

Impression of Chh. Shahu Maharaj on Indian Constitution

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In the History of Modern India ,Chh. ShahuMaharaj , one of the architect of modern India, he had undertaken several decisions courageously. He had not only given a new vision to the Kolhapur Empire but also immensely contributed to development of human race. He stands as the distinct personality who firstly worked to bring changes among all sectors of society. He has paved a way to combat such negative situations and left an impression on the democratic manifesto of independent India .

Dr.Ambedkar admitted that Mahatma Phule, Kabir and Chh. ShahuMaharajwere his spiritual teachers. So in every walk of life of Babasaheb, there is reflection of Chh. ShahuMaharaj’s thoughts and activities carried by him. We can observe same in Indian Constitution also. In this topic , it will be noticed that there is impression of Chh. ShahuMaharaj work on the Constitution. by considering the work and Constitutional content included by Drafting Committee.

Here the topic concentrates on close inter-link between Constitutional provisions for human rights and welfare of weaker with the thoughts of Chh. ShahuMaharaj.

In his short reign ,Shahu succeeded in introducing radical social and legal reforms that far-reaching consequences for the marginalized and the dispossessed. In the process, he also took the mantle from Phule and passed it on to Ambedkar. The Objectives of this study are as follow.

Objectives:

This topic focuses:

- 1.the social practices that existed in our society during the beginning decades of the 20 th century;
2. the efforts of Chh. ShahuMaharaj to deal with issues like caste system, gender discrimination, welfare of weakers along all segments of society.
3. the role of Chh. ShahuMaharaj in promoting school education in India;
4. the impact of the reform movement on Indian society.
- 5.Reflection of thoughts of Chh. ShahuMaharajin Indian Constitution.

The Constitution of India rests firmly on the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. It reflects an uncompromising respect for human dignity, an unquestioning commitment to equality and non-discrimination, and an over-riding concern for the poorest and the weakest in society. The Constitution makes it mandatory to protect and promote freedoms, and to assure every citizen a decent standard of living. Right to dignity, healthy environment, free education and to shelter are emanations of the right to life guaranteed in the Constitution. An elaborate Constitutional mechanism has been provided for the uplift and welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. Special provisions in the Constitution are also provided for ensuring welfare of women and children. It was target area of work of Chh. ShahuMaharaj. An occasion to reviewing the working of the Constitution serves as one for the nation to recall with deep gratitude the services and sacrifices of all those who fought for

upliftment of poor & weaker and independence and of those great persons who framed a noble Constitution for India with lofty ideals.

Constitution is a vital document, according to which the country carries out its operations. Constitution protects the rights of the citizens of a concerned nation, irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, sex or physical appearance. A constitution, thus, can be safely said to be a social contract between the government and the people it governs. The constitution of a particular country lays down the national goals which form the basic edifice on which the nation rests upon. For instance, the constitution of India has inscribed in it the primary facets of the nation which are democracy, socialism, secularism and national integration. Indian Constitution makes provisions for the protection and promotion of the interests of different regions and groups in the country along with weaker sections. Thus, the constitution contains elaborate provisions for the minorities, scheduled castes and tribes and marginalized etc.

We say, India is welfare state. A welfare state is a concept of government where the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of Socio-economic well-being of people. It is seen in every walk of Chh. Shahu Maharaj. He worked for welfare of women and protection of interests and rights of vulnerable or *weaker sections of society*. He is a pioneer of revolutionary manifesto of 50 per cent reservation for the Depressed Classes in government jobs. He quickly progressed from a personal sense of outrage to a general sensitivity and awareness of the sufferings of those on the wrong side of the caste divide.

Dr. Ambedkar admitted in the Constituent Assembly that many elements were borrowed from great philosopher thoughts. The architect of Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar used to say in the speeches about Chh. Shahu Maharaj, “Ambedkar said that Shahu’s absence would “ruin everything” in our society.”

Maharashtra is land of social thinkers, social reformers and social revolutionaries who have not only molded and enriched all facets of life but have also made contribution towards holistic development of India.

