

CHAPTER I

**SOCIO-RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL CONDITION OF JAIN
COMMUNITY IN THE STATE OF KOLHAPUR BY THE
END OF 19TH CENTURY**



CHAPTER ONE

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INTRODUCTION.

History of the Princely State of Kolhapur from, the commencement of this century to the State's final merger in 1949 is dominated by strong and widespread social reforms. Social equality among Hindu Castes and communities and welfare of non-Brahmin backward community were the main objectives of that movement. As a result, in the course of time, the doors of educational institutions were opened to masses in such a big way perhaps for the first time in the history of India. Primary schools, secondary schools, institutions of higher education were successively established in different parts of the State. Grants and other facilities were provided to them. Female education received much attention and impetus from various quarters. Thus, in the educational history of this State in particular, and that of Maharashtra in general, a new chapter was opened. Almost all non-Brahmin community was benefitted mostly by those developments. So were the men and women of Jain community. As the progress of any particular community in any given field depends lastly on socio-economic, geographical, historical aspects, a brief review of such and similar aspects related to Jain community and the Princely State of Kolhapur is taken in this Chapter.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION.

The district of Kolhapur lies between 15° and 17° north latitude and 73° and 74° east longitude. It is bounded on the north by the district of Sangli; on the west by the district of Ratnagiri, and on the south and east by the Belgaum district of Karnataka State.¹

Kolhapur State comprised ten administrative units and nine feudatory Jahagirs. They were: (1) Karveer, (2) Panhala, (3) Alte, (4) Shirol, (5) Ajra, (6) Chanwad, (7) Gadhinglaj, (8) Raibag, (9) Bhudargad, and (10) Radhanagari. These were then ten Mahals or administrative units in Kolhapur State. The State also had a control on the following feudatory Jahagirs: (1) Vishalgad, (2) Barada, (3) Kapashi, (4) Kagal [Sr.], (5) Kagal [Jr.], (6) Torgal, (7) Ichalkaranji, and 2 petty Jahagirs of (8) Himmat Bahadur and Sarlashkar.²

(Kolhapur is a district newly formed after the merger of Kolhapur State on 1st March 1949 and other Indian States with the State of Bombay. It consists of 956 villages of the former Kolhapur State.³ Afterwards, five villages of the former Kurundwad State.) One village of the former Miraj (Senior) State and seven villages that were formerly in the Belgaum district were attached to the present Kolhapur District.) Again, in November-1956, the Chandgad Taluka of Belgaum District with an area of 394 square miles and a population of 80,513 was merged with the southern division of Kolhapur district as a separate Taluka

of the district.⁴ The study covers only those parts of the present Kolhapur District which formed part of the erstwhile Kolhapur State.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Kolhapur has been a region of both religious importance and historical significance since ancient times. It formed an important Principality of Western Presidency in seventeenth century. Chh. Shivaji, the founder of Maratha power, captured the fort of Panhala (on the northern side of Kolhapur) in 1659, and brought it within the fold of Hindavi Swaraj.⁵ It shot to prominence by 1700, when Tarabai, the daughter-in-law of Shivaji and the widow of Rajaram, made it her base to wage a war against Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.⁶ Death of the Mughal Emperor in 1707 and the subsequent release of Shahu, the son of Chh. Sambhaji from Mughal captivity in 1707 introduced an element of Civil War in the history of Marathas. The Maratha-throne came to be hotly contested for by Shahu and Tarabai on behalf of her son Shivaji-II. Under the circumstances, she laid the foundations of another independent Maratha State at Kolhapur in 1710.⁷ Thus, two Maratha States came into existence - the State of Satara and the State of Kolhapur. Both the States were further recognized as independent States later by the Treaty of Warana in 1730.⁸

