

CHAPTER-III

SHAHU MAHARAJ ON EDUCATION
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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SHAHU MAHARAJ ON EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter an attempt is made to discuss Shahu's ideas and actual work regarding educational system and economic development. Shahu's education work is of historic importance. His educational activities can be considered as revolutionary. In order to get an integrated view of Shahu's life mission it is necessary to look at his educational activities as well as his ideas about economic development of the State.

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION :

Shahu was of the opinion that ignorance out-dated blind beliefs and poverty were the three main hurdles in the progress of the society. According to him, education was the only means by which it was possible to fight against these three evils simultaneously. He was of the view that education was a key in the advancement of backward classes in the country. He thought that establishment of a society based on the democratic principles such as liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice was possible by spreading

education among all classes. To free backward classes from the intellectual slavery of the Brahmins, he advocated free and compulsory education to the down-trodden classes. He was of the view that the British expansion of secular education was necessary while explaining the importance of education he said, "It has been proved by the history that no country in the world has made progress without sound educational system. There will not be any great statesman and a brave warrior in the country where there is ignorance. Therefore, India needs free and compulsory education."¹

According to him, education was not only essential for the intellectual development but also for the development of agriculture, army, industries and economic development. Education was an instrument to abolish the differences based on caste, religion, language etc. To bring about social integration in the society and to make the administration of the State more efficient, the spread of education was necessary. He was of the opinion that unless and until educational facilities were provided to all classes instead of a particular class like Brahmins, the education system had no meaning. In short, according to him, education was the most important means of establishing democratic society. It was a means for the emancipation of all the down-trodden. He held that the fruits of Swaraj would not be available as

long as the Indian society would remain caste-ridden without spread of education Swaraj would be in the hands of a few people. (Khamagaon Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Samaj's 11th Parishad).

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION :

Shahu laid more stress on primary education than on secondary and higher education. When Shahu had ascended to power in 1894 in every field was dominated in all respects by the Brahmins. Therefore, Shahu had to face many hardships at the hands of the Brahmins. The incident of Vedokt in 1900 was the climax of it. It is found that after 1900. Shahu made all efforts to relentlessly spread education for the uplift of the non-Brahmins.

During the first decade of Chhatrapati Shahu's rule aggregate outlays, consisting of State and local expenditure on primary, secondary and higher education and educational buildings tended to decline from Rs. 139.6 thousand in 1894 to Rs. 11337 thousand in 1904.² Such trend was entailed by various reasons such as - (i) Shahu's economy drive, (ii) fluctuations in number of institutions, (iii) measures to close down bad institutions and ineffective and communal 'heredity schools' mostly managed by the village Kulkarni.³ (iv) and frequent closures of educational institutions, even

for months due to out break of epidemics, like plague and cholera in the wave of famines of 1896-97 and 1899-1900.⁴

Though the number of primary and secondary schools was reduced from 221 in 1894 to 191 in 1900, it registered a fairly continuous growth from 245 in 1903-4 to 375 in 1915-16 and further to 555 in 1921-22. Besides the primary and secondary schools for girls and boys, various special schools like night schools, training schools, Satyashodhak schools, kshatrivedic school, Arabic School and Patil school were started similarly large number of Urdu schools and those for untouchables were opened by Chh. Shahu.⁵

Owing to introduction of compulsory and free education in 1917-18, the number of pupils (particularly in rural area) shot-up to 17,349 in 1918-19 and further to 20,092 and 29,988 in 1920-21 and 1921-22 respectively.

FREE AND COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION :

The first free and compulsory primary school was inaugurated by Chh. Shahu himself at the village 'Chipree' on 4th March, 1918.⁶ He made determined efforts to spread the net work of such schools in rural area. Shahu had appointed a committee to explore the possibility of starting free and compulsory primary education in 1912-13. However,

due to the out break of the Ist World War and paucity of finances this socially progressive measure could not be put into operation till 1917-18. Moreover, the schools were sceptical about the success of his policy. The following table shows how the number of schools and students increased.

