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Remembering Shahu Maharaj



Revival of caste-based politics?

Contrary to the BJP expectation and exit poll predictions, the Indian electorate sprung a surprise in the Lok Sabha election. BJP, unlike in 2014 and 2019, could not get a majority and will have to depend upon other parties to form the government. A lot of interpretations are being made following the Lok Sabha election. But they are fundamentally political in nature, which is very obvious. We refrain ourselves from making any political comments. At the same time, however, some vital social issues, raised in the electioneering, need to be discussed. Equally important are some political trends, which can be seen as a mirror of the contemporary mind set. Political behaviour, like voting, is always manifestation of several social elements. Therefore, political behaviour can never be neglected in the democratic society.

A major feature of the 2024 Lok Sabha election is the revival of caste-based politics, which had become less influential in the past one decade. Political parties and leaders, who mainly survived on caste-based politics, had lost their shine and glory following the emergence of Narendra Modi at national level in 2014. This was experienced in a series of Assembly elections and 2019 Lok Sabha election. Many academicians describe this phenomenon as the emergence of a new vote bank – ‘beneficiary class’, which overpowered age-old caste politics. A few scholars attribute degeneration of caste politics to the more accommodative ‘Hindutva umbrella’. Forgetting any sensitivity, which divides society, is always a welcome sign, as it helps to have a healthy and strong society.

The 2024 election, however, seems to have once again brought the scenario back to square one. Two examples can be cited to prove this fear. Firstly, the election result has given a new life to the leaders like Akhilesh Yadav, Sharad

Pawar, Lalu Yadav and Mamata Banerjee, who never hesitated to use caste as their playing card for political motives. Secondly, BJP performance in the seats, reserved for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, has gone down substantially. For example, BJP had won 40 seats, reserved for Scheduled Caste out of 84. This was in 2014. In 2019, it won 46 seats. However, BJP performance declined significantly as it managed to win 29 seats in the 2024 election. Same is the case of seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes. BJP won 27 and 31 seats in 2014 and 2019, respectively. This time it was arrested on 25 seats. (We have 47 seats, reserved for ST). While BJP leaders always bank upon welfare schemes, introduced and implemented by them, election outcome calls for a serious introspection for them. Opposition campaign that BJP plans to amend the constitution seem to have made a big impact on the voters belonging to SC and ST votes. Responsibility now lies with BJP to prove its credentials. Significantly, BJP had to suffer losses where caste sensitivity was refreshed and had some crucial social combination, which is needed for electoral politics.

Another major social issue discussed in the election campaign was extension of reservation to minorities. BJP has made its position clear that it does not approve religion-based reservation. Non-BJP parties are more eager in this regard and did not hesitate to campaign for it. Notwithstanding the election outcome, all political parties are expected to ponder seriously on religion-based reservation. We ought to remember that any step in this direction is bound to have very serious implications on the social fabric of the nation. Religion-based reservation was never expected by the constitution makers. They never discuss this issue in the constituent assembly. Neither

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history of reservation shows that it was never meant for religious minorities. Reservation is exclusively meant for those members of Hindu society, who were handicapped by untouchability. Religions, other than Hindu, do not believe in caste-system and untouchability. In fact, protection from caste discrimination is the most important allurements to the SC and ST people for conversion. Against this backdrop, it would be against the constitutional values and spirit to have religion-based reservation.

The most vital question is social. What is the need for reservation when religious minorities are already getting benefits because of their minority status. Religion-based reservation has an adverse impact on the current beneficiaries as minorities will eat out major portions of reservation. Its implications would not be merely political but social as well. Politicians are supposed to show more wisdom, maturity, restraint and faith in constitutional spirit in this connection.

