

CHAPTER - I

KOLHAPUR STATE ; ITS TOPOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Before discussing the details of educational progress achieved in Kolhapur State during the reign of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj it is essential to know something about Kolhapur State and Chh. Rajaram Maharaj. Therefore, the researcher intends to discuss in this chapter the topography the administrative divisions and the historical background in brief of Kolhapur State. Besides a brief sketch of Chh. Rajaram Maharaja's early life will also be given in this chapter.

Kolhapur which is also known as Karveer is one of such places which has religious importance and historical significance since ancient times. Kolhapur and Karveer have been two different names of one and the same place since ancient times. Kolhapur has been famous since good old days for 'Lotus' which is also the 'National Flower Of India'.

Kolhapur also enjoys great religious importance. It is rightly referred to as 'Dakshin Kashi'. According to the old religious scriptures Kolhapur has been the home of 33 crores of Gods and Goddess. Karveer nagari or Kolhapur is considered to be as pure as a temple. Religious devotees from different places come here to take dips into the ponds named as 'Lakshirth' and 'Koti Tirth'. In Kolhapur there are a number of places of religious importance such as Ambabai Temple, Tramboli Devi Temple, Vitheba Temple, Yallana, Khol-Khandoba Temple and Padmakrishna Temple. Outside the capital

city there are some other old famous temples like Khidrapur's Saraswati Temple, Kopeswar Temple, Mahakali Temple at Chinchli, Dattamandir at Marsobawadi near Shirol, Jotirling Temple at Wadi-Ratnagiri, and Panling Temple etc. There are also famous Jain temples on Bahubali hill.¹

Kolhapur state was an important Maratha principality in the Western presidency. In the 17th century Kolhapur became a part of Maratha Kingdom founded by Chh. Shivaji. From the first decade of the 18th century Kolhapur became a distinguished principality among the Indian states. It was the largest native state in Southern Maharashtra.

Kolhapur state lay between $17^{\circ}10'45''$ and $15^{\circ}50'20''$ north latitude and $74^{\circ}44'11''$ and $73^{\circ}43'10''$ east latitude. It was bonded on the north by the river Varna which separated it from the British District of Satara, on the north by the river Krishna, on the east and south by the District of Belgaum and on the west by the Sahayadri mountain which divided it from Sawantwadi on the South-West and Ratnagiri on the West. The total area of state was 3217.1 square miles, of which 2124.6 belonged to the state proper and the rest to feudatory Jahagirs under the state.²

Six big rivers viz. Krishna, Varna, Hiranyakeshi, Panchaganga, Doodhganga and Vedaganga and their big and small tributaries watered the territory of Karveer state and also enriched its soil. Scientists have been arguing since long that Kolhapur region is very rich in mineral deposits.

Kolhapur state consisted of the following 10 administrative units and 9 Feudatory Jahagirs under its control
 1) Karveer, 2) Panhala, 3) Alte, 4) Shirol, 5) Aajra, 6) Chanved, 7) Gadhinglaj, 8) Saibag, 9) Bhudargad and 10) Padhanagari were the 10 Mahals or administrative units in Kolhapur state. The state also possessed the following feudatory Jahagirs under its control : 1) Vishalgad, 2) Bavada, 3) Kapasi, 4) Kagal (Sr.), 5) Kagal (Jr.), 6) Torgal, 7) Inchalkaranji and the 2 petti Jahagirs of 8) Himmat Bahadur and Sarlashkar.³

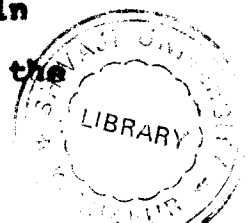
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND :

Kolhapur and the adjoining historic Panhala fort have a long and glorious historical background. In ancient times the Shilhar Kings ruled in the Deccan with Panhala as their capital.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj the founder of Maratha power captured Panhala fort soon after Afzalkhan's assassination in 1659. Since then Kolhapur region formed a part of Hindavi Swaraj. Chh. Shivaji Maharaj died in 1680. Chhatrapati Sambhaji the eldest son of Shivaji had to spend all the years of his regime in fighting against the enemies of Swaraj. In 1689 Chh. Sambhaji was cruelly put to death by the Mughals. After this the Marathas began to face boldly the full fledged Mughal invasion under the leadership of emperor Aurangzeb who was out to conquer the Deccan territory 'Chhatrapati Rajaram II' son of Shivaji led the Maratha resistance. However, he was a weak and delicate man and so he could not sustain hardships of military expeditions. In 1700 when the