TABLE 'A'

GROWTH OF THE NUMBER OF FREE COMPULSORY
PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS, 1917-18 TO
1921-22

Years	No. of Schools	Pupils
1917-18	27	1,296
1918-19	95	4,631
1919-20	170	6,362
1920-21	379	17,218
1921-22	420	22,007

Source : Kolhapur State : Reports on Gen.
Ad. for these years section on
Instruction.

In 1917-18 there were 27 schools and 1296 students taking education free of cost. Such schools swelled in number in the following years and in 1921-22 out of total number of 555 of all the types of primary and secondary schools free and compulsory schools came to 420. Same thing applies to the growth of the number of pupils in these schools (Table 'B'). The number of such students rose from 1,296 in 1917-18 to 17,218 in 1920-21 and further to 22,007 in 1921-22 in the last year the aggregate number of pupils in the primary and secondary schools being 29,988.⁷ Thus, almost entire primary education in Kolhapur State became free and compulsory by the close of Chh. Shahu's rule in 1922.

SCHOOLS FOR THE UNTOUCHABLES :

Special attention was paid by Chh. Shahu to the education of women and untouchables. It was a corollary to his overall progressive policy. The Table 'B' shows the growth of the number of the State aided schools for lower castes number of such schools and pupils rose from 6 and 196 in 1900-1 to 12 and 396 in 1906-7 and further to 27 and 636 in 1912-13 respectively. However, due to increased admission of lower caste students to other schools and beginning of free and compulsory education in 1917-18, the

number of schools exclusively meant for the untouchables declined.

TABLE 'B'

STATE AIDED LOW CASTE SCHOOLS AND
STUDENTS DURING 1900 TO 1919

Years	Schools	S t u d e n t s		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1900-1901	6			196
1906-1907	12			396
1909-1910	22			732
1912-1913	27			636
1917-1918	22	378	23	401
1918-1919	19	445	33	478

Source : Kolhapur State ; Reports on Gen. Ad.
for 1900-01, 1906-07 (p. 53), 1909-10
(p.48), 1912-13 (p: 54), 1917-19
(p. 23) , 1918-19 (p.44).

REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY
FROM THE SCHOOLS :

Shahu not only made primary education compulsory and free but also he tried to remove untouchability from

the schools by passings some orders to that effect. He ordered in 1919, the closure of the Government schools exclusively meant for untouchables as follows : "Those schools which are specially run for the benefit of the untouchable students (excluding Jahagir schools) should be closed by the Dassara and the children should be admitted to the common Government schools on the basis of equality since untouchability is not to be observed in Government schools, children of all communities should be seated together in the class."⁸ Similarly, His Highness issued the following orders in 1919 with a view to abolishing caste system and securing humanitarian treatment for the untouchable students.

"It has come to the notice of His Excellency that the untouchables and the others are treated differently in the educational institutions and that the untouchables are not allowed to enter the premises of the schools, since Government buildings are not meant for private use and since no one has a right to look down upon the untouchables, they should be treated with due consideration. Educational institutions are meant for the poor and since the untouchables are the poorest of the poor. They deserve to be treated on equalitarian basis since they also pay taxes, there is no reason why they should be treated differently

It is, therefore, the earnest desire of His Excellency that those schools which are supported by Government grants in the form of general grants or buildings or play grounds should treat the untouchable children with more consideration than the other children. Compared to the untouchables, the others have a number of openings for pursuing education whereas the untouchables are not properly treated, every one concerned from the principal to the junior most teacher will be answerable and the grants given to the private schools will be withdrawn."⁹

Untouchables attending Government aided schools should be treated well. If any one had objection to this, he was free to resign his post within six weeks of the date of this order. He would, however, not be entitled to pension. If the society which received grants had any objection to this, their grants would be withdrawn. The schools which had been given buildings, play grounds and other landed properties (by the State) would be heavily taxed, if any private educational society was opposed to the doner's desire, it would be either taxed 7% on its movable and immovable property or a scholarship would have to be instituted in the name of the doner or his heir if so desired. However, tried a teacher might be, he should help an untouchable student when approached."¹⁰

SCHOOLS FOR THE WOMEN :

Shahu advocated the education for women. He was of the view that education was the means of personality development and rational thinking, particularly, he stressed the need of education for the widows.