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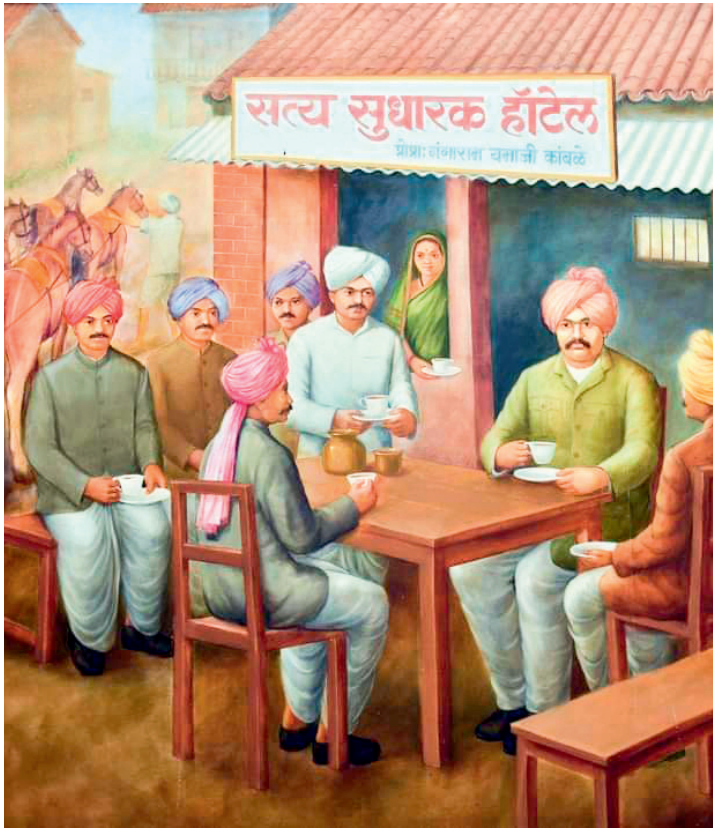
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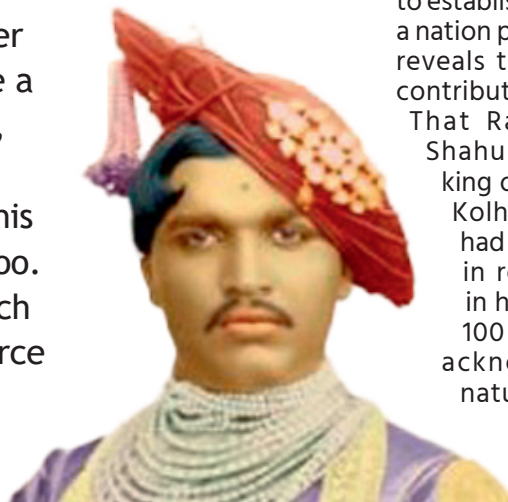
Dr. Jayashri

Sovereignty and integrity are considered essential features of any nation. Any division that is cultural, social or economic in nature can never help a nation maintain its unity and integrity. The unity of any nation is based on the well-defined principle of the correlations between various groups of its citizens and the cohesiveness between them. The lifestyle of every element of the society in the nation is required to be based on high human values for the purpose. Nurturing high human values and bestowing human rights based on the principle of equality forms the bonds of cohesiveness among various elements of society. A glance at the history of India shows that various iconic figures ranging from Bhagvan Gautam Buddha in the ancient ages to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Dr Babasaheb in the modern era have time and again reflected on and adopted such high human values. A look at their life and work makes it evident.

An overview of the life of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the iconic king of the princely state of Kolhapur, and work done by him to establish social justice in India, a nation plagued by inequalities, reveals the importance of his contributions for the purpose. That Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the iconic king of the princely state of Kolhapur in Maharashtra, had succeeded in ushering in revolutionary changes in his state approximately 100 years ago is a well-acknowledged fact. The nature of these changes was not merely restricted to social reforms. Indeed,

Chhatrapati Shahu: Pioneer of Reservation Policy

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of the princely state of Kolhapur took several courageous and revolutionary steps to introduce reforms and usher in social justice in his state a century ago. Not only that, he set an example before the people by living up to his ideals in his personal life too. We must adopt the approach propagated by him to enforce the rights of the backward classes today.





it was a social revolution! The eradication of caste-based differences that plagued society was the main objective behind the monumental social work done by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The socially awakened and aware king wanted to prove that one does not attain a high position merely by birth in a specific caste or religion. Instead, one can attain greatness due to his or her virtues and the skills as well as the knowledge acquired. The king provided rightful opportunities to each of his subjects without considering the caste or religion of individuals to make this happen and thus tried to improve and enrich their conditions.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj took over the reins of his princely state following his coronation on 2nd April 1884. In that year, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's royal court at Kolhapur consisted of 60 Brahmin and 12 non-Brahmin officers. A total of 46 Brahmin and seven non-Brahmin officers were appointed with the privy administration of the king. The total population of the princely state of

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj enacted the rule of 'Baluta Band' (Share of the corn and garden produce assigned for the subsistence of the twelve community helpers of a village) on 22nd February 1918. Thus, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj rescued the people forced to pursue the same profession despite their will.

Kolhapur was nine lakhs at that time. Of this, only 26,000 people belonged to Brahmin and other high castes. Notwithstanding this, people belonging to the Brahmin community were occupying a maximum number of administrative posts. Enjoying monopoly over education, the Brahmins had established their domination in the administration. The people of the Maratha community, which was the largest constituent of the population, had no presence in the administration. The administration was dominated by specific communities such as Brahmins, Parsis and Europeans.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj studied the prevailing conditions in minute detail and introduced reservations in the Government jobs intending to achieve a balance of power and encourage the non-Brahmins to pursue higher education, master the skills and enable

themselves. Through these reservations, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj retained a large share of employment in the Government jobs provided by his princely state for the backward classes. He published an important declaration on 26th July 1902 for the purpose. According to the declaration, effective from the date of receipt of the order, 50 per cent of the vacant posts shall be filled up by recruiting candidates belonging to the backward classes. If the number of officers belonging to the backward classes was lower than 50 per cent in any office, the next appointment with such office will be made by recruiting candidates of backward classes. It further stated that it shall be mandatory for heads of all departments to submit quarterly reports of all appointments made in their department from the date of the order to the Government. (Backward classes means all classes except Brahmin, Prabhu, Shenvi, Parsi and other forward classes).

