
CHAPTER - VI

Reforms of Babasaheb Ghorpade : Constitutional
and Miscellaneous Reforms.

CHAPTER - VI

Reforms of Babasaheb Ghorpade : Constitutional and Miscellaneous Reforms.

Introduction :

Babasaheb was first class Sardar in the Deccan and represented the Sardars and Inamdars of the Deccan in the Bombay legislative council for twelve years. He was also a member of the Senate of the Bombay University for some time.¹

A) Constitutional Reforms :

In an urgent letter written by Babasaheb to Chhatrapati Rajaram, Maharaja of Kolhapur, on 10th June, 1931, he writes,

" As your Highness is kindly aware, I have for some years past been suffering from ill-health, which is making it more and more difficult for me to devote myself single-handed to the heavy responsibilities of my administration."²

" Your Highness knows that during the 39 years I have been at the head of affairs in my Jagir, I have devoted myself to administrating Ichalkaranji so as to give peace and contentment to the people entrusted to my care. It is because I feel that I can no longer exercise that personal touch in conducting my administration that I desire to appoint a

Council of trusted officials, who will carry on administration on the lines I have laid down and who will be responsible to me for the good administration of my Jagir and the contentment of the people.³

" Before I make plans to take a large rest away from my jagir, I desire to see established in my jagir a council of administration in which I have implicit trust and it is for this reason that I am approaching your Highness with request that your highness will be pleased to accord the necessary approval to the introduction of a council and to my remaining absent from time to time from my jagir for long periods at a time and returning only occasionally when my health permits and when my personal attendance is imperative in the interests of my jagir." ⁴

My Senior officers are Mr.J.L.Gohen, Mr.J.D.Kulkarni Mr. D.B.Joshi, and Mr. V.V.Rajawade. I have full faith in these four officers and would desire to appoint a council consisting of Mr.Goheen as President and Mr.Kulkarni and Mr.Joshi as members. Mr. Rajawade will continue to act as the Karbhari of jagir. The Council will consult me in every important matters and in matters of permanent interests.

" I am not position at present, to say for what period I shall be absent from my jagir as that must depend upon my

health, but I think that on the advice of my medical advisers, I must in the first instance, delegate to my council the powers, I enjoy for a period of two years irrespective as to whether I am present in Ichalkaranji or not. As I am desirous of leaving my jagir for a more congenial climate, as early as possible." ⁵

Though Babasaheb was willing to introduce constitutional reforms he did not succeed in materialising these reforms.

Mr. H.G.Franks in his book ' The Story of Ichalkaranji says " he represented the Sardars and Inamadars of the Deccan in the Bombay Legislative Council for twelve years and by enlightening them on their rights created a sympathetic atmosphere for fair constitutional struggle. While in Council he also urged the necessity of making primary education free and compulsory. He worked for the introduction of equal weights and measures so as to check the abolition of many evil practices among merchants, which were so detrimental to the poor people. Indeed his main work in the Council was on questions that involved the interests of the masses and although he did not see the results at the time, the people have since reaped the harvest of his labour. To widen his

horizon further, the Chief took to travelling both in and out of India." ⁶

Babasaheb was 'first class Sardar in the Deccan and represented the Sardars and Inamdars of the Deccan in the Bombay Legislative Council for twelve years. He was also a member of the Senate of the Bombay University for some time.⁷

When Babasaheb was the member of Bombay legislative council, he came in contact with people like, Lord Sandhurst, Lord Northcot, Lord Lamington and Sir George Clerk, the govern~~me~~ of Bombay. His other companions in the Legislative Council were late Sir Bhakhandra Bhatwadekar, Shri Daji Abaji Khare, Hari Sitaram Dixit, Sir Phirojshaha Mehata, Vithalrao Thakarshi, Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, Nouroji Padamji, Madhavrao Vinchurkar, Dadasaheb Karandikar and Shri Dattatraya Venkatesh Velavai. Babasaheb got the opportunity of working with such prominent people.⁸

Since Babasaheb was representating, the Sardars and Inamdars from Maharashtra and Karnataka, the questions, he asked were more about the welfare and benefit of Sardars and Inamadars, he represented.⁹

He fought for the efficiency in the recovery procedure of the land revenue from the Inamadars. He also fought on the floors of legislative council for the abolition of the discri-

-mination between peasants and Inamdar's clients. He conveyed to the government that, Sardars and Inamdars from the Deccan State must be forgiven their debts.¹⁰

He suggested in the Legislative Council that a special school should be started for the Sardars and Inamadars children on Rajkot pattern. Likewise, he struggled for the equal weights and measures all over the State.

He paid special attention in the Miraj-Pandharpur railway route and got it sanctioned. In 1904, he suggested on the floors of the legislative council that a sugar factory should be founded, somewhere, near Baramati.¹¹

He requested the government to promote research in Sugarcane crop on the bank of Neera Canal.

Babasaheb was a visionary person. In the Legislative Council, he always pressed forward his demand of starting a medical college in a place like Poona.¹²

In 1907, Babasaheb gave a talk on the budget provisions and suggested that the primary education must be made free and compulsory. He insisted that the books manufactured and published by Hindu College at Benaras must be prescribed for the syllabus in the schools, so that, there will no oppose for the books. In addition to this, he supported the idea of advisory

board for state governments. In this way Babasaheb fought on the floors of council for the legitimate rights of the people.¹³

The letter written by Babasaheb to his higher authority for the appointment of district Judge of the Ichalkaranji Jagir dated 10th March, 1942, as under :-¹⁴

" Mr. Sathe wishes to be relieved as early as possible and I shall be thankful if you could kindly arrange to accord the sanction of the Darbar to Mr. Rajwade's appointment as district Judge. So as relieve Mr. Sathe before the end of this month.¹⁵

After the retirement of J.L.Goheen, as administrator of Ichalkaranji in 1934, Babasaheb had submitted a Vinantipatra to appoint Lt. Colonel A.G.Frere in place of Mr. J.L.Goheen.

