
CHAPTER FOUR

A LIFE SKETCH OF
KARMAVEER BHAURAO PATIL

CHAPTER IVA LIFE SKETCH OF KARMAVEER BHAURAO PATILBirth:

Bhaurao Patil popularly known as the "Karmaveer" (hero in action) was born on the 22nd of September in 1887 at Kumbhoj, a village in the Hatkanangale Taluka of the ex-Princely State of Kolhapur. His father Payagonda Deogonda (1859-1942) was a resident of Aitawade Ek., village in the Walva Taluka of the former Satara District, now in Sangli district. Payagonda was first chaturth Jain farmer to pass the 'Mulki' Examination (the Vernacular School Final Examination). For thirty years, of he served as a Clerk in the Revenue Department of the British Government, and retired in 1914. He was a very honest and straight-forward man. Bhaurao's mother, Gangabai was the only daughter of her parents. She was a virtuous and courageous lady.

Bhaurao Patil inherited the virtues of simplicity, frugal habits, public spirit and self-denial from his worthy ancestors. His mother Smt. Gangabai Patil was the only daughter of Shri Jaingonda Patil of Kumbhoj. He inherited his rebellious attitude towards social injustice from his mother's family. His maternal grandfather and maternal uncles were known for their bravery and sympathy for the weaker sections of the society.

Similarly, he inherited a high moral chourage and iron constitution from his mother. Bhaurao some times used to say^{of} himself that the saintliness and the rebelliousness in his nature, had their roots in the characteristics of his ancestors, from whom he inherited these characteristics¹. Bhaurao had three younger brothers, namely Tatya, Balgonda and Bandu and two younger sisters named Tarabai and Dwarkabai.

Education:

Bhaurao was the eldest child and the first son of his parents and therefore, he was much fondled by his parents and grandparents from his mother's side. Frequent transfers of his father and excessive love of his parents proved an impediment in his progress in school. Bhaurao picked up elementary education at different places in the Satara district wherever his father was posted. Therefore, the father was doubtful about his son's further progress in education. But on the advice of Jehangirji Rustomji Thanawala, a neighbour in the village Vita, he was sent to Kolhapur for his further education alongwith his younger brother Tatya².

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1. Ghorpade A.K., Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil: Charitra Va Karya (Life and work), (Marathi), p.2.
 2. Dr.Mathew A.V., Karmaveer Bhaurao patil, An Amazing story of Leadership and organization in Rural Education, satara, 1957, P46.

Bhaurao was admitted for lodge and board in the newly started Boarding House in the Jain Math, attached to the Daxina Maharashtra Jain Vidyalaya Pathashala, and for schooling in the Rajaram High School simultaneously in 1903. At the age of sixteen he was in the first standard of the High School. Bhaurao was a big-sized lad and advanced in age as compared to his class-mates. He was known for his straight-forward and courageous nature. He was also an unopposed leader of his class in the school and of the inmates of his hostel³. But in his studies he used to lag behind. He could reach the sixth standard of High School in 1909. His promotion was halted due to his failure in the sixth standard.

The activities of the prince of Kolhapur i.e. Shri S hahu Chhatrapati were directed towards the education and uplift of the backward ryot in his state. Young Bhaurao was much impressed by the atmosphere in Kolhapur. Especially, the radical views of the Maharaja regarding the eradication of untouchability and the irrationality of the idea of pollution by mere contact, applied to him very much. He decided to put into practice these views by himself⁴. In the Jain Hostel

3. Ibid., p.49.

4. Kudale.B.D. " Prasang Paristhiti Ani Purvaparampara Yani Kelele Bhauravanvaril Sanskar ", Gramodhar, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil Gaurav Visheshank (Nov.1948), p.33.