The Princely State of Kolhapur maintained its political independence throughout its British Rule until its merger into Independent India in 1949. In its unbroken history of more

than two centuries, it saw a number of rulers, the most prominent being Chhatrapati Shahu (1894-1922) whose regime is of great significance in the social history of Maharashtra. He had a worthy successor in his son Rajaram (1922-1940) who championed socio-economic causes held by his father and led the destiny of his State when freedom struggle had gathered strong momentum. Both of them - Shahu and Rajaram - championed the cause of education, including the female education.⁹

THE JAINS IN KOLHAPUR:

The Jains, with a distinct religious philosophy and ethical code of conduct and vast and rich literature, formed one of the important communities of ancient India. Though comparatively smaller in number, they eventually spread with the passage of time to distant parts of this country. It is now an established fact that Jainism entered South India, Karnataka in particular, in the reign of Chandragupta (B.C. 321-296)¹⁰ the founder of Maurya Kingdom, Bhadrabahu (B.C. 433-375)¹¹ after having a long and severe famine in north, led the migration of the Jain Sangh to South.¹²

The Jain settlements came up in Kolhapur region fairly early and took deep roots due to the socio-economic conditions, liberal patronage of this region and of the various dynasties which controlled their region from time to time.¹³

The feudatories of the Rashtrakutas favoured Jainism

in various places. Near-about Kolhapur, the Rattas of Saundatti (District Belgaum) and their provincial governors were great patrons of Jainism in the 11th century A.D.¹⁴ A Jain Saint Munichandra was not only a teacher but also a minister to Lakshmi-deva, Karvirya's son, and he was given the title of 'Acarya', the founders of Ratta-Rajya. Under the Silahars (1050-1200) of both Karad and Kolhapur, Jainism seems to have taken rigorous strides. Kolhapur seems to have been a Jain settlement¹⁵ even before the time of the Silahars (1050-1200). Jainism was the prevailing religion in Kolhapur and the country around. The great teacher Mahanandi seems to have been responsible for putting Jainism on a sound footing in this area.¹⁶ In Kolhapur itself, there are some temples which testify to the popularity and prosperity of the creed in the town.¹⁷

Like other dynasties, the Silahar also gave a Court-status to Jain religion. One of its famous Silahar kings, Gandaraditya (1105-1140), his queen Karnadevi and his ministers, built Jain temples in Kolhapur.¹⁸ His son Vijayaditya (1140-1175) also supported Jain religion in a big way.

The Muslim invasion in 13th century and rapid expansion of Muslim power in the subsequent centuries wiped out major Hindu kingdoms from the political canvass in north. However, in south the first rise of Vijayanagar Empire in the fourteenth century and then the rise of Maratha power in Deccan in the seventeenth century ensured continued patronage of Vaisnavism, Saivism and Jainism, last received it in a limited way. As

a result, Jain community had to fall on its own resources to fend for itself.¹⁹

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF JAINS:

Majority of Jains in Kolhapur are Digambars.²⁰ The Jain temples are called 'Bastis' (or dwellings) which can easily be identified from ordinary dwellings because of their high plinths.²¹ The Jains can be divided on the basis of their occupation, trade and farming. The concentration of Jain traders is in the cities like Kolhapur and Jaysingpur. Those engaged in farming are spread out, in the eastern part of Shirol, Hatkanan-gale, Karveer and Kagal talukas. In Kolhapur-proper and in its eastern and western villages, most of the Jains being Patil, Chougules, Magdums and Khots, the officers in the old Panchayat system. The whole Jain society in this area is distributed in Chaturtha, Panchams, Shetwal, Kasar and Upadhyayas.²² Proverbially, it is said that there are eightyfour castes and sub-castes recorded among the Digambars.²³ This may not be taken literally, still the two branches - Chaturtha and Pancham - are important from the viewpoint of population and other important things like trade and commerce.