People belonging to the Backward classes could never have exercised their rights because of the domination of Brahmins in employment. This policy adopted by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj helped ensure that the backward classes of the society get their due share. This reservation policy means direct priority was given to the backward classes in half of the posts in the service of the Government of the princely state. However, due importance was given to eligibility while appointing an individual for any post. Persons, who did not possess educational eligibility were not accommodated in the administration. This clearly shows that this policy did not mean degrading intellectual eligibility. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was not willing to make any adjustments to the qualifications. However, he insisted that all must be provided with reasonable opportunities. Therefore, he made all required efforts to develop an inclination towards education among the masses and tried to enable the backward classes to make progress by publishing the declaration.

While supporting his revolutionary declaration and explaining its reasonability and fairness, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj said, "Even the mother separately reserved milk for the weak and young children at her house. Nurses at the hospital administer special tonics to weak patients. Similarly, special justice needs to be done to the weaker sections of society while governing. I have made this provision to reserve 50 per cent of seats to protect the candidates of backward classes which were plagued with illiteracy and ignorance for generations in their competition with the high casts which have



been enjoying monopoly over knowledge and education for thousands of years.”

In a bid to remove misconceptions about this reservation policy, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also cited another example. When Advocate Abhyankar from Sangli criticized Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj about this policy, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj took him for a ride in a stable of horses. The foals and grown-up horses were left free at the stable. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj ordered to pour grams on a rug to feed the horses. When the fodder was poured, all horses ran to feed on it. The strong horses ran ahead and ate all the fodder. The weak, ailing horses remained behind them. Pointing towards this scene, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj said, “Do you see Abhyankar? This is why the ailing horses need to be protected by giving fodder to them separately in the bags attached to their mouths. This applies to the backward classes too. How would they be able to hold their heads high if they are not provided special concessions?”

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj not only tried to uphold social justice through his reservation policy but also made several other efforts throughout his life to eradicate differential treatment and to ensure equality between individuals of the high castes and those of backward classes. Some such efforts include: 1. Sutar (Carpenter), Lohar (Ironsmith), Kumbhar (Potter), Shimpi (Tailor), Teli (Oilman etc. castes are viewed as lower castes in Hindu religion.

People, who belonged to these castes were forced to pursue the hereditary profession in which their caste was engaged traditionally. Therefore, the caste of such individuals was identified with that specific profession. Even if an individual possessed skills required to follow a different profession or avocation, that person was unable to enter that profession because of the restrictions imposed by the religion in the name of the caste system. Therefore, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj enacted the rule of ‘Baluta Band’ (Share of the corn and garden produce assigned for the subsistence of the twelve community helpers of a village) on 22nd February 1918. Thus, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj rescued the people forced to pursue the same profession despite their will.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj scrapped the tradition of making appointments of Kulkarni’s (village clerk) hereditarily by enacting a law on 29th July 1918 and instead started making appointments of eligible candidates for the post of Talathi. He started coaching classes for candidates of backward classes aspiring to be Talathis to ensure that candidates of backward classes, especially the untouchables, receive special training and become eligible for the post. The untouchable candidates, who completed such training successfully, would be appointed as Talathi on a priority basis. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj issued a special order to ensure this.

Similarly, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj issued



a separate order that as far as possible, a candidate belonging to the cast which had the majority of the population be appointed as Talathi, and maximum preference be given to the candidates of untouchable castes such as Mahar, Mang, Chambhar etc. and making it mandatory to appoint at least five untouchable officers in each Peth and 3 untouchable officers in every Mahal. Thus, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj restored honour and provided social status to the untouchables, who were forced for generations to stand outside the Chavadi (office of village panchayat) and address people of Brahmin, Maratha etc. which considered themselves higher classes. This raised their social standard.

Individuals born in the Mahar community were forced to do substandard work like making announcements in the village, disposing of carcasses of dead animals etc. because of the system of Mahar Vatan (negative patrimonial rights). Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj went to the root of the issue and scrapped Mahar Vatan by issuing an order in 1918. Thus, he rescued members of the Mahar community from slavery.

By issuing a royal order on 7th June 1920, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj freed members of the Mahar community from the lives of slaves they were forced to live. Thus, he completely abolished the tradition of Vethbigari (Bonded labourer) in his princely state and empowered the members of the Mahar community by bestowing human rights due to them.

Members of various untouchable castes such as Mang, Berad, Ramoshi etc. had been branded as thieves and dacoits for generations. Therefore, they suffered an inferiority complex. They were required to give daily attendance at the Chavadi (office of village panchayat). Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj addressed this problem and issued an order to stop the tradition of mandatory daily attendance for members of such castes branded as criminals.