rules like, putting on ' sovale ' bu the inmates before taking meals or prohibiting the inmates to shave after the meals were taken or compelling them to take a bath after a contact with the backward class people, were in vogue⁵. Bhaurao not finding any rationality refused to obey these rules. In 1908 he broke open the kitchen of the hostel and took his meals without a bath after his attendance at a function of a B.C. hostel, viz. Miss Clerke's Hostel, Shri A.B. Lathe, the Superintendent of the Jain Hostel; Assistant Superintendent Mr. Bhardore, who knew of the stubborn attitude of Bhaurao Patil; wanted to expel Bhaurao from the hostel. Shri Lathe, being a strict disciplinarian, did not tolerate Bhaurao's activities. Shri Lathe, in his personal life, was a thorough Satya Samajist, but in an institution he sought strict obedience. Young Bhaurao was not willing to bow down to the irrational ritualistic, authoritarianism of the hostel rules. This was a clash of ideologies. However, this being the third act of disobedience by Bhaurao Patil, on the advice of Bhardore, he was expelled from the hostel, in 1908, which perhaps gave a new turn to Bhaurao's life itself.

5. Dr. Matthew, A. V., Op. Cit. p. 54.

This act of the Assistant Superintendent was really a vindictive one, because Jain Boarding House was the place where, the promoters of the society for the education of the Depressed classes met and formed the society. The orthodox Jinsen Swami himself was one of the promoters⁶. This incident was merely an excuse for throwing Bhaurao Patil out of the hostel. Shri A.B.Latthe being the Head of the Hostel had to accept the suggestion of his orthodox assistant. After leaving the Jain Hostel, he stayed at the Palace of the Maharaja through the courtesy of Balasaheb Khanvilkar. The stay in the palace had a salutary effect in moulding Bhaurao's character and future career. The Maharaja, along with his young friends namely Shri Baskarrao Jadhav, Shri A.B.Latthe and Shri Dongre was slowly trying to introduce socio-educational reforms in his State. This atmosphere left an indelible impression on young Bhaurao's mind. However, Bhaurao's failure in the 6th standard brought his career as a student to a close in 1908-1909. The same year he was married to Laxmibai, daughter of Anna Patil of Kumbhoj.

In 1910, he attended an All India Digambar Jain Conference at Sharavan Belgola (Mysore). Mr.Damodhar Lengade and Mr.Bhaurao

6. Latthe,A.B., Memories of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur, pp.147-148.

Patil were the volunteers in chief, in charge of the volunteer troop. Shri Manikchand Hirachand Javheri was the President of the Conference. He was pleased with the excellent services rendered by Bhaurao and his volunteer troop.⁷ He wanted to give Bhaurao a good start in his life. He took him to Bombay, enrolled his name in Davar's Commerce Institute and admitted him in Sheth Harachand Gumanji Jain Boarding School, founded by Shri Manikchand himself in memory of his father. Bhaurao could not learn much in Davar's Institute. Sheth Manikchand tried to teach him his business of Jewellery. But that proved an abortive attempt. Bhaurao returned to Satara unpolluted by the atmosphere of Bombay. He started a coaching class as his main job, besides doing some odd jobs like acting as an agent to Bharat Insurance Company or the Krishi Sudharana Mandal, Koregaon etc.

In 1910, the residents of Dudhagaon included Shri D.J. Madhwanna and B.D.Kudale had started a small boarding house viz. Vidyarthi Ashram at the instance of Shri Bhaurao Patil⁸. Bhaurao used to stay at Dudhagaon for some months every year from 1910 to 1920. This 'Vidyarthi Ashram' was the genesis of hostels at Kale, Nerlé and Satara⁹.

