

Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj: Perspective on Education and Educational Reforms

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Abstract:

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj founded the Maratha Empire in Maharashtra in 17th century. Sambhaji Maharaj and Rajaram Maharaj, the decedents of Shivaji Maharaj expanded the Maratha Empire after his death. After the battle of Khed, the Maratha Empire divided in two thrones. The son of Sambhaji Maharaj, Shahu ascended the throne of Satara whereas Rajaram's wife, Tararani led the throne of Kolhapur or Karvir. The descendant of Rajaram Maharaj, Shivaji- IV was childless. His wife Anandibai adopted Yashwantrao Jaysingrao Ghatage to the throne of Kolhapur on 17th March, 1884. He was crowned in 1894 and became the official King of Kolhapur Sansthan. He is also known as Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. He was considered as a democrat and a social reformer. He was greatly influenced by the works of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, an Indian social activist, an anti-caste social reformer and a thinker. He worked for the education of women and the oppressed class people throughout his life. Shahu Maharaj also contributed a lot in the field of education of the people of his Sansthan. The Maharaja of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaekwad was the first Indian ruler who introduced free and compulsory primary education in his state in 1906. Shahu Maharaj also implemented free and compulsory education policy in his Sansthan in 1916. Phule- Shahu- Ambedkar is the trio of Maharashtra who gave their crucial contribution in the field of education of the common masses. The present paper focuses on the perspective of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj on Education and his educational reforms.

Key Words: Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Education, Boarding Houses, Caste System, Reservation

Life and Works of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj:

Yashwantrao Jaysingrao Ghatage was born on 26th June, 1874 in the Ghatage Maratha family. His father name was Jaysingrao Ghatage. His mother name was Radhabai. He completed his formal education at Rajkumar College, Rajkot. Also he took the lessons of administrative affairs, Indian history and English language from Sir Stuart Fraser. He was adopted by Queen Anandibai, the widow of King Shivaji IV on 17 March, 1884. He was married to Laxmibai, the daughter of Gunaji Khanvilkar, the nobleman of Baroda in 1891. He ascended the throne in 1894 and became the official King of Kolhapur Sansthan. As the King of the Sansthan he took the crucial decisions regarding the common masses or bahun especially the lower castes and the downtrodden people. He was the King of the Kolhapur Sansthan but also he was a modern social reformer. He took the decisions regarding the agricultural development, industrial development, water management and women empowerment. He made the welfare policies of economy and reservation. He worked throughout his life for the eradication of the castes. His work for SC, ST and NT castes is important to be noted. He contributed to Art, Culture and Sport especially for wrestling. He not only took the decisions and made policies for the welfare of the people but also he implemented all these

decisions and policies in his Sansthan. He made very important reforms in the field of education. Mahatma Phule established the first school for girls in 1848 in Pune. He was greatly influenced by the works of Mahatma JyotibaPhule in the field of education, especially girls' and women's education. He took very important decisions regarding the education of common masses in his Sansthan and also implemented it. He died in Mumbai on 6th May, 1922. The government of Maharashtra celebrates his birth anniversary as 'Samajik Nyay Din' from 2001.

Introduction:

The field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in school is called education. Education is very crucial in the life of human being because education imparts us wisdom. The person who takes the education he or she becomes self-dependent, doesnot rely on others and thinks independently. We get respect in the society when we are literate. There are multiple job opportunities for us when we get the education. India has been the center of learning since ancient times. In ancient times Takshashila (now in North-Western Pakistan) and Nalanda University (now in Rajgir, Bihar, India) were the noted centers of learning for several centuries. With the arrival of the British Raj in India the modern European education came to India. Mahatma JyotibaPhule started a first school for girls in 1848 in Pune. He suffered a lot when he opened the school but he and his wife SavitribaiPhule continued the pious work of imparting knowledge through the schools. He worked for the oppressed class people and the downtrodden people. He established the SatyashodhakSamaj. Rajarshi Shahu Chhtrapati influenced a lot from the works of Mahatma JyotibaPhule and also he took the important and crucial decisions regarding the caste system and the education of these downtrodden people in his Sansthan.

Perspective of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj on Education and Educational Reforms:

Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the ideal King of Kolhapur Sansthan. His decisions and policies regarding the education were crucial to be noted. He not only took the decisions and made policies regarding the education rather he implemented all those decisions and policies in his Sansthan. In 1903 he established JaysingraoGhatage Technical Institute to provide the technical education. In 1905 he founded King Edward Mohammedan Education Society. He opened the King Edward Agricultural Institute in 1912-13 to impart agricultural education. He started the Native Library in 1912. In 1913 he started the school of SatyashodhakSamaj. He started the Patil School to give the administrative training at the village level. He presented the manifesto in 1913 that there must be at least one school in every village. In 1916 he established the Deccan Education Sanstha in Nipani, Karnataka. In the same year he also established Shri Shivaji Preparatory Military School.

Maharaja SayajiraoGayakwad (1875-1939) was the first Indian ruler who introduced free and compulsory Primary Education in 1906 in his state, Baroda. Rajarshi Chhatrapati ShahuMahataj also implemented this policy of free and compulsory primary education in 1916 in Kolhapur Sansthan. The government of India implemented the policy of free and compulsory education to all children in the age group six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. The inspiration of free

and compulsory education was taken from the policy of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj.

He established 20 different Boardings or Hostels in Kolhapur Sansthan for the students of the various castes because the students were unable to pay the rents of the private residences in those days who used to come from village to city to pursue education. These boardings were free of charge for the students. For instance, Victoria Maratha Boarding (1901), Jain Boarding (1902), Muslim Boarding (1907-08), Veerashaiv Lingayat Boarding (1907-08), Miss Clark Hostel (1908-09), Daivadnya Boarding (1915-16), Namdev Boarding (1911-12), Sarswat Boarding (1914-15) Arya Samaj Gurukul, Vaishya Boarding, Indumatee Boarding, Vedit Vidyalaya- Vastigruha (1920-21), Prince Shivaji Maratha Boarding House (1920-21), Shivakanthi Shesh Samaj Boarding, etc. Kolhapur was considered as the mother of Boarding Houses.

He first time introduced The Practice of Reservation in government jobs in modern India from 26 July, 1902. The idea of reservation originally came from Mahatma Jyotiba Phule but he implemented (50%) reservation excluding four castes (Brahmins, Parsi, Shenvi, Prabhu) in his kingdom. He donated 1 Lakh to Banaras Hindu Vishwavidyalaya on the request of Malaviy. Also he gave 5000 rupees to the Mooknayak, the first newspaper of B. R. Ambedkar.

He was given the title of Maharaja by the British government in 1900. The Kurmi Kshatriy Samaj of Kanpur titled him Rajarshi. According to the view of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar he was the pioneer of social democracy. Bhai Madhavrao Bagal said about him that he was a king but a democratic king. According to Prabodhankar Thakare he was the search light of Maharashtra. Kanpur University of Uttar Pradesh was renamed as Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj University in 1995.

Conclusion:

Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the king of Kolhapur Sansthan. He reigned from 1894 to 1922. During his tenure he took very crucial decisions regarding the education of the lower classes and bahun and also implemented all these decisions for the welfare of the common masses in his Sansthan. He was the king of common people or the king of bahun. He was the second King in the history of India after Maharaja Sayajirao Gayakwad who started free and compulsory primary education in his Sansthan. He was the ideal King of the Kolhapur Sansthan.

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