Among them, Chh. Shahu Maharaj was the first ruler in modern India to give expression to the misery and discontent that lay latent in the minds and hearts of the dumb millions. Chh. Shahu Maharaj occupies a unique position among the social reformer of India in the first two decades of twentieth century. Modern India, cannot be imagined without the 'path breaking contributions' of Chh. Shahu Maharaj who came after him, who fought against heavy odds to convince the people around about challenging existing social practices and questioning old mode of thinking and exposing millennial old oppressions which had religious sanctions as well. We cannot forget the importance of the path breaking work he did. He raised his voice against every form of injustice. He ceaselessly worked for the moral and material improvement of the oppressed and the depressed. He blazed the trail in several vital spheres of national life. Chh. Shahu Maharaj communicated with the common people entirely in their own idiom, language and spirit. He did his best to infuse a new spirit in the dormant oppressed masses to fight for their rights, and thus, in many respects. It has been rightly described him as *‘the father of Indian social reform from royal family.’* Chh. Shahu Maharaj’s thoughts represented the fulfilment of the renaissance desire for social transformation along revolutionary lines.

Numerous social evils that were practiced in the name of religion. Dominants had been exploiting weaker by saying that the practices have been part of religion. Knowledge in India was appropriated by the Brahmanical, elitist interest. This made Chh. Shahu Maharaj strived to root out social evils and advocated development of all particularly depressed and women. Chh. Shahu Maharaj is the Spiritual Father of ourselves. Chh. Shahu Maharaj was an earliest leader and true ruler who led all members of society to oppose strongly gender inequality.

Shahu made and enforced powerful laws against the devadasi system and domestic violence, and legalized inter-caste and inter-religious marriages and widow remarriage. He was equally sensitive about the subtle ways in which sexism operates. He issued orders against verbal abuse of women, especially during the Holi festival drunken revelry. He granted “adult” status to women above 18 years of age, the same as for men. Ambedkar granted women Constitutional guarantees of equality, argued for women’s control over reproduction and ensured paid maternity leave for women workers. Ambedkar had correctly understood and appreciated women’s contribution to social production and reproduction. He also tried his level best to obtain for them their inheritance rights.

He was in the real sense a great thinker and finder of truth. He was a humanist . His view of social justice was akin to “*the respect-for-person* .He developed a keen sense of social justice, becoming passionately critical of handicap caste system. Social justice is that which assures the dignity and self respect of the individual. Dignity and self respect are the essence of human rights. Common threat to dignity and self respect is violation of human rights. Human rights are integral part of human beings. They are born with men, in the sense human beings get them by birth. He took really efforts 200 years ahead of the time to offer rights to backward classes. Shahu encouraged his people “to learn, to unite and to fight for their rights.” He was aware that primary education among the masses in the British Rule was very much neglected .He argued that ‘a good deal of their poverty, their want of self reliance ,their entire dependence upon the learned and intelligence classes’ could be attributed to the ‘deplorable state of education among the peasantry’.

He praised British Rule because it gave the tools to fight against injustice. Chh. Shahu Maharaj’s work rests on principle of which include freedom and equality of men and women.

Chh. Shahu Maharaj considered all human beings are children of God and worship the Creator without the help of any mediator. He was follower of systematic and scientific study.

The history of twentieth century is the story of the impetus for social reform in which the introduction and spread of modern education was an important element. Shahu furthered Phule’s educational agenda, universalized primary education, strongly recognized the importance of education. He used to say ,Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj believed that **no country could make progress without education**. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was visionary and really democratic in nature and he had the ambition to bring about social change through the education. He realized the importance of education in social change, empowerment of the backward, empowerment of women and socially

disadvantaged people. The Maharaja was also aware of the various types of education and training, he focused his efforts on not only conventional education but also undertook efforts for industrial education, medical education, agricultural education. Most importantly, he realized the concept of free and compulsory education for all in that era. He not only realized that, but also worked on a comprehensive program of promoting free and compulsory education for social change. Now '**Education for all**' is motto of our government.

By considering above contribution given by Chh. Shahu Maharaj for upliftment of poor, we will see the image of his incredible work in Indian constitution. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women and lower classes of society, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women & weaker for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of specific importance in this regard.

Chh. Shahu Maharaj started his significant work since 1894, which was later re-emerged in Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Chh. Shahu Maharaj tried to eliminate the stigma of social untouchability surrounding the lower castes. Although India's national constitution of 1950 sought to abolish cast discrimination and the practice of untouchability, the roots are in philosophy of Chh. Shahu Maharaj. His social thoughts are based on humanism. It is based on the values like equality, Justice and tranquillity. He spread value based system through his work and thought. Our constitution assures human rights and welfare of weaker sections which was agenda of Chh. Shahu Maharaj to empower weaker, neglected, marginalized. He suggested a number of solutions to improve the conditions of the agriculture sector. During British Rule also legislations were passed to provide remedial measures to such weak portion of society.

This interprets the welfare of weaker sections of society, which is at center of our Constitution.

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