The Prime Minister Office, Kolhapur in reply issued a notification. It ran as under :

" Whereas the Jahagirdar of Ichalkaranji has submitted a Vinantipatra to appoint Lt. Colonel A.G.Frere in place of Mr. J.L.Goheen whose term of office expires on the 6th of May 1934, for a period of two years. His Highness the Chhatrapati Maharajasaheb has been pleased to appoint Lt.Colonel A.G.Frere

as administrator of Ichalkaranji, for a period of six months in the first instance. The powers of district and sessions judge exercised at present by Mr. D.B.Joshi are withdrawn and Lt. Colonel Frere is to exercise them from the date on which he assumes charge as administrator of Ichalkaranji i.e. 6th May, 1934, for a period of six months in the first instance. The dispensation from High Court supervision granted to the Jagirdar of Ichalkaranji under Notification No.15 dated 10th January, 1905 in criminal matters, being personal, is not extended to the case of Lt. Colonel Frere." 16

" Lt. Colonel is to work in revenue and administrative matters under the direct supervision of the Darbar and in important matters he may consult the jagirdar of Ichalkaranji Lt. Colonel Frere is to exercise those power which are at present exercised by Mr.Goheen." 17

" The appointment of Lt. Colonel Frere as administrator and as district and sessions judge is probationary for the first six months. The period of his appointment will be extended upto two years as requested by the jagirdar of Ichalkaranji provided his work is found satisfactory during these six months." 18

Proposal for the formation of a Federal system
of Small Native States :

Babasaheb Ghorpade, in 1914, wrote an article, " Smaller Native States A Federal States " in Times of India and enclosed in the appendix.

In this article Babasaheb Ghorpade as expressed his views about the reforms in administration of Indian states in British India. The majority of the Indian states were smaller in area than a British district or even a British taluka. Consequently, revenue of the smaller Indian states was limited. Thereby, the administration of the Smaller states suffered to a great extent. There was not only inefficiency but also the danger of incompetent ruler creating difficulties for the people. In order to have better administration and improvement in the living conditions of the people in smaller state Babasaheb Ghorpade proposed the formation of a federal system of the Smaller native states. The proposal could not materialize due to the selfishness of the native rulers of the smaller states.

Yet, the scheme proposed by Babasaheb Ghorpade clearly reflects on the attitude of the chief of Ichalkaranji, who gave more attention to the welfare of the continuation of the native rulers of smaller states, whom he represented in the Bombay legislature.

B) Miscellaneous Reforms :

1) Initiatives in Co-operative Movements

Babasaheb knew that government patronage could help any movement to grow and spread quickly. Babasaheb realized the importance of co-operative movement. He was one of the few jagirdars from Bombay State who helped for the ¹healthy growth of co-operative movement. When he was England, he studied the co-operative movement there. after his return from Europe he gave a speech on the co-operative movement in Ireland in the meeting of Bombay State Council. He was the founder member of Ichalkaranji Central Co-operative Bank in his jagir. He made an attempt for the growth of co-operative principles as well as co-operative enterprises in Ichalkaranji town.¹⁹

2) Faith in Secularism :

Though Babasaheb was Hindu, by birth, he was secular in practice. He believed in religious tolerance and co-existence. His secular attitude could be seen from the honours, that were conferred upon him by men from different religious and castes at the time of the ' Golden Jubilee ' celebrations of his administration. The Manpatre, were given by different religious and caste communities in Ichalkaranji such as Muhammadans,

Chambhars, Mahars, Jains and other. These manpatras, given in the Appendix, reveal to us the admiration felt by these social groups towards Babasaheb Ghorpade.

Babasaheb managed to construct a water tank from public funds in the masjid in Ichalkaranji. The water was also supplied without any cost. He made a monthly provision for the daily sweeping the masjid clean. Even the ground in front of masjid in Ichalkaranji, though owned by the jagirdar was given without any cost of the Mahmmadan community.

N O T E S

1. Kolhapur Archives, Ichalkaranji General Administration
File No.59, p. 377.
2. Kolhapur Archives, Ichalkaranji Administration,
File No. 10, p.16.
3. Ibid, p.16.
4. Ibid, p.16.
5. Ibid, p.16.
6. H.G.Franks, ' The Story of Ichalkaranji " pp.135,136.
7. Kolhapur Archives, Ichalkaranji General Administration,
File No.59, p.377.
8. V.D.Kulkarni Shrimant Babasahebbanchi Mumbai Kayade-
Mandalatil Kamagiri, in Maha-Rashtra, edited by P.R.
Ambike, 1942, p.139.
9. V.D.Kulkarni, op.cit, p.139.
10. Ibid, p.140.
11. Ibid, p.141.
12. Ibid, p.143.

13. Ibid, p. 143
14. Kolhapur Archives, Administration of Ichalkaranji
Administration File No.78, p.240.
15. Ibid, p.240.
16. Ibid, p.240.
17. Ibid, p.240.
18. Ibid, p.240.
19. V.L.Mehata, Sahakari Chalavalicha Jank, in Maha-Rashtra,
edited by B.R. Ambike, 1942, p.89.