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PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

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History

Shahu (also known as Chhatrapati Rajarshi Shahu) (26 June 1874 – 6 May 1922) of the Bhonsle dynasty of Marathas was a Raja (reign. 1894 – 1900) and the first Maharaja (1900–1922) of the Indian princely state of Kolhapur. Rajarshi Shahu was considered a true democrat and social reformer. Shahu Maharaj was an able ruler who was associated with many progressive policies during his rule. From his coronation in 1894 till his demise in 1922, he worked for the cause of the lower caste subjects in his state. Primary education to all regardless of caste and creed was one of his most significant priorities.

His works and Contributions to the Society:

Chhatrapati Shahu occupied the throne of Kolhapur for 28 years, from 1894 to 1922; during this period he initiated numerous social reforms in his empire. He is credited with doing much to improve conditions for the lower castes. He also ensured suitable employment for students thus educated, thereby creating one of the earliest affirmative action (50% reservation to weaker sections) programs in history. Many of

these measures came in to effect in the year 1902. He started Shahu Chhatrapati Weaving and Spinning Mill in 1906 to provide employment. Rajaram college was built by Shahu Maharaj, and later was named after him. His emphasis was on education, his aim being to make learning available to the masses. He introduced a number of educational programs to promote education among his subjects. He established hostels for different ethnicities and religions, including Panchals, Devadnya, Nabhik, Shimpi, Dhor-Chambhar communities as well as for Muslims, Jains and Christians. He established the Miss Clarke Boarding School for the socially quarantined segments of the community. Shahu introduced several scholarships for poor meritorious students from backward castes. He also initiated compulsory free primary education for all in his state. He established Vedic Schools which enabled students from all castes and classes to learn the scriptures, thus propagating Sanskrit education among all. He also founded special schools for village heads or 'patils' to make them better administrators.

Sahu was a strong advocate of equality among all strata of society and refused to give the Brahmins any special status. He removed Brahmins from the post of Royal Religious advisers when they refused to perform religious rites for non-Brahmins. He appointed a young Maratha scholar in the post and bestowed him the title of 'Kshatra Jagadguru' (the world teacher of the Kshatriyas). This incident together with Shahu's encouragement of the non-Brahmins to read and recite the Vedas led to the Vedokta controversy in Maharashtra. This dispute brought a storm of protest from the elite strata of society and vicious opposition to his rule. He established the Deccan Rayat Association in Nipani during 1916. The association sought to secure political rights for non-Brahmins and invite their equal participation in politics. Shahu was influenced by the works of Jyotiba Phule, and long patronized the Satya Shodhak Samaj, formed by Phule.

SOME OF HIS WORK :-

- Started Railway from Miraj to Kolhapur on may 8 th 1888
- In 1893 he published a LAW BOOK for Kolhapur princely
- In 1894 Maharaj demolished the vethbigari Padhat (forced or slaved labor)

- 1895 he started Motibag Talim In Kolhapur (talim is place where people practice wrestling)
- He inaugurated fergusson college. In year 1895
- 6.1896 started hostels for students in kolhapur(probably the first hostel system for students in India)
- He waved farm loan at that time.
- He started reservation for the seat of “ Talathi “ for minorities.
- In 1901 he brought the law against the slaughter of cow.
- Started 50% reservation for the monitories in job.
- Started shahu spinning mill in Kolhapur in 1906. (15 lakh investment at that time)
- Stared brach of “satyashodhak samaj” in Kolhapur during 1911.
- 1992 Built khasbagh kusti maidan (wrestling ground in Kolhapur).
- Started “satyashodhak school” in kolhapur.
- He built Radhanagari Dam (World’s first dam built using soil)
- He made primary education free.
- Brought law for remarriage of widdos in 1917
- In 1918 started “Arya Samaj”
- He chaired the “ Akhil Bhartiya Ashprush parishad “ in delhi in year 1922.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- He was the greatest king of that time. Maharaja Of Kolhapur. His personality was very attractive he had solid body yet he was simple and ground to earth king.