During his endeavours for social reforms, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj promulgated an act in July 1917 enabling widows to remarry. He tried to abolish the evil traditions of Jogti and Devdasi (offering young children to appease God) by enacting a law in January 1920.

Besides, he issued an order on 8th October 1919 providing free access to all government-owned and public places in his princely state to untouchables. Thus, he provided unrestricted access to untouchables to gardens, reservoirs, hospitals, offices and the palace. Government hospitals were issued instructions in stern language that Dalit patients must be treated like other patients and doctors or nurses

not willing to abide by this should resign. All government-run and privately owned schools were directed to give equal treatment to Dalit students. Separate schools being run for Dalits were closed. Heads of all departments in the government offices were instructed to give equal treatment to Dalit clerks or any Dalit visitor.

He made special provisions for the enforcement of these laws and also punished those violating them. Besides these efforts aimed at social reforms, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj set examples of his conduct in his personal life to promote the eradication of untouchability, social equality and justice among people. He appointed members of the Pharsepardhi community, branded as unreliable criminals, to various posts such as bodyguard and security guard. Thus, he tried to highlight their trustworthiness in the minds of people.

He helped an untouchable person like Gangaram Kambale set up a hotel. Not only that, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj himself patronised the hotel by frequently visiting it to have a cup of tea. On many occasions, castes of untouchable persons would be used as their surnames. Consequently, people would come to know their castes. This created a lot of hurdles for the untouchables. Therefore, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj changed their surnames. Moreover, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj took the initiative personally to encourage inter-caste marriages to eradicate caste differences. He married Chandraprabhabai, the daughter of his uncle Kakasaheb Ghatge who belonged to a prestigious family in Kagal, with Yashvantrao, the son of Maharaja Tukojirao Holkar of the princely state of Indore. Ghatge's belong to the Kshatriya Maratha caste and the Holkar's were members of the Dhangar community. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj displayed courage to arrange this inter-caste marriage. Thus, he set an example for the people by living up to his ideals.

Living in the present era, we may not be able to fully understand how courageous and revolutionary these changes introduced in the princely state of Kolhapur for the establishment of social justice were when they were implemented about a century ago. Therefore, we must adopt the liberal and progressive approach propagated by him to enforce the rights of the backward classes today.

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Relations between Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Ambedkar

The relation between Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Ambedkar lies in their shared commitment to social justice and upliftment of the marginalized sections of society, particularly the Dalits. Shahu Maharaj's reforms in education and social welfare laid the foundation for Dr. Ambedkar's work in challenging the caste system and advocating for Dalit rights. Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged Shahu Maharaj's efforts in empowering Dalits and saw him as a precursor to his own struggle for social equality. Their collaboration, though indirect due to the difference in time periods, contributed significantly to the advancement of social reform in India, particularly in addressing caste-based discrimination and promoting education and empowerment among marginalized communities.

Dr. Gautam

The relation between Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is one of the important chapters in the history of the social reform movement in Maharashtra. Rajarshi, himself was a great social reformer. Being a great visionary, he understood the great scholarly attitude and dedication of Dr. Ambedkar towards the mission of upliftment of the downtrodden. Hence, he supported Dr. Ambedkar till his death. Dr. Ambedkar also had great respect for Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj and his contribution to the contemporary reform movement.

The first meeting between Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj & Dr. Ambedkar was undoubtedly a unique one in the history of India. Unfortunately, the association did not live long.

The untimely demise of Shahu Maharaj ended this association, which was the most tragic event for Maharashtra. Dr. Ambedkar had gone to America (1913) for higher education due to the valuable support of scholarship offered by the generous king of Baroda - Maharaj Sayajirao Gaikwad. He completed his M.A. & Ph.D. and later went to London University for M.Sc. & Bar-at-Law. However, the Baroda Government did not agree to extend the tenure for scholarship. Therefore, helplessly, Dr. Ambedkar had to return India (1917). According to the terms laid down in the scholarship, he had to join for the service at the Princely State of Baroda. Due to his caste, he faced several obstacles in getting a place to stay. Even in the office, he was insulted by the so-called high-caste employees.



Sayajirao Maharaj, the ruling sovereign of Baroda himself found a helpless situation in helping Dr. Ambedkar to save from humiliation & injustices. Consequently, out of desperation, Dr. Ambedkar had to resign from the service returned to Mumbai.