7. Kudale, B.D., Op.Cit., p.35.

8. The Resolution No.6 in the Second Annual Meeting of the Dudhgaon Shikshan Prasarak Sanstha, held on 27-2-1914.

9. Kudale, B.D., Op.cit. p.35.

In 1914, when Bhaurao had come to Koregaon (District Satara) to see his father, he received a wire on 9-6-1914 from Pandit Kallappa Nitve, from Kolhapur. Accordingly Bhaurao went to Kolhapur and saw this man at his residence on 10-6-1914. This man, not being on good terms with Shri A.B. Latthe, wanted to implicate Latthe in the act of high treason caused by the besmearing with tar of royal status including that of Her Majesty Queen Victoria in the Kolhapur Town Hall garden by somebody in the Kolhapur State. Shri Nitve wanted to use Bhaurao as a cat's paw by compelling him to stand false witness against Shri Latthe and thus take revenge upon Latthe, who had driven Bhaurao out of the Jain Boarding House. But Bhaurao refused to stand witness against Latthe as instructed. He had to pay a heavy price for that, Shri Nitve got Bhaurao arrested on the false accusation of stealing money and setting fire to Nitve's press. Bhaurao was tortured by Kolhapur police beyond one's imagination. However, he survived these tortures and also was acquitted by the magistrate of the charges made against him and released from Jail in Kolhapur. Immediately, a second trap was being laid by the Kolhapur police but it failed as he outwitted them, and safely came to Dudhagaon on 26-1-1915.

After a few days he met Ogale brothers, his old classmates, Mr. Atmarampant and Mr. Shankarrao at Kirloskarwadi. After some negotiations he began to work as a Chief Sales Organizer for two budding factories started by Ogale brothers, and Kirloskar brothers. As a Salesman his visits to various places influenced his mind to take up some material work, rather than employment. Again in 1921, he left Kirloskar for two reasons: (1) to undertake the educational work i.e. of starting hostels for poor boys and (2) as also due to some differences regarding the use of profits for the welfare of the workers including their education.

With great hopes to get money for his hostel project, he joined the late Sir D.B. Cooper in his venture of starting a new iron factory in competition with the Kirloskars and to bring down prices of their ploughs in the interest of farmers. Here also, he found that Shri Cooper was paying more attention to his own profits than to the welfare of the workers and their children, As per the promise, he did not spare money for the hostel to be started by Bhaurao on the factory site. Bhaurao broke his relation with this new factory and straightway came to Satara and founded his hostel in 1924 on an auspicious 'Dashahara day'¹⁰. Influenced by Satya Shodhak

10. Ghorpade, A.K., Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil Life and Work, p.100.

Samaj and the various experiences he had to face, he realised the real needs of the people. He was much perturbed by the suffering the masses suffered.

Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil was great follower of Satya Shodhak Samaj. By 1919, Bhaurao Patil availed himself of an opportunity. In this year the Satara District Conference of the Satya Shodhak Samaj was held at Kale in the Karad taluka, of Satara district. Most of the prominent Satya Shodhak Samaj workers of the district and from outside attended the conference held under the Presidentship of Shri Keshavrao Bagade, B.A., LL.B., of Poona. In this Conference Bhaurao Patil proposed a programme for the education of rural population. The delegates attending the conference readily accepted the suggestion and it was decided to start the society at Kale itself. The local people viz. " Daji Patil, Narukaka Khot and Bhaurao Chougule willing to co-operated with this ideas Bhaurao Patil in the project and thus was born the ' Rayat Shikshan Sanstha '¹¹.

Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil was the founder-member, a teacher and organiser of the " Rayat Shikshan Sanstha ". In the

11. Dr. Matthew, A.V., Op.cit. p.129.

beginning the Sanstha had not a single school of its own, no teacher, not a single life-member and no assured income. Even under such adverse conditions Bhaurao Patil was running the Boarding houses for the village at Kale and Narle on the pattern of ' Dudhgaon Vidyarthi Ashram ' and admitted pupils of all castes and creeds without making any distinction and insisted that " all the young folk who came into it should do as much as possible manual work, so that even the poorest pupil may have a chance to get secondary and higher education"¹². Every student had to learn his own income to earn.

Thus Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil started the work of Rayat Shikshan Sanstha at Kale, district Satara in 1919. Later on the headquarters of the Sanstha was transferred to Satara city in 1924. " K.B.Patil with his commendable patience and vision worked hard for the non-Brahmin masses. He became a popular social worker; and it was in the year 1924, he started " Shri Chhatrapati Shahu Boarding House ". It was named after the Maharajah of Kolhapur, who loved Patil's activities. Shri Chhatrapati Shahu Boarding House had its own unique features in which all the communities lived together in one hostel for a common purpose that of receiving education"¹³.