- In his work the influence of modernity and foresight is always seen. From the coronation to the present state of affairs and social affairs, Maharaj made many bold decisions, and brought them too.
- Shahu Maharaj laid special emphasis on spreading education in the Bahujan Samaj. He made primary education compulsory and free in Kolhapur. He issued a royal decree to spread women's education. In 1919, with a view to eradicating untouchability,
- He abolished the practice of setting up separate schools for upper castes and untouchables. To eliminate caste discrimination, he enacted a law recognizing interracial marriage in his state.
- In 1917, he passed the Remarriage Act, which legalized widowhood. He established the Deccan Rayat Association at Nipani in 1916 to involve the Bahujan Samaj in the political decision-making process.
- The Vedokta affair over the right to chant the Vedokta mantra took place during the reign of Shahu Maharaj. He was educated by Fraser, a British officer. Further education took place at Rajkumar College, Rajkot and at Dharwad. Shahu Maharaj's personality was developed due to the knowledge gained through study and educational trip.
- During the famine of 1896 and the ensuing plague, he was put to the test and completely overcome. The people feel that there is no such thing as 'becoming a king' in view of drought, distribution of food, cheap grain shops, establishment of destitute ashrams.
- He was instrumental in establishing Shahu Chhatrapati Spinning and Weaving Mill, Shahupuri Trade Center, Farmers' Cooperative Society, King Edward Agricultural Institute for Agricultural Technology Research in Kolhapur.
- He also paid attention to agricultural development through the construction of Radhanagari Dam and providing loans to farmers.

Award's:

- On Jan 1st 1895 he was rewarded as CGSI (Knight Grand Commander) by Queen Victoria of England
- For his extraordinary work Cambridge University gave him L.L.D

Degree (Doctor Of Law) in year 1902.

- Queen Victoria also gave him title as “ Maharaja” in year 1900.
- In 1919 During the Khstriya Parishad In Kanpur , Kanpur people gave him title as “ Rajarshri” and from onward he was called Rajarshri Chatrpati Shahu Maharaj.

Other Awards-

- King Edward 7th Coronation Medol in 1902,
- Kinght Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order 1903,
- Knight grand Commander Indian Empire 1911,
- Delhi Darbar Gold medal 1903, 1911.
- He was people's king. Truly legend.

SUMMARY:

Shahu Maharaj, during his rule, attempted to liberate the Non-Brahmin class from the grip of baised casteism. He enacted various laws against traditional standing and religion and offered significance to the current position of women in society. He committed himself to the social transformation idea of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule.

- Nevertheless, he thought that education could not serve as a tool for the evolution and progress of Non-Brahmins and Dalits. So, he legislated various laws to advance social equality, justice, and value in his rule. Shahu Maharaj resuscitated the ‘Satyashodhak Samaj’ of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. He was a passionate supporter of ideologies by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. He understood the importance of education in the life of

Bahujan Samaj.

- Hence, legislated the Law of free and compulsory primary education. In the initial phase of the 19th century, the social status and economic wellbeing of women was not at all satisfactory in Kolhapur at the time of Shahu Maharaj, as portrayed in the review of education in Bombay state (1855 – 1965).

He formulated and initiated the execution of education policy for the empowerment of women. As per the opinion of Shahu Maharaj, the state was undergoing losses due to a lack of education in Bahujan society, including women. The priests had a hold over the temples, and their impedance needs to be ceased by treating and making the schools as the temples. So that knowledge of real religion would get revealed. The stature of women in the society, i.e. in the prevailing caste system and Varna system was worst.

They were abused and misused. Shahu Maharaj observed the situation and genuinely thought about improving the lives of the women in the dominant male society. He assessed the issues of women and concluded that education is not the only answer. He sensed the necessity of robust and enforceable laws to prevent the exploitation of the women in the current societal caste and varnas system. His commitment to creating particular laws for women's empowerment was incredible. They are significant today. The legislated laws by Shahu Maharaj are as follows:

1. Free and Compulsory Primary Education to All Act, 1917 : All the people of the Kolhapur province must be able to read and write and thereby making their development the compulsory education committee is framing this Act of compulsory education. He endorsed an order on 8th September 1917 to make free and compulsory primary education to all in Kolhapur state.
2. Inter-caste and Inter-religion Marriage Act, 1919 : During the period of Shahu Maharaj, inter-caste and inter-religion marriages were not acceptable to the society. The girl

willing to make such marriage was highly criticized. Shahu Maharaj took the initiative and enacted the Law to give legal permission to the registration of such marriages. Of course, at the time of such marriages, the minimum required age of the bride should be above 14 years, and that of bridegroom be above 18 years. This Law enacted on 12th July 1919, in a period when there was a tradition of child marriages.