A letter which Shahu wrote in 1921 throws light on Shahu's views on education for the women. He wrote, "Don't neglect to your studies your thought will become rational and perfect as your intellect develops through study "Education gives a new in sight."¹¹ Shahu's attitude towards the problems of women was liberal and sympathetic. He advocated inter caste marriages, widow-marriages, remarriages and prohibited child marriages by passing different orders to that effect.¹²

He started different scholarships such as Shri Radhabai Akkasaheb Maharaj Scholarship and Nandkunvar Maharaj Scholarship.¹³

Free education was provided to the girls learning in Rajaram College, Kolhapur. Through the education, he wanted to make the women self-reliant and virtuous. In short, the aim of his education for the women was to create an 'ideal, cultural women. Shahu had sent Kerishnabai

Kelavkar a very brilliant girl to Grant Medical College in Bombay for higher education in medicines.¹⁴

For the spread of education for the women, Shahu established a number of institutions. The number of such schools rose from 26 in 1894 to 33 in 1922,¹⁵ and in the latter a number of girl students was an high 1918.¹⁶

HIGHER EDUCATION :

Shahu was of the opinion that there would be Swadeshi bureaucracy if education was not made available to all because a few learned people would capture the power. He said, "I give more stress on primary education but that does not mean that I do not pay attention to the higher education. By spreading education, I want to give Swaraj to all people." Shahu's above speech points out that he had considered not only primary education but also higher education. Taking into consideration all the efforts of Shahu about the spread of education, It can be said that he paid special attention to higher education. The Rajaram College which was established primarily for the education of the sons of the chiefs and sardars and for the pupils belonging to priestly community, began to admit students belonging to agricultarists class and backward communities only after Shahu ascended to the Gandhi.¹⁷

Shahu's ideas about the higher education were comprehensive. His aim was not only to educate students to become doctors, lawyers, engineers and statesmen but to train them in agriculture and trade. Shahu was of the view that education was essential for the development of agriculture industries, war etc. Chh. Shahu regarded engineering and industrial education, imparted by Jayasingrao Ghatage Technical Institute (founded in 1887) indispensable for development of modern industry.¹⁸ The expenditures on this institution were entirely borne by the Darbar. It admitted on an average 40 to 45 students every year who had passed 5th vernacular standard and trained them in (1) carpentry, (2) Smithy, (3) metal turning, (4) Brass founding, (5) Simple engine driving, (6) General knowledge of machinery, (7) Motor mechanics, (8) Electroplating and (9) Weaving as an integrated course.¹⁹

The course of agricultural science was opened and students began to appear for high school agricultural examination conducted by the College of Agriculture, Poona. In 1906-07 agricultural training course and model farm were attached to this school. Physical education and sports also received considerable attention from the authorities. Various facilities for promoting higher education among

untouchables and backward classes, such as free student-ships, scholarships etc. were provided. No fees were charged to girl students in Rajaram College and special prizes were awarded to successful lady students in all the college classes.²⁰

Shahu started different kinds of schools for different purposes for example -

PATIL SCHOOL :

This school was started to train the Patil's of villages in various functions such as collection of revenue, to give judgement regarding minor criminal cases.

PUROHIT SCHOOLS :

Here the Purohits were trained in religious rites. Shahu was of the view that each caste should have its own Purohits.

YUVARAJ SCHOOLS :

To train the prince in matters like general administration, welfare of the state and welfare before he assumed power was the aim of these schools.

UDYOG SHALA :

Shahu said, "It is not enough that we should be only agriculturists or soldiers. It is necessary that we should engage ourselves in trade and commerce and in higher profession". Shahu felt that workers in factories should obtain new techniques and skills; as the development of the Nation depends upon the development of industries.²¹

SANSKRIT SCHOOLS :

These schools were expected to enrich the culture of the State.

SATYASHODHAK SCHOOLS :

To spread the principles of Satyashodhak Samaj founded by Mahatma Phuley was the aim of these schools particularly, to reduce the dominance of the Brahmins, to educate the non-Brahmins and to abolish differences based on caste, religion etc. were the objectives of their schools.

