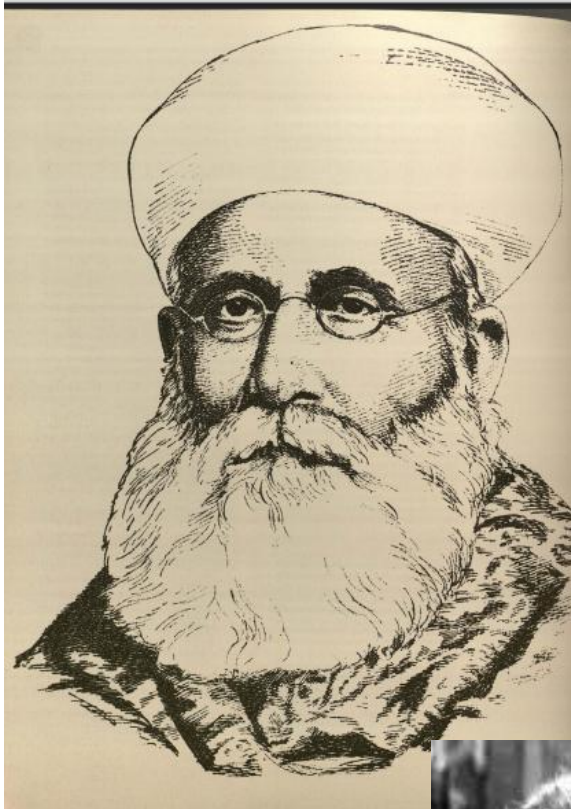


# Parsis and Modern Theatre

Kaikhushru Kabraji

Founder of Victoria Natak Mandli,  
Pioneer of Theatre in Bombay

Promotion of Indian Music- Gayan  
Utejak mandali



# Pioneers of Press and Cinema

Fardunji Murzban-  
Mumbai Samachar

J. F. Madan- Madan  
Theatres-

Ardeshir Irani- Alam ara

Sohrab Modi- Pukaar,  
Jhansi Ki Raani



- Pioneers in Medicine and Law
- Eminent Parsi Scientists



# Parsis and the Professions

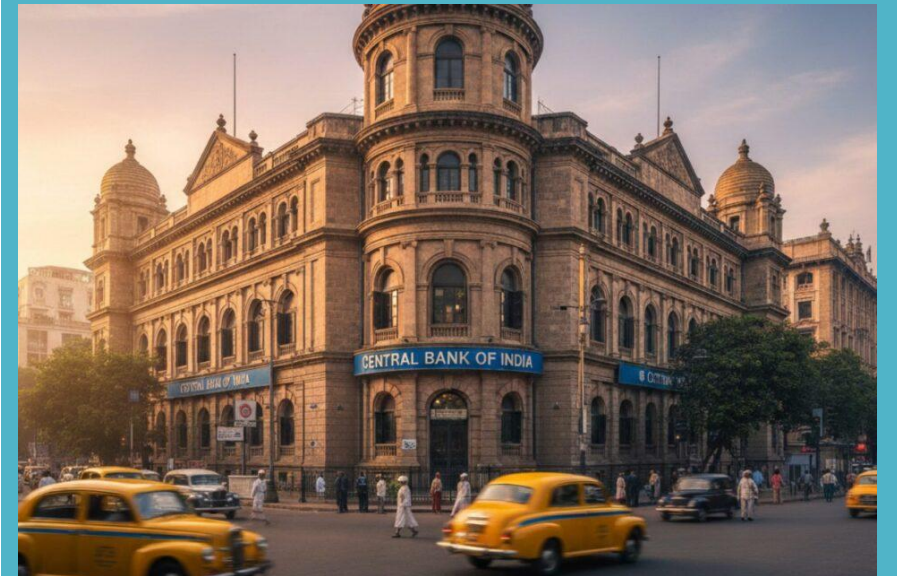


Parsis in post-independence period faced shrinkage of opportunities particularly those linked with liquor trade etc.

Many were seen taking to the service sector rather than entrepreneurial activities

Huge number of Parsis belong today to middle class section

Future



Need to document the contribution of Parsis

Erasure from history books like NCERT

Courses on Swayam/ NPTEL

Support needed for publications

Unique culture and heritage should be studied as Part of IKS

## The Vanishing Parsi



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# Thanks

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