

Rajashri Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Agricultural Development
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Abstract :

Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati made fundamental reforms for agriculture in his Kolhapur Santhan, keeping in mind the formula that 'the salvation of agriculture is the salvation of the farmers, alternatively the salvation of the country,' when agriculture is the backbone of our economy.

Not only Maharashtra but the entire country has been hit by farmer suicides over the last few years. There are official reports that as many as 1 lakh 35 thousand 585 farmers have committed suicide in the country so far. On average 12 thousand of farmers commit suicide every year in the country. In Maharashtra alone, as many as 3,000 farmers end their lives in a year. Despite a good monsoon, 637 farmers were from January to March 2017. The government is aware of the suicide. The main reasons for this are rising indebtedness, difficulties in getting guaranteed prices, unstable policies of the government, and loss-making agriculture. This year too has been rocked by farmers' suicides and the agitation for loan waivers. Against this backdrop, this review of the agricultural activities of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj, who was known as the 'King of Ryots'. How Shahu Maharaj's policy towards agriculture and farmers was. This is described in this article. It can be understood that the purpose of hailing Shahu has been achieved even though it has taught some lessons to the present rulers.

Introduction:

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also known as Rajarshi Shahu was considered a true democrat and social reformer. First Maharaja of the princely state of Kolhapur, he was an invaluable gem in the history of Maharashtra. Greatly influenced by the contributions of social reformer Jyotiba Phule, Shahu Maharaj was an ideal leader and able ruler who was associated with many progressive and path-breaking activities during his rule. From his coronation in 1894 to his demise in 1922, he worked tirelessly for the cause of the lower caste subjects in his state. Primary education for all regardless of caste and creed was one of his most significant priorities.

Father of Kolhapur's prosperity

At a time when agriculture is the backbone of our economy, keeping in mind the formula that 'the salvation of agriculture is the salvation of the farmers, alternatively the salvation of the country,' Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati made fundamental reforms for agriculture in his institute. To add to this, he started new industries and gave the energy of the principle of cooperation to these industries, so today in Maharashtra, Kolhapur district agriculture, Cooperation, and industry appear to be at the forefront of all three sectors. Shahu Maharaj laid the foundation of this progress of Kolhapur a hundred years ago.¹

Independent Irrigation Policy

Shahu Maharaj's subjects were mostly farmers, and his condition was no different from that of farmers in other parts of the country. In the first phase of his career (1896-99), during the terrible drought in Kolhapur, the Maharaja saved the lives of thousands of people and animals due to the timely supply of food grains and grass fodder. Shahu Maharaj announced a unique 'Universal Irrigation Policy' for Kolhapur to overcome a crisis like a drought. For this, he appointed a special 'Irrigation Officer', through which every village in the institutions was inspected in detail with a view to the construction of a pond, he recorded the new and old wells, small and big ponds, small and big dams, and took up their repair works. Plans for new lakes and small dams began to be implemented immediately. Shahu Maharaj implemented the policy of blocking every

drop of rainwater for the first time. A hundred years later, we have now realized its importance. This is an example of how far Shahu was thinking.

In a letter written to the British officer, Colonel Ferris Shahu Maharaj says, after you left here, I built about 20 dams, but my ambitions were not fulfilled, so I am going to take up a big irrigation project that is going to be a big project all over India, for which I am putting in my full force. I want this scheme to succeed.

In Maharashtra, even at a cost of Rs 20,000 crore, irrigation has not increased by one percent in the last few years. Because it remained the desire of our rulers how to fill their houses by starting the work of a big irrigation project. Looking at this reality, the greatness of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj fills the eyes.

Radhanagari Dam: The largest dam in the country

Shahu Maharaj traveled all over the world. He focused on starting what we see best in our Sansthan. A true ruler has to be like this. Shahu Maharaj had gone to Europe in the year 1902. There was influenced by material progress. There he saw how much the resources of nature can be used for prosperity. Seeing the dams there, he wondered why we too should not build such dams. Hundreds of inches of rainfall on the top of the Sahyadri. The rivers originating from there flow in the rainy season and when the summer begins, the rivers become dry. If the rainwater that falls in the Sahyadri is blocked and given to the black land across the country, then this land is real. In this sense, they were optimistic that Sujalam would become Suflam. It was from this optimism that the foundation stone of the Radhanagari Dam was laid. It was not uncommon for a Sansthan like Kolhapur with an annual income of around Rs 20 to 30 lakh to take up the work of such a big dam. Thinking of today, it was like a district joining hands to build the Koyna dam. The Maharaja saw the project as his life's work.