THE JAINS' SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS:

i) Chaturtha :

The majority of Jains belong to this branch and they are agriculturists. Their religious head is Jinsen Bhattarak

of Nandani (a place near Ichalkaranji).²⁴

ii) Pancham :

They are mostly traders settled in urban areas. Literacy rate was higher among them and was their monetary condition better. These were the followers of Lakshminsen Bhattarak of Kolhapur.²⁵

Besides these two categories, there were other minor categories also, such as:

iii) Kasar :

Those who were comparatively in minority. They resided in Kolhapur. They were the followers of Devendra Bhattarak of Humachas in southern Karnataka.²⁶

iv) Shetwal :

Like Kasars, they were also in minority and they resided in Kolhapur. They had migrated from Vidarbha and Marathwada regions and were engaged in sundry works and skilled works. They were the followers of Vishalkirti Bhattarak of Latur as their priest.²⁷

v) Upadhyaya :

Lastly, the Upadhyaya constitute a special category, owing to the nature of their work. They perform religious deeds and as such, they belonged to both the categories, viz. Pancham and Chaturtha Jains. Because of their professions, they were scattered in the rural parts and lived under poor financial conditions. As they were Upadhyaya, naturally, they have no special importance

in this area.²⁸ To every Jain temple, one or more Upadhyayas are attached. They belong to Chaturth or the Pancham division and are supported by the Jain community, taking food offerings, cloth and money which are offered to the Gods and Goddesses. Besides temple priests, every village which has a considerable number of Jains, has a hereditary village priest called 'Gramopadhyaya'. Also, among Upadhyayas were merged two offices of Gramopadhyaya, a hereditary village priest and Paramadhi.²⁹

Among the Kolhapur Jains, the husbandrymen formed the largest and the most important class³⁰ with a head-priest or a Bhattarak of their own, who lives at Nandani and has also a Matha in Kolhapur. A few of them hold large units and maintain farm servants. However, a majority of the Jain landholders held small land units and could not afford land labour and hence, tilled their lands with the help of their families.³¹ In large towns like Kolhapur and Miraj, Jains are merchants. The Pancham Jains in the places like Kolhapur and Jaysingpur traded chiefly in jewellery, cotton, cloth and grain. They had their Bhattarakas at Kolhapur. They also had a Math each at Raibag and Belgaum respectively. Most of the Kasars were in the bangle business or in copper and brass goods business, some were weavers and some operate oil presses.³²

The village priest keeps a register of all marriages and thread-girdings in the villages; and the Bhattarakas whose headquarters are at Kolhapur and other places, and whose authority extends over all Kolhapur Jains, make a yearly circuit gathering

contributions or send agents to collect the subscriptions from the persons named in the village priests' lists. The office of the high priest is selective. The high priest chooses his successor from among his favourite disciples. Though the Bhattarakas are respected and well received whenever they go out, they seem to be losing strength as an institution. But in the post-medieval ages, the Jains of different categories had their own Bhattarakas who had hereditary titles; Jinsen, that of the Chaturtha Jains; Lakshmisin, of the Pancham Jains; Devendra-kirti, of the Kasar section; and Vishalkirti, of the Shetwal Jains. The last two have their Mathas outside Kolhapur.³³

The relations between the members of those of different categories were controlled within their sub-sects. The restrictions put on marital relations based on sub-castes on the one hand, accentuated the evil of child marriage and, on the other hand, affected the homogenous nature of the Jain community.³⁴

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN 1901:³⁵

Religion	Population	Females	Percentage
Hindu	8,18,005	4,04,349	49.43
Jains	50,924	24,725	48.55
Muslims	38,553	18,732	48.58
Christians	2,517	1,325	52.64
Others	12	6	50.00
Total	9,10,011	4,49,137	49.35

In the year 1901 with the population of 50,924, it stood second to Hindus with a population of 8,18,005 in total population of 9,10,011. This forms 5.59 percent of total population. On the verge of the 20th century, the Jain community was changed to the shackles of age-long outdated traditions.

SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

The British rule established firmly uniform administration, new English education and the emphasis on communication. The last three generated awakening among Indians to an extent unparalleled in the history of India and the intellectual awakening in turn, led to the birth of many organizations such as Brahma Samaj (1828), Prarthana Samaj (1867), Satya Shodhak Samaj (1873) and Arya Samaj (1875), devoted to the social reforms. The educated Jains in Kolhapur felt the impact of the work of such and similar organizations and activated them to work for the reforms in Jain community in northern India.³⁶

Accordingly, 'Bharatvarsha Digambar Jain Sabha' was established in 1890 for the reforms in the Jain community.³⁷ This organization started preaching its views through its newspaper 'Jain Gazette'. Similarly, 'Mumbai Prantik Digambar Jain Sabha' was established in Bombay in 1895 under the guidance of Seth Manikchand Hirachand Javeri.³⁸

The educated Jains in the north felt the impact of the work of such and similar organizations, which inspired

and activated them to work for the reforms in their own community. Their work, in its turn, inspired the Jains in south. In Solapur, Sheth Hirachand Nemchand Doshi started a weekly 'Jain Bodhak'³⁹ to bring about certain reforms in the Jain community. Progressive-minded Jain social workers of Kumbhoj (Kolhapur district) came together and founded a social organization 'Saddharm Prakash'. This organization did not survive long because of the lack of support from Jains.⁴⁰ In 1893, Lakshmisen Bhattarak started a separate 'Pathshala' at Kolhapur.⁴¹ It was closed down within a year. The failures of those institutions did not discourage the Jains. They decided to establish an organization for the educational and religious progress of Jains at Stawanidhi,⁴² near Nipani (Belgaum district). A pamphlet was published by Stawanidhi Kshetra Committee to this effect and on 3rd April 1899 at Stawanidhi, the first meeting with a definite object to found an organization was summoned under the presidentship of Lakshmisen Bhattaraka.⁴³

It was resolved to set up a permanent organization for the social, religious and educational upliftment of Jains of this area. This organization came to be named as 'Daxin Maharashtra Jain Sabha'.⁴⁴ Anna Babaji Latthe, a college-student with one Anna Fadyappa Chougule, a student of Law at Bombay, played a significant role in the said meeting. It was also resolved to restrict the work of the conference to the Jains of south Maharashtra alone.⁴⁵ Like in other communities, rigid conservatism prevailed in the Jain community. The causes for their backwardness were many, important being the ignorance of the religious traditions.

Given the said characteristics of life that generally governed the masses in this region, the priestly class was found to exploit them. So, it was true of Jains in particular. The economic backwardness added to their overall backwardness. The ordinary Jain was poor. Majority of them were in traditional professions - agriculture and trade - on small scale and had moderate incomes. They remained satisfied with those moderate means and income. No effort on their part may be seen to modernize farming or expand trade beyond their region. Industrialization meant nothing to them. Thus, their efforts remained restricted to somehow maintaining the financial structure they had inherited.⁴⁶

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS.

Establishment of British control over the administration of Kolhapur State marked a major step in the history of education. Prior to it, the education consisted of mere acquiring a proficiency in Marathi and Modi scripts and practical arithmetic.⁴⁷ It was considered sufficient and enough for one to take to one's traditional business. It lacked an element of development of mental faculties.⁴⁸ Major D.C.Graham, the first Political Superintendent of Kolhapur, took a keen interest in the educational affairs of the State with a view of enlarging and improving the prospects of education.⁴⁹

For the first time in 1848, Government opened four schools in Kolhapur State - at Kolhapur, Alate, Shirol and Panhala.⁵⁰ From 1848 to 1854, the number of schools rose to ten.

There was only one English school in the State. It was in the city of Kolhapur. In 1866-67, the number of Government schools increased from 10 to 25 and the number of pupils from 405 to 1147. respectively.⁵¹ The first Kolhapur Government English High School came into being in 1867 at Kolhapur. In 1871, it was named 'Rajaram High School' in memory of Chhatrapati Rajaram (1866-70). In 1880, a college class and Sardar or Chief Class were attached to it.⁵²

In 1871, Night Schools were established for labourers, artisans and farmers.⁵³ The training class for preparing trained teachers for vernacular schools was started in 1861 and the training for vernacular girls school in 1882.⁵⁴

The number of schools went on steadily increasing in 1883-1884. There were 190 schools on an average of one school for every six villages. The total expenditure on education came to about Rs.70,120 in 1883-84.⁵⁵

The 190 schools comprise Rajaram College, one training school, one female training class (1882), six second-grade Anglo-vernacular schools, 154 vernacular schools, nineteen night-schools and eight girls' schools.⁵⁶

SHAHU'S EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT.