Maratha war of independence was still going on Chh. Rajaram died. After his death his widow the young, ambitious, brave and resourceful Tarabai courageously led the Maratha forces. She installed her son Shivaji on the throne and herself became the regent. Tarabai very well organized the Maratha defences and succeeded in defeating the Mughal troops under Aurangzeb himself. Aurangzeb died in dispair in Maharashtra in 1708. After Aurangzeb's death his son released Chh. Shahu the son of Chh. Sambhaji from the Mughal captivity. Chh. Shahu's release caused internal dissensions among the Marathes. Chh. Shahu claimed the Maratha throne for himself. Tarabai rejected his claims. Maratha Civil war started in which Chh. Shahu got success. In 1709 Chh. Shahu coronated himself and began to rule the Maratha Kingdom from Satara. Tarabai shifted to Panhala and from there she declared her independence. Thus Chh. Shivaji Maharaja's daughter-in-law Maharani Tarabai laid the foundations of another independent Maratha state at Kolhapur in 1710. Disputes between Satara and Kolhapur continued till 1730. In 1731 all the disputes between the two states were settled by the treaty of Wana. By the same treaty Kolhapur came to be recognised as an independent Maratha State.⁴

In 1710 when Maharani Tarabai declare the independence of Kolhapur state. She seated her son on the throne. However, within 4 years a palace revolution occured in Kolhapur. Tarabai's son Chh. Shivaji was removed from the



throne and Tarabai too was imprisoned. Chh. Rajaram's II wife Rajasbai and her son Sambhaji conspired against Tarabai and won the throne for Sambhaji who ruled Kolhapur state from 1714 to 1760.⁵

The first four Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur viz. Sambhaji (1714-1760), Shivaji II (1762-1813), Sambhaji Alias Abasaheb (1813-1821) and Shahaji alias Buvasaheb (1821-1838) ruled over Kolhapur state as truly independent rulers. In 1821 Chh. Sambhaji alias Abasaheb was brutally killed in his own palace by a young Maratha Sardar named Sayaji Mohite. Between 1838 and 1864 three more Chatrapatis viz. Shivaji III (1838-1866), Rajaram (1866-1870) and Shivaji IV (1871-1893) ruled Kolhapur state. On the death of Chh. Shivaji IV in 1893 the dowager queen Anandibai adopted Abasaheb Chatge's 10 year old son. This boy was installed on the Kolhapur gadi in 1894 and he came to be known as Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj.⁶

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja who ruled Kolhapur state from 1894 to 1922 was a progressive ruler. He was also a great social reformer. He during his reign adopted a number of measures to improve the conditions of the masses. Due to his continuous efforts Kolhapur became an important centre of progressive social and educational activities and the non-Brahmin politics in Western India. In 1922 Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja died at the age of forty-eight. He had two sons. His eldest son Chh. Rajaram (1897-1940) ascended the throne at Kolhapur in 1922.

EARLY LIFE OF CHHATRAPATI RAJARAM :

As the present work is a study of Kolhapur state under Chhatrapati Rajaram it is essential to discuss here the early life of this Chhatrapati.

Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaja was born on 31st July 1897. His birth was a matter of great pleasure and happiness in the whole of Kolhapur State. As a happy gesture, 12 of the best behaved prisoners were released, food, sweets and clothings along with money were distributed to all the poor and deserted people.⁷ Later on in the year 1898, he fell ill but improved his health soon after. In his childhood he was given regular training in horse was trained for horse riding everyday in the morning and evening. As he became more and more skilled in horse riding, his interest to study and understand the world around him increased. The young Chhatrapati became more and more attached to primary education. He was taught by the best Pandits and Scholars so as to make him well versed in Marathi. For his English education which later on enabled him in coping with the problems his father Shri Chh. Shahu Maharaja asked Dr.Irwin and his wife Mrs.Irwin to take up the responsibility. Young Chh.Rajaram also developed a deep affection for this couple whose behaviour was exemplary decent. But the sudden death of Dr.Irwin, the entire responsibility of Chh.Rajaram Maharaja's education fell on Mrs.Irwin. As she was diligent and greatful woman, She under the general direction of Divansahab started her tuition classes inside the royal

palace itself. Due to this Chh. Rajaram Maharaja grew up mentally very well. At the age of 15, he became a very good hunter and horse rider too. Then Chh. Shahu Maharaja decided to send both of his sons to great Britain for higher studies.⁸

EDUCATION AND TRAVEL IN EUROPE :

Mrs. Irwin left for England a little earlier in order to arrange for accommodation for the princes and their friends. She selected for Rajaram an education centre named as the 'Burnham House' in the Middlesex Country. It was a very famous institution. Almost all the children passing from that institute had become successful in one field or another. It had been working successfully for 35 years when young Rajaram Maharaja sought admission there. The clear motive of the school was to create strong individuals who excelled not only in their respective fields but also showed liking and interest in other fields also. This way bound to make them successful candidates in everyday life at the different levels of society.⁹

The education there consisted of religious study, dancing, swimming, carpentership, study of differ languages like Greek, Latin, French, German, Drawing and Painting and other important subjects.