By this time (1918), Shahu Maharaj must have heard about Dr. Ambedkar. He became greatly delighted to know that a young man belonging to the Mahar community had an opportunity to go to foreign country & return to India having accomplished such higher degrees. Naturally, he felt great curiosity to see this young man. Khairmode, the biographer of Dr. Ambedkar, says that Mr. Dattoba Pawar, an educated social worker from Kolhapur who himself belonged to an untouchable community, was acquainted to Dr. Ambedkar. Dattoba Pawar informed Shahu Maharaj about Dr. Ambedkar. Dhananjay Keer, a noted biographer of Dr. Ambedkar, has also agreed on this point & asserts that Mr. Dattoba Pawar was responsible for the first meeting between these great personalities.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj publicly invited Dr. Ambedkar for a meal & arranged a feast at the camp of Sontali. Maharaj treated Dr. Ambedkar in his visit to Kolhapur with great respect. In the end at farewell, he honoured him with Jari-Pataka (a special turban from Kolhapur) as a token of his affection.

Khairmode has stated the year of meeting as 1920. On the other hand, Bhai Madhavrao Bagal disagrees with the above says that it was not Dattoba Pawar, but Mr. Dattoba Dalvi, who made the meeting possible. Bagal has written this in his autobiography – Aathawani - (The Memoir) in which he claims that Dalvi himself had told him about this meeting. Dalvi was one of the best artists in Kolhapur. Shahu Maharaj had sent Mr. Dalvi to Dr. Ambedkar, who expressed Maharaja's willingness to see him. Later, accordingly, the meeting took place. It is informed that before 1920 Dr. Ambedkar started a fortnightly, which was financially helped in the beginning by Maharaja by donating Rs. 2500. It means clearly that both Maharaj & Dr. Ambedkar definitely have met prior to the beginning of the fortnightly & had discussion

regarding movements for the betterment of untouchables, which required some kind of newspaper for awakening them.

Mr. Khairmode, himself, has admitted that due to the inspiration from Dr. Ambedkar, a delegate of activists from the untouchable community had met Maharaj in 1919 at Mumbai for the cause of launching a newspaper, complementary to the movements for untouchables. It is possible that Shahu Maharaj & Dr. Ambedkar's meeting had taken place before the delegation's meeting at Mumbai. Dr. Gangadhar Pantavane, a noted researcher of Ambedkar movements & Prof. Dhampal Ratnakar also agreed upon the year 1919 as the authentic year of this meeting.

MOOKNAYAK & CONFERENCE AT MANGAON

Dr. Ambedkar gave a meaningful name to his fortnightly – Mooknayak, the one which professed to lead and give expression to repressed thoughts & opinions of those communities, which had been speechless & rather maintained speechlessness & exiled for centuries. Though the names of associated activists of Dr. Ambedkar appeared in the editors of Mooknayak', it was Dr. Ambedkar, who settled aims in the beginning. He used to write the editorials of Mooknayak. One historical truth is necessary to be stated here. The advertisement of Mooknayak was rejected in its beginning by Kesari. It was quite antithetical because Lokmanya Tilak had expressed his progressive thoughts in regard to the eradication of untouchability at the first conference on Eradication of Untouchability, held at Mumbai in 1918. Still, Kesari did not publish even a single line of that speech. On this background, it was not a great surprise that Kesari rejected the advertisement of Mooknayak. On the other hand, Chhatrapati Shahu cooperated with Mooknayak right from its inception. There are many documents, showing how Shahu Maharaj extended his hand in cooperation to Dr. Ambedkar from time to time. Dr. Ambedkar could establish close relations with Shahu Maharaj in 1920 when he came to Kolhapur. The conference at Mangaon (a village in the princely state of Kolhapur) was mainly motivated by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Shahu Maharaj had participated in the conference. He had deep faith in Dr. Ambedkar's leadership of untouchables. While expressing his satisfaction, he said to the gathered public, "You have found your leader; therefore, I congratulate you all with my whole heart. I am sure Dr. Ambedkar will never feel at ease without emancipating you. Not only this, but I



am sure that a time will come & he will be held as a leader of whole India. My heart tells me so". It was Shahu Maharaj's visionary outlook & prediction, which came true in the history of modern India. At Mangaon conference, while honouring Dr. Ambedkar's scholarly attitude and intellect, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj said, "Is there any objection to call him (Dr. Ambedkar) a Pundit? Why should there be? He is a real pundit. The Arya Samajists, Buddhists & Christian would have gladly accepted him in their religions. But he did not enter into their religion for that you must thank him. I, too, thank him."

In this conference a very important resolution was proposed that Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati had emancipated the community of untouchables from their slavery & tried to establish social equality in his state. Such a noble work nobody had done in India. Therefore, he deserved many hearty congratulations. For this reason, let all sociality exiled untouchables celebrate his birthday as a festival. This resolution was passed in the conference. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, on this occasion, publicly invited Dr. Ambedkar for a meal & arranged a feast at the camp of Sontali. Maharaj treated Dr. Ambedkar in his visit to Kolhapur with great respect. In the end at farewell, he honoured him with Jari-Pataka (a special turban from Kolhapur) as a token of his affection. While accepting this honour, Dr. Ambedkar was moved with emotions & replied – "I will try my best to honour this turban through all my life". It is known that Dr. Ambedkar kept his words by way of dedicating himself to the cause of emancipation of untouchability till his last breath. In fact, the public life of Dr. Ambedkar began with his Mangaon conference, which he admitted later in his public speech in 1940.