SAINIK SCHOOLS :

Shahu started infantry schools to train recruits or soldiers in the art of war as Shahu knew the trained soldiers were the true defenders of the State.

Chh. Shahu not only made efforts to open new schools but also he cared for the training of the teachers. He was of the view that the teacher should have the perfect knowledge of their subject. He should be of high character. His teaching should reach to the hearts of the students. While speaking with Topkhane Shahu said, "If the teachers do not succeed in teaching the hearts and souls of the students, the boys as well as girls would not learn properly. Shahu knew that the teachers required training course of the teachers was of six months and the subjects thought for training were Airthmetic, Marathi, School Organization and Managements teaching methodology and practical lessons.

In short, it can be concluded that he encouraged music, dance, dramas, wrestling, sports and many other activities. For the spread of education Shahu levied on education tax. He provided sufficient funds for libraries to spread the education in rural areas was the aim. The discussion an education cannot be complete until we take into consideration his 'Hostel Movement in Kolhapur'.

On the occasion of laying corner stone the Udaji Maratha Boys Boarding or hostel at Nasik on 15th April, 1920. Shahu said, "It is a matter of great satisfaction that though the boarding is established by the Marathes though

It has been kept open to all castes as the principle of unity of all castes spreads, the caste differences would lose its rigidity and it will help to develop social unity."²² In the same speech Shahu said, "I condemn those who keep our brothers and sisters in slavery. It is my duty to uplift them."²³ He added, "I am proud to tell you that the Britishers and others call the British Parliament as the 'mother of Parliament' in the same way Kolhapur can be called as the 'mother of Boarding houses'. In Kolhapur you find boarding of fairs, the Hindus, the Lingayats, the Sarswats, the Muslims, the Daivadnya, the Panchal and the Shimpi, the Kayasht Prabhu and others.

On 15th August, 1920 in Arya Kshatriya Parishad Shahu said, "To establish more and more hostels in the character of Kolhapur City, there are more hostels in Kolhapur than any other city. To educate the poor and non-Brahmins is the aim of establishing these hostels."²⁴

From Shahu's above speeches regarding student hostels it can be said that Shahu aimed to provide educational facilities to the poor students from the rural area. He wanted to eradicate untouchability and differences based on castes and religions by the means of hostels. To bring the non-Brahmins to the level of Brahmins in case of education was his motto, to provide expenses of education to the

depressed classes and to free the students from the unhealthy influence of their homes were the objectives of Shahu, therefore, he opened many hostels and paid financial assistance to them. In short, Shahu was the father of education movement in Kolhapur State.

Shahu believed in the philosophy of education expanded by Mahatma Phuley in which emphasis was laid upon the primary education and vocational education. He held that education was a means through which the down trodden of people could achieve their liberation. He did not approve of feltration theory of education and maintained that the tax paying poor peasantry should be given the education. Shahu was the supporter of modern and secular education and argued that ignorance should belifs in the tradition and superstitions could be removed by the secular education.

SHAHU ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT :

Shahu was not an economist but he had some definite ideas about economic problems. His thoughts on economic development are valuable even today, such as poverty, unemployment, famines, scarcity of essential commodities, irrigation of land, new schemes to increase agricultural produce are as grave as they were in Shahu's period.

Therefore, if the economic thoughts of Shahu are put into practice honestly and efficiency, it will not be difficult to solve the problems and make human life happy and prosperous. The development in various fields like agriculture, industry, trade and business transport etc. which we find today in Kolhapur District has its roots in Shahu's progressive thoughts. Shahu's numerous speeches throw a flood of light on his ideas on economic development.

When Shahu was only fourteen, he inaugurated the railway construction function on that occasion, he said, "The railway is very important for the increase in means of wealth causes industrial development."²⁵ Shahu's brief speech was suggestive of his future economic thought, his economic thoughts can be divided under three sub-heads :

- i) Agriculture
- ii) Industry
- iii) Trade and Business.