Shri Chh. Rajaram Maharaj along with his younger brother Chh. Shivaji and other friends left for the rosy future ahead of him on May 12th, 1912. For protection and comforts Shrimant Bapusaheb Maharaj and Sir Rao Bahadur Sabnis

accompanied the boys to England. As three months were still there for the reopening of the school, two masters were privately appointed to teach Chh. Rajaram Maharaja. Mrs. Irwin informed by letter to Shri Chh. Shahu Maharaja about the special arrangements that had been made for Yuvraj Rajaram his brother Shivaji Maharaj and others. She wrote "As students they will soon go to reside at the school but they will come to me everyday either for meals or breakfast and they will often spend their evenings in my company. If anybody falls ill or needs treatment or nursing or if any of the princes needs any special care, necessary arrangements for the princes can be made in the neighbourhood of my house".¹⁰

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj replied to the letter saying that he did not wish his sons to receive any special treatment because of his royal status. He wanted his sons to identify themselves completely in mind and spirit with the young British boys. It would be enough if they took their meals once in a week at Mrs. Irwin's place. Chh. Shahu Maharaja was a man who did not want aristocracy to seep into the brains of his sons and other children whom he had sent from here. After Chh. Rajaram Maharaja started going to his school regularly, Mrs. Irwin wrote, "I am sending with this letter a copy of 'Hags and Finchley Times' paper in which there is a list of successful students along with the fields in which they have been successful. You will be happy to note the contents and also the achievements of young Rajaram. Bal played very well and won a cricket ball and a silver medal. Shivaji got a beautiful

small watch, Jayasingrao got a knife, Ingle got a ball, Appa got a leather writing box and Shankar got a pair of rings".¹¹

The above paragraph shows the achievements of the young Marathas who had learnt to survive in a world alien to them. Chh. Rajaram Maharaj mixed up very well with his English colleagues as per the wishes of his father. One year after Chh. Rajaram started his education there, Sir W. Morrison wrote to Chh. Shahu Maharaja, "I visited hedden yesterday in the afternoon. There I saw all the six boys playing foot-ball. It was Saturday afternoon. I watched the game for half an hour. Princes like others was playing laboursly. This time they looked less fat and more quick then when I saw them first in England. They have been reduced and looked more slim and healthy. There is no doubt that they are still undeveloped in some respects. But every time I noticed. Everybody likes them. All the six looked very happy".¹²

In the year 1914 in January Chh. Rajaram Maharaj enrolled himself into St. Edwards school at Oxford and there he learnt more about agriculture which was his favourite subject. In 1915 he was accommodated into the "princes Hostel" at Dove in Brighton. So as to enable him to learn better manners Mrs. Irwin helped him to communicate with the wounded Hindu soldiers lying in the Royal Pavilion and Dome. The wounded were soothed by the soft spoken voice of the young prince. The happiness of the wounded soldiers especially of those who hailed from Kagal and Kolhapur areas knew no bounds.

Jayasingrao and his friends distributed sweets. While getting introduced to the Major, Rajaram Maharaja gave him also a few pounds for the special comfort of there wounded patients.

RETURN TO THE MOTHER-LAND :

Chh. Rajaram Maharaja's homesickness noticeably increased during his stay in England. Mrs. Irwin recognized this and soon planned to send young Chh. Rajaram to his home country. But the situation in Maharashtra was then full of unrest and taking this into consideration Mrs. Irwin wrote to Chh. Shahu Maharaj, "Till the beginning of August when we leave England our address will be the same. Hope the route to India will be smooth and safe by then. Reaching Chh. Rajaram safely back to you will give me immense satisfaction of having done my entrusted duty".¹³

This shows how concerned Mrs. Irwin was of Chh. Rajaram's safety. Chh. Rajaram Maharaj left England along with his friends on 10th July 1915 and reached Newyork on 19th July. He also made a careful study of the ways and customs of American people. He visited a number of scenic and man made beautiful places. From there he went to Japan and from there he proceeded to Colombo. He finally reached his capital safely on 17th October 1915 along with his friends. The people he saw in all these countries, their customs their ways of living all affected and influenced young Chh. Rajaram. His experience abroad went a long way in making him in future a good ruler.¹⁴

DURING HIS STAY IN ENGLAND :

During his stay in England Chh. Rajaram Maharaj had been influenced by the British ways of living. His mental capacities increased after being guided by the experienced English Lecturers and Professors. Seeing the over all physical and mental improvement of Chh. Rajaram Maharaj his father Chh. Shahu Maharaj felt happy and satisfied.