GROWING CO-OPERATION & RELATIONS

One month after the Mangaon conference, Dr. Ambedkar & Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj met again at Nagpur on the occasion of All India Ex-Communicated Society's Conference (30 May 1920). This meeting strengthened the friendly

ties between them further. In that meeting, a burning problem of ensuing political reforms and representation of untouchables in the legislative council was discussed. In reality, it was Dr. Ambedkar, who himself organized this conference with the view to clarify to the government on the role of untouchables. In this regard, Dr. Ambedkar bitterly criticized the so-called role of Maharshi Vitthal Ramaji Shinde. He succeeded in making people register their demonstration against him. As a result of it, the Nagpur conference made it clear that the leadership & the reins of movements for untouchables were transferring to a rising, able leadership of Dr. Ambedkar. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj had this very expectation from Dr. Ambedkar.

Later, both continued their ties with regular correspondence. Dr. Ambedkar had written a letter to Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj about establishment of a committee working for emancipation of untouchables, for which some funds should be raised. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj should adorn this committee by pontificating in it. In reply to this letter Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj wrote (June 7, 1920) – "I may happily allow you to include my name in it. The institution so formed for this noble cause, I assure you that I will readily take responsibility in it either as a vice president or even as an assistant secretary. I think you should form an All-India Depressed Classes Education Fund Institute on which some responsible, reputed & active persons be appointed as employees on behalf of this institute. Some people be sent on deputations at various places for the work of raising funds, which will be the most convenient way. I strongly desire to hold the position of an Assistant secretary, the work of which I will perform quite gladly". The leadership of any movement, run for the Dalits should be led by a leader like Dr. Ambedkar. It was already mentioned above that at the conference of Mangaon, 26th June - birthday of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was resolved to be celebrated by all



untouchables as a festival. The same resolution was once again passed at Nagpur Conference. In accordance with this occasion, Dr. Ambedkar had decided to publish a special issue of Mooknayak. A letter written by him to Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj in this regard on 13th June 1920 runs as, "I am coming to Kolhapur for getting detailed information about His Highness's income & other matters for the special issue of Mooknayak". Unfortunately, information regarding whether Dr. Ambedkar came to Kolhapur or he published the special issue on the said topic, is not available anywhere.

During this time, Dr. Ambedkar was engaged as a professor in Sydenham College to earn for his livelihood. Yet, his attention was focused on his incomplete education. For its completion, Dr. Ambedkar had to go to London in July 1920. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj extended financial help to him for his higher education. At the same time, he himself visited Dr. Ambedkar's residence in a Cement Chawl at Parel. Not only this, but he offered brotherly affection toward Ramabai, the wife of Dr. Ambedkar, as his younger sister & promised Dr. Ambedkar that he would take her to Kolhapur till the return of Dr. Ambedkar. From this kind expression, we can imagine what a great affection & generosity Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj extended towards Dr. Ambedkar! On this, Dr. Ambedkar thanked Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj from the bottom of heart & politely said, "I am making almost all kinds of arrangements for my family in Mumbai. I would not like to give any troubles to you". This was the last meeting between the two great social reformers. (May 1920). At the time of his departure from Mumbai, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj gave a letter to Dr. Ambedkar, which was to be delivered to his friend in England, Sir Alfred Peas. In this letter Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj had requested Peas to cooperate with Dr. Ambedkar in his work of awakening public opinion in England for making it favourable on the side of Non-Brahmins in India.

Dr. Ambedkar ran a public awakening movement in England for the rights of non-Brahmins. At the same time, he was taking care of his studies. Here in India, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj & Dalit Communities were anxiously waiting for his arrival to the motherland. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was very particular about how to help to increase Dr. Ambedkar's reputation & prestige among people even in his absence. In February 1922, an All-India Conference of Untouchable Communities was held at Delhi. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was the Chief Guest of this conference. In his speech, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj remembered Dr. Ambedkar. He said in

honour of Dr. Ambedkar, "In fact, the honour of being the chief guest of this conference should have gone to the most enthusiastic & well-educated Dr. Ambedkar. He is a more learned & proud young man than me. He has worked hard for your welfare without rest but today, he could not attend this conference, because, at present he is in England for completion of his studies".