12. Ibid., p.129.

13. Kavlekar, K.K., Non-Brahmin Movement in Southern India, Shivaji University Publication, Shivaji University Press, 1979. p.67.

The hostel movement of Shri Shahu resulted in a hostel for all communities. Bhaurao Patil did not agree with a hostel for each community but all communities had to live in a single hostel.

In the beginning Sanstha had only a few students of different communities and castes. " The despised untouchable Mang or Mahar lives a brother on terms of equality with other students here. He is no longer the despised untouchable. The Muslim boy also, lives here and finds it a congenial home. There is no question of 'Hindu-pani' or Mussalman pani' here. It is a single indivisible Home. The Christian boy shares the life of his Hindu and Muslim brethren^e"¹⁴.

Not a single servant was employed. Every bit of work was done by the boys and boys alone. Food was prepared by all the inmates by batches of boys of 15 each day. The hostel movement started by Shri Shahu had a never ending impact. Though Karmaveer Bahurao Patil had no University education, he had inherited rich qualities of the Indian peasant at his best. He possessed practical wisdom, good capacity for

14. The Modern Review, August, 1940, Educational Efforts in Satara, by L. N. Rao, p.p. 218-221.

organization, a strong will and keen enthusiasm and love for practical nation building work"¹⁵.

At present the Rayat Shikshan Sanstha has spread its different activities throughout Western Maharashtra, Karnatak and Marathwada like a huge Banian tree.

In 1959, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil expired but his students, who became life-members during his life-time, took the responsibility of expanding the educational activities of the Sanstha to the nooks and corners of Maharashtra, and have fulfilled the wish of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil, who wanted to provide the educational facilities to the younger generation of the majority community and the downtrodden. Services of Br.P.G.Patil, Mrs.P.G.Patil, who have sacrificed much for the development of Sanstha, will have to be recorded. They are the pillars of the Sanstha. Besides Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil's efforts in bringing an educational revolution can be considered as a great contribution to political development. The Sanstha has contributed great intellectual in various walks of life.

15. Ibid., p.220.

CASTE-WISE BREAK OF THE STUDENTS IN
CHHATRAPATI SHAHU BOARDING HOUSE IN 1944

Sr.No.	Name of the Caste	No.of Students
1)	Marathas	133
2)	Dhangars or Shepherds	13
3)	Weavers	7
4)	Tailors	5
5)	Barbars	2
6)	Gardeners	2
7)	Lingayats	6
8)	Guravs	3
9)	Sonar	1
10)	Washerman	3
11)	Sali	4
12)	Carpenters	2
13)	Koli	3
14)	Brahmin	5
15)	Baniya	1
16)	Kumbhar	7
17)	Bhoi	1
18)	Rajput	1
<u>DEPRESSED CLASS BOYS:</u>		
19)	Mahars	75
20)	Mangs	30
21)	Chambhars	18
22)	Dhor	4
23)	Ramoshi	8
24)	Kaikadi (tribals)	4
25)	Vaddar	1
26)	Nat	1
27)	Jains	17
28)	Christians	12
29)	Muslims	14
30)	Others	6
	Total	<u>388</u>

The present position of the Sanstha upto the end of 1976-77 is given below¹⁶.

TABLE - 1

Details of educational and other Institutions of the Rayat Shikshan Sanstha upto the end of 1976-77.

Sr.No.	Category of the Institution	Numbers
1)	Colleges	19
2)	Secondary Schools	311
3)	Teacher's Training Colleges	7
4)	Pre-Primary & Primary Schools	4
5)	Hostels	70
6)	Other Branches	16
Total		427

The number of Institutions shows the services the Sanstha is doing to this part of Maharashtra. It can be stated that Rayat Shikshan Sanstha is the largest educational society, in Maharashtra.

16. Annual Report for 1976-77, p.9.