MRS. IRWIN'S OPINION :

Chh. Rajaram Maharaja's tutor Mrs. Irwin remarked about her student in the following words, "About 16 years ago. Shri Chh. Shahu Maharaj entrusted his children to me for education. At that time it was really a very tough job for me to shift the attention of these young princes from hunting of tigers, wild pigs and other games.¹⁵

Slowly with a great amount of patience and balance, I worked over them and taught them to love the art of learning. From youth Chh. Rajaram was lovable to his teachers and his students, friends. In London and Oxford with his well developed manners he captivated his Lecturers and Professors who constantly advised other European students to follow him.

He was interested in both sports and studies. He always used to be anxious to complete Football and cricket were his favourite outdoor games. He combined both studies and outdoor games with a great fineness.

He was a favourite among students too. His cultured behaviour ever smiling face his charitable nature all attracted the students to him especially the power.

He was a principled person who always enjoyed company and people round him.

Though he had the power ^{to} change the lives of hundreds and thousands of people he never considered people as his puppets. He behaved to everyone respectfully.

He had a deep love and devotion towards his mother and respect for his father's wishes and promptness to be have accordingly. These were the two outstanding traits in him. These two qualities made Shri Chh. Rajaram a very respectable king in his life time. He was a very obedient child who believed in the wishes of his parents and put himself completely to fulfill them.

His self confidence and broad mindedness helped him in increasing his knowledge fast. His open nature helped me in moulding him into a successful individual. His innocent behaviour also own me over and helped in creating a beautiful 'Tutor Child' relationships".¹⁶

Later on, Chh. Shahu Maharaj sent his young son to Allahabad for future education in the field of agriculture. He was sent to the Yubing Christian College in Allahabad on 9th December 1915. He studied there for one year and passed with good marks after which he come back to the capital for practical experience in the art of administration.

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE :

Chh. Shahu Maharaj wanted his sons to be well versed in all spheres of life. He had entrusted to his sons certain duties in the field of business. Both Chh. Rajaram and Chh. Shivaji were clever businessmen and founded two business organisations called R.B.N. and Co. and S.A. company. Their knowledge and skill of conducting businesses profited the subjects. In the same way they also set up a 'Sahakari Kothar' (Co-operative Society) for the benefit of common people. Chh. Shivaji Maharaj was the promoter of the Kothar. Both these companies soon flourished and earned immense profits.¹⁷

APPRENTICESHIP IN ADMINISTRATION :

Since a very young age Chh. Rajaram had been a lover of Truth and Justice. For the experience of legal matters he had been entrusted a case in which the guilty person who was condemned wanted the guilt to be taken off his shoulders. For this he came to young Chh. Rajaram and begged for the shift of guilt to the innocent person's shoulders. He wanted the verdict to be given in his favour. Chh. Rajaram Maharaj said, "You should not be able with the work of dispensation of Justice. The Goddess of justice does not know relations and friendships. She recognizes only truth and honesty".¹⁸ From this incident one can understand the values and ideals cherished by this prince since the early days of his careers.

As a king, Shri Chh. Rajaram loved all his subjects equally. In his Lakshmvilas Palace he had servants belonging to all castes and communities. He was never influenced by the feelings of 'High' and 'Low'. He was a king who appreciated good work and skill. When on a hunting session he would always look to the comforts including hunger and thirst of his servants. In a society where people ate food prepared only by Brahmins Rajaram Maharaja had no such restrictions. He would sit down his subjects and eat the same type of food with them. He loved the mute animals also in the same way as he loved his subjects. He never overworked his horse. He was a sympathetic king who very well understood the miseries of the poor and the plight of the succeeded in uplifting them and giving them honour and status in the society.¹⁹

The first world war had already started when Chh. Rajaram Maharaj was undergoing educational training in England. When he returned back he handled the tense situation with rare skill. His feelings of self-confidence and power of oratory stood him in good stead here. He travelled all through southern Maharashtra and made the people aware that good would come to the Indians only if they co-operated with English against their enemies. This could bring about more reforms in India. Due to his encouragement around 16000 Maharashtrains came forward to help the British war efforts Chh. Rajaram's contribution to the British war glorified him all through Maharashtra.

Chh. Rajaram Maharaj was married to Indumati Devi, the daughter of the king of Baroda Fatthesingrao. The marriage ceremony took place on 1st April 1918.²⁰

The great Chh. Shahu Maharaj died on 6th May 1922. His death drowned the entire lower caste society in a sea^a of sorrow.

After the death of Chh. Shahu Maharaj, Shri Chh. Rajaram Maharaj took the vow of following into his father's footsteps. He was a person who understood his responsibilities and acted accordingly with full sense of justice to everyone.

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