This is what happened to the dam –

The actual construction of the Radhanagari dam started in the year 1909. By 1918, it had cost Rs 14 lakh. Construction was done up to 40 feet. There were 3,000 masons and laborers working on this work. The Maharaja had to face many difficulties while implementing this project but the Maharaja did not waver. Further, due to paucity of funds, construction stopped for some time, but 600 million cubic feet of water per year from the water stock stored in the dam began to be available for agriculture, which was completed in 1957. The dam planted the seeds of the Green Revolution in the Kolhapur district.

Manifesto No. 48

After realizing that the work of the Pat dam was of great use in preventing drought, the work of large ponds was started. In order to make more use of these ponds and other ponds and wells in the institute for irrigation purposes, the Irrigation Division in the Public Works Department was separated and on top of that, Shri Shankar Sitaram Gupte was made the Irrigation Officer. Has been appointed. They were first ordered to submit a report of the information they had written below.²

Information should be made about where the irrigation ponds are located in the Sansthan, from where the water is supplied to it, how much water comes every quarter of the year, how much water can be used, what type of sludge will come if the water comes from the Tal, whether the water of the ponds will be used for irrigation purposes, etc. If so, approximately how many acres of land will be soaked and how much will it cost? The irrigation project should be prepared early and a separate report of the full reality should be made about the lakes whose irrigation will give the government some income from the irrigation and the benefits the people of Sansthan are able to get the benefits quickly.

A village-wise separate chart of each taluka should be prepared of the number of acres of land that is soaked in the lakes, and government and private wells in the institute. In this table, it should be known how many days the water of the well is sufficient and

what variety, how many acres of crops are grown on it, and whether the well is worth improving or not. A separate chart should be made by taking the same information about the lake. The sample of the table should go from you and a copy of it should be given to Shahu Maharaj. The Division has sanctioned a grant of Rs.600/- for one draftsman's salary of 20, one trowel's salary of 15, one clerk's salary of 12, and rs.600/- for the goods required for the survey. The irrigation officer should be given the information required by the revenue officer of each taluka and if necessary, appropriate assistance should be given immediately.

Loan for agricultural education

The loan waiver storm is raging across the country and also in Maharashtra. Shahu Maharaj implemented many schemes for agriculture when the loan waiver announced by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra was criticized in a simple, principled and normative manner; But a student who was going to the United States for agricultural education was provided with a noninterest loan. In the resolution, Maharaj says, (Resolution No. 990) Ramchandra Dhondo Shelke, R. Kolhapur, a Maratha householder, is going to the United States to learn agriculture, so on his request, he should be given a loan of Rs. 1500 for this work.

Education is equally important along with agriculture

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also felt that agriculture and housework should be given priority by educating the children of farmers. As he had decreed in the Sansthan. To educate the children of farmers, one or two hours, to keep the children of farmers free for one or two hours. The rest of the time should be kept free for farm work or housework. If the curriculum is planned and implemented this way, then there will be no complaints from the farmers. The Maharaja had asked to make such arrangements.

Do not even touch the vegetable stalk of the public

When Shahu Maharaj himself or the officers of the court went on a visit to the Sansthan, he would buy various items from the farmers and other people, his money was paid by the Sansthan later; But he paid from the mamlatdar to the faujdar, the faujdar to his soldier, the soldier to the patils of the villagers, and the patils from whom he had taken various things; But when the Maharaja became suspicious of this, he issued a general account order on April 14, 1894. Shahu Maharaj had the same view as Shivaji Maharaj, who ordered that the heart should not be shown to the stalk of the people of Sansthan. The order says that wheat, jowar, dal, etc., grains, flour, sugar, spices, etc., should be taken from Kolhapur as far as possible to the Maharaja's muttapakkhana. Goats, chickens, and eggs should also go to the market village near the place of stay and give cash to the owner wherever he is. The task of collecting the material should never be told to the police constables. If you buy milk from the villagers while on the invasion, the owner should pay all the money there according to the price in the village.