Agriculture :

Shahu wanted to bring about radical changes in traditional agricultural system. He advised farmers to follow new methods of ways of cultivation, while speaking on 15th August, 1920, Shahu said, "India is predominantly

an agricultural country. Nearly 80 percent people work on fields. There is no doubt that all the workers do have basic skills of their business, but it is difficult for them to remain on top in this technically developing world. They should try to achieve new skills, techniques. In agriculture,²⁶ Shahu further added, "farmers do not get sufficient income through agriculture, therefore, the number of farmers are going to big cities in search of jobs and its result is the cities are getting thickly populated. It has created the serious health and sanitary problems. Therefore, if we think of welfare of the state, we must pay attention to the development of agriculture. There is ample scope to increase the production from agriculture. It is necessary to provide jobs to as many people as possible in agriculture."²⁷

Shahu's above speech regarding problems of agriculture can be applied to the present problems of the agriculture. Today, we find farmers are agitating for their demands that means they do not get sufficient income from the farming, thousands of people are leading towards big cities like Bombay. In search of jobs which has created very great problems of health, water, supply housing etc. Shahu was aware of the fact that agriculture was the basic

business and it needed careful planning, sufficient funds and many other things, like new instruments, loans, improved seeds, skills, pesticides and irrigation.

Shahu knew that the farmers required water for their agriculture and so he built lakes. His aim to built lakes was to reduce the scarcity of water for drinking and farming and increase agricultural produce. Shahu inaugurated a lake built at Yamage near Murgud in Kagal Jahagir on 6th February, 1922. He said, "Because of this lake there won't be scarcity of water, I believe that your trade or business will prosper and you will surpass the town 'Nipani' in trade. The irrigated land will produce sugarcane on a large scale and there will be a sugar factories.²⁸ It finds that at present there are two to three sugar factories this shows that Shahu was quite prophetic his views regarding agriculture and trade.

Shahu laid down the foundations of co-operation movement in Maharashtra. He was of the opinion that the days of working on individual skills had gone hence there was need of common efforts and co-operation. He asked the farmers to start their co-operative banks, co-operative factories and co-operative markets.²⁹

Shahu encouraged scientific research in agriculture. He arranged exhibitions of agricultural products and sought to modernize agriculture and for it, he implemented different schemes of water supply, canals and dams. He brought more and more land under irrigation. It can be said that he was the first thinker who had vision of the Agro-Industrial Society.

Industrial Development :

Such was of the view that the progress and prosperity of the State depended upon the industrial development. While inaugurating Rajaram Industrial School Boarding House and show room at Panhala on 15th August, 1920 he said, "The status and prestige of a country is judged by the development of that country in industrial field."³⁰

He mentioned, "the skilled workers have remained neglected and there is no change in their social and economic conditions. It is necessary to assist them in various respects for the indigenous development of industries. Industrial development becomes difficult. If it is not assisted by the State Government and supported by people."

Shahu added, "our people are expert in skills but backward in education, and, therefore, there is need of

proper training for them, that kind of education is essential which makes the students self-reliant."³¹

Shahu knew that due to industrial development the means of wealth, national income and trade could be increased. The distinction between the urban and rural areas could be reduced or minimised. He laid stress on development of industries in rural area. In short, it can be said that instead of centralisation, he favoured decentralization of wealth and industries to avoid the problems of health and sanitation in big cities. To provide opportunities of employment in rural area was the objective of his planning.

Trade and Business :

Shahu did not separate trade from the agriculture and industrial development. He was of the view that they were inter-dependent and the development in one field affected the development in other field. Shahu established Shahupuri of Kolhapur for the development of trade and business.³² He invited traders from other towns and provided required necessities to them. He followed the policy of concession and assistance. From Shahu's efforts to increase business and trade, it becomes quite clear that he knew the trade and business needed encouragement by the

State Government. Even today, we find the policies of Government are not much different from Shahu's.

In short, it can be concluded that Shahu's ideas on different economic aspects were prophetic and pragmatic. To establish a society based on social justice, decentralisation was his motto. He wanted to bring about radical changes in agro-industrial fields. He advocated technological development but opposed blind imitation of the western countries. He thought that there was need of considering domestic conditions before starting a new business. He paid keen attention to the development of market yards and transport system because he was of the view that growth of market for emerging manufactures was indispensable for the rapid industrialization of the economy. He encouraged co-operative societies and private firms in the field of trade and commerce.

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