The reign of Shahu (1894-1922) turned out to be a milestone in the educational and the social history of the State of Kolhapur. It was fortunate to have a king who was

foresighted and practical enough to understand, appreciate and encourage the work of social reformers, the king who could understand the importance and significance of education as a tool of social change and source of power and progress.⁵⁷ He held free and compulsory primary education to be the only invigorating tonic for the lower classes that would enable them to throw off the heavy shackles of past, the caste system. He, therefore, introduced free and compulsory education in his State,⁵⁸ a remarkably progressive step by any standard.

He believed that the educational development would lead ultimately to the path of social equality. Shahu studied the past carefully, watched the present anxiously and looked ahead to the future eagerly.⁵⁹ Social evils and superstitions among the people obstructed evolution, growth and progress. As a ruler, it was not his immediate duty to attempt to overthrow the existing social order, but to modify it by blunting the edges of the social evils and helping the oppressed ones to grow. He took an initiative in educating and mobilising the public opinion.⁶⁰

He adopted various measures to translate it into reality. He was the patron and elected President of the Deccan Maratha Association. He consulted educationists of all kinds and took various measures for the spread of education.⁶¹

The first step that Chh. Shahu took was to adopt new measures for the spread of the educational progress. He set up an

independent Department of Education and created a new post of Education Inspector with control and authority over schools in Karveer State.⁶²

Female education also received encouragement at his hands. In 1904, the State had 1409 girl-students. Besides, there was a training school for women. Some 10 girls were enrolled there. Miss Lithe was the Superintendent of Female Education, Mrs. Radhabai Krishnarao Kelkar was appointed as Lady Superintendent from September 1, 1895.⁶³

TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR WOMEN.

Though there was a training school for women, the number of girls there was rather poor. Mrs. Kelkar was in-charge of women's training school.⁶⁴

Given below is year-wise strength of the girl-students from 1893 to 1899.⁶⁵

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Girls in Schools.</u>
1893-94	10
1894-95	12
1895-96	9
1896-97	8
1897-98	8
1898-99	6

The progressive decrease in the strength of students from the year 1894-95 reflects on the progressive female education

in the last decade of 19th century. In the course of five years, it dropped by 50 percent.

Here is another Table that illustrates the literacy percentage of the Jain community residing at various places.⁶⁶

<u>Place</u>	<u>Literacy Percentage</u>
Mahikantha	79
Ahmedabad	75
Kheda	75
Surat	75
Palanpur	74
Poona	70
Kaithiyawad	69
Nasik	65
Ahmednagar	62
Khandesh	59
Solapur	54
Satara	29
Kachchha	29
Dharwad	25
Kolhapur	17
Belgaum	15
Southern Maharashtra States ⁶⁷	13

The Jain community in Kolhapur ranked third from bottom with 17% literacy, whereas their counterparts at Mahikanta topped the list with 79%.

This shows the poor literacy rate of the Jain community in comparison with that of the Jain community residing outside. So far as the Jain community is concerned, only 37 males out of 20,199 in Kolhapur State knew English as per Census Report.⁶⁸ The same report records that out of 24,725 Jain female population of Kolhapur State, only 55 females could read and write⁶⁹ and there was not a single Jain female in Kolhapur State knowing English.⁷⁰

The Jain community always valued education in the past. But the fact that only 17 percent of its male population could read and write, shows that the degree of negligence of education on its part. Chhatrapati Shahu and the devoted workers in the Jain community concentrated their attention on education and were active in that direction.

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23. Ibid., 'Jain Community', op.cit., I to V.
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66. Census Report of 1901.
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