Shahu Maharaj used to say, 'We do not find it satisfactory that we should be farmers or soldiers. Therefore, we need to get into the trade and other high-quality businesses. Although most of us are involved in the business of farming, we need education in that too. There is no movement that does not require education. In recent times, agriculture has become so systematic that anyone who wants to succeed in it should be able to read and understand books on the subject.'

Encouraging innovative farming

The vision of Shahu Maharaj's work is reflected in his every step. While doing any work, he always thought of the next hundred years. He also never looked at agriculture in the traditional way. He insisted that my farmer should be wise, he should grow new crops. That is why at that time he experimented with the cultivation of many new crops. In it, he himself paid attention to the caste. He experimented with the cultivation and processing of many crops such as silk, veldode, cocoa, Indian rubber, jute,

ambadi, belgaumi potato, lac, shingade, tapioca, (shabu), and Cambodian cotton. He planted coffee and tea near Panhala. The tea from this farm was then sold with the brand Panhala No. 4. Shahu Maharaj used to send this tea to many including Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda and he liked it.

A king who plows steel to farmers

During World War I, the British began to face a shortage of steel. At that time, the British melted the guns in Hindustan and used them to make weapons. Shahu Maharaj took the guns of his state to the British and gave them to the Kirloskar Company, which made steel plows for the farmers so that they could not make their weapons.

Agricultural school

Shahu Maharaj had started farm schools to train farmers in modern farming. Maharaj used to organize grand exhibitions of agriculture and animals to understand the techniques of modern farming in agriculture. The Maharaja wanted that there should be a museum that gave information about agriculture. It was from this that the first building of the agricultural museum was built later in the Kolhapur Sansthan. Today this building houses the collector's office of Kolhapur. In 1912, he established the 'King Edward Agricultural Institute' in Kolhapur to promote improved farming practices in the institute.³

Agricultural exhibition

In order to give the farmers a taste of modern agriculture, he organized agricultural exhibitions in the institute, such as Ambabai's Rathotsava, Jyotiba Yatra, and when there are fairs and yatras in villages. From such exhibitions, modern tools of agriculture, samples of grains of excellent production, brochures, etc. were arranged. Animals of the best breeds were also exhibited.

Jaggery trade

Shahu Maharaj's emphasis was not only on good farming; So, he tried hard to make a market available to him here. At that time, the best quality jaggery produced in the Kolhapur Sansthan went down to the ghat beyond the Sahyadri and went to the market of Rajapur in Konkan and from there it was sent to Mumbai and so on. This jaggery was then known as 'Rajapuri Jaggery'. That is, the jaggery belongs to Kolhapur and the name is Rajapur. The Maharaja decided to change this situation. In the second year after the coronation, the work of establishing a new market called 'Shahupuri' was taken up on the land near the railway station. He encouraged the traders of Kolhapur, Kagaland Nipani to set up warehouses by giving them special concessions. In just five or six years, this new market has emerged in full swing. The agricultural goods in the institute got the market of the institute.

Beekeeping industry

The beekeeping industry was one such innovative experiment. The forest on the Sahyadri mountain ranges in the western part of the institute was dotted with perennial flowers. The Maharaja thought that due to this, the beekeeping industry could be started as an addition to agriculture in the Kolhapur Sansthan. He sent his officer named Chitnis directly to the Director of Agriculture in Kolkata to get information about the industry, but not only there, but no scientific knowledge of this was available anywhere in the country, which is why Shahu Maharaj did not keep quiet. He stubbornly started this industry and continued to run it. The struggle to get his knowledge by sending a man to Kolkata is a testimony to how attentively and studiously Shahu Maharaj was looking at any work.

Conclusion:

Rajarshi Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj was a true visionary social reformer. His simple living, remarkable efforts for the welfare of backward classes, and his genuine contributions to educational, social, and even agricultural reforms like water harvesting will always guide us toward doing better things for our nation.

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