From England, Dr. Ambedkar continued his communication with Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj with the same affection & affinity. In his letter to Maharaj (4th September 1921), he wrote that as the value of the pound in England had decreased, he faced financial difficulties, so Maharaj should send him 200 pounds for expenditure. With this request, in the same letter at the end he wrote: "I hope you are in the pink of your health. We require your presence very badly because you are the pillar of a progressing social, democratic great movement in India". The great movement began by Mahatma Phule & continued up to Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was a mass movement for emancipation, development of untouchables in order to establish social democracy. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was a real strong supporter of this movement. The reference to which Dr. Ambedkar made was appropriate in all respects. Dr. Ambedkar, who was in London, received the heartbreaking news of the demise of such a great supporter of the social democratic movement. He was greatly shocked & moved by this news. He wrote a letter of condolence to Rajaram Maharaj, the elder son of Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati in which he says. "This critical incident has been extremely painful and sorrowful for me for two reasons. His death deserted me from my personal great friend & the untouchable community lost its greatest well-wisher. I myself greatly grieve the death of Maharaj & participate in your widowed Maharani's unfathomable sorrow & express my condolence with my whole heart" Dr. Ambedkar, even after the death of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj, always remembered him respectfully & fondly. He always referred to him with utmost respect. When in 1940 he had come to Kolhapur for the Dalit Praja Parishad (Dalit Public Conference), he said in his speech, "One thing is clear about Kolhapur that I myself & my untouchable community are very proud of it. It was in Kolhapur itself that Shahu Maharaj raised & founded the democratic system".

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Historic conflict that shaped Maharashtra's movement



The Vedokta episode, which shaped Maharashtra's history, also gave a new progressive direction to the society. Read on...

Sanvidhan

Many schools of thought were born in India while Indian culture was developing. On several occasions, there was healthy interaction between them. Of course, there were several conflicts too. The history of conflicts in this great nation has repeated cycles of revolution and counter revolutions. The Brahminical system tried to suppress the feelings of the common people during the constantly ongoing conflicts between inequality and equality, truth and falsehood, science and pretence. However, rebellious voices emerged from the masses on every such occasion. Names of many people fighting for equality, right from Bhagvan Tathagat Buddha to the crusaders struggling for equality in the present day are listed in the long history of our nation.

Chhatrapati Rajarshi Shahu of the Princely State of Karveer has carved out a special place in the heart of the masses due to the vital role played by him in the conflict. His life and work are akin to a pious scripture chronicling the social revolution. His decisions on matters in a variety of fields such as religion, education, sports, politics, empowerment of women, and social justice have been in the interest of the common masses. He strongly believed in the use of power to protect the interest of the common people and always strived to use his royal power in the public interest. Therefore, the people of the present day too feel intimacy

for him.

When the Vedokta episode, a historic raging controversy, was unfolding, the question that perturbed him was if he was forced to throat down humiliation by the Brahmanical system despite being the Chhatrapati, a crowned king, how much insults the masses would be forced to suffer. The very noteworthy fact was that he too was forced to struggle. However, his struggle energised the movement of the Ambedkarites and those in favour of the common masses (Bahujanvadi). They could find inspiration from this conflict and define terms like 'self-dignity' and 'self-esteem'. Following this conflict, the school of the Society of Truth Seekers (Satyashodhak) got a shot in the arm in the princely state of Karveer. Today, in the present progressive era, even as we are striving to consolidate our scientific, rational thoughts, the parallel system based on inequality too is gaining strength. We must reflect on the historical conflict during the Vedokta episode to strengthen the progressive movements.

As the belief in the Vedic religion goes, the Vedas emerged on the earth before the human race. They are believed to be of divine origin (Apaurusheya) and as per the belief, ascertaining the exact period when they originated is extremely difficult. Vedic religion professes the opinion that the Vedas are the first specimen of literature in the world. Initially, the Vedas were not divided into parts. However, over the course of time, they were divided into four parts – namely, the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Saam Veda and Atharva Veda.



Subsequently, these four Vedas were also divided into branches. There are eight branches of the Rig Veda, eighty-six branches of the Yajur Veda, one thousand branches of the Saam Veda and nine branches of the Atharva Veda. Similarly, the Puranas also proved to be of vital importance in broadening the base of the religion and extending the outreach of the religion to other religions. However, as per the belief in the Vedic religion, the Puranas are of secondary importance compared to the Vedas. In short, in the Vedic religion-based system, the system works based on the Vedas.

Before the Vedokta episode involving Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Vedic Brahmins had raised questions about the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj too being a 'Kshatriya' and refused to carry out rituals of his coronation. Similarly, citing that no 'Kshatriya' was left alive in Kaliyug since Parshuram had 'eradicated the Kshatriyas from the back of the earth on 21 occasions', it was also alleged that Chhatrapati Pratapsingh, the King of Satara was not a 'Kshatriya'. However, Chhatrapati Pratapsingh assembled knowledgeable Brahmins from all over the country and obtained a ruling from them that he was a 'Kshatriya'. 'Siddhanta Vijay', a volume delving into this particular subject, was also authored. Maharaj Sayajirao Gaikwad of the princely state of Baroda was also forced to face humiliation in a manner similar to the attempts to insult Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Chhatrapati Pratapsingh.

While Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad was ruling over the princely state of Baroda in the year 1896 _ four years before the Vedokta episode _ Pandit Shivdatta Shastri-Joshi had pointed out to the king that the rites there were being performed as per the rituals prescribed in the Puranas (Puranokta). In response to this, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad collected pieces of evidence of his being a 'Kshatriya' through noted historian Sardesai and issued the order to other Marathas to collect similar proofs.

Rites in the princely state of Kolhapur were also being performed as per the rituals prescribed in the Vedas (Vedokta) before the Vedokta episode. At the time when Babasaheb Maharaj was ruling over the princely state of Kolhapur, the royal prince of his court, Pandit Raghunath Shastri Parvate had misled him arguing that the kings of the state had been remaining issueless since they were performing the rituals in Vedic manner (Vedokta). A religious-minded Babasaheb Maharaj had agreed with Pandit Raghunath Shastri Parvate and stopped performing the rituals in a Vedic manner (Vedokta). Of course, the sole intention


of the king behind taking the decision was to father a child of his own and not to compromise his status as a 'Kshatriya'.

What exactly was the Vedokta episode?

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj too was religiously minded. He bore a tattoo of Lord Shiva on one hand. His family prominently worshipped the goddess (Shakti Pooja). He would perform the pooja of Lord Shiva every day in his routine life. When the Maharaja went to the ghat (stone structure of staircases built to make river bed accessible) of the Panchaganga River to perform rituals of a religious bath performed regularly in the pious month of Kartik (Kartik Snana) in the year 1900, the royal priest appointed to perform the rituals for the royal family, Narayan Rao Rajopadhye recited the Mantras prescribed for Kartik Snana in the Puranas (Puranokta) although he was required to be reciting the Mantras prescribed for Kartik Snan in the Vedas (Vedokta) for the Kartik Snana of a Kshatriya king. Besides, it is essential for the priest to have bathed before reciting the Mantras prescribed in the Vedas (Vedokta) for the bath of a Kshatriya king. However, Rajopadhye recited the Mantras without having a bath himself. Rajaram Shastri Bhagvat, the king's brother Shrimant Bapusaheb Ghatge of Kagal and brother-in-law Mamasahab Khanvilkar, who had studied Sanskrit and Vedic rituals (Veda Shastra) and who were present at the occasion, pointed it out to the king. When an explanation was sought from the royal priest concerned, Rajopadhye said, "The Mantras prescribed in the Vedas (Vedokta) need not be recited for the 'Shudras', nor was it essential to a priest to have a bath before reciting the mantras." Controlling his rage over the arrogant answer, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj started collecting evidence of historic documents. He even sent some of his representatives to Satara to obtain information about the volume 'Siddhant Vijay'. On the contrary, an unrelenting Rajopadhye too started preparing for the ensuing conflict instead of repenting.

The King's fight against the Brahmin class

Although the king expected Rajopadhye to feel remorse and waited for him to lament, no positive development took place in this direction. Instead, Rajopadhye launched a campaign to poison the mind of the Brahmin class against Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Moreover, the priestly class of Kolhapur outcast Narayan Bhatt Sevkar, a well-educated priest, for performing the sacramental rites to be performed in the month of Shravana (Shravani ceremony) at the palace of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. In yet another offensive move,



Rajopadhye intentionally remained absent for the rituals of the king's mother performed at the palace at Fort Panhala during the king's stay there.

Subsequently, Lokmanya Tilak came to know about the matter. Tilak then published the Kesari newspaper. Accordingly, he wrote two editorials extending his support to Rajopadhye and published them in Kesari under the headlines Vedoktache Khul (1) and Vedoktache Khul (2) on 22nd October 1901 and 29th October 1901 respectively. These editorials argued that since the ability has come to an end with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, others should not claim the unwarranted. Further, supporting the stance adopted by Tilak, several learned Brahmins too towed the same line during the Vedokta episode.

In response to all these offences of Rajopadhye, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj served three consecutive notices on him. The language of all these notices was extremely decent and reticent. Rajopadhye chose not to answer the first two notices. However, he gave his reply to the third notice, which was a show cause notice, sent on 1st May 1902 through the royal court. Rajopadhye did not miss to display his Brahminical cunningness in that reply too. Most importantly, he did not back off from the stand taken by him. His explanation too maintained that religious rituals cannot be performed as prescribed in the Vedas (Vedokta) for the king.

Finally, after many deliberations, the decision to remove him from the post of priest for the royal family was taken. When Rajopadhye realised that the king was firm on his decision, he submitted his first application to the Political Agent for the princely state of Kolhapur and Southern Maharashtra Country Lieutenant Colonel W B Ferris on 3rd January 1903 praying that the king be advised to continue his grant (Inam). However, this application came to be rejected citing the ground that there was nothing warranting the intervention of a Political Agent in the matter since the grant has been cancelled for his failure to provide the religious services.

Subsequently, the Government of Bombay too rejected the application observing that the king was well within his powers while taking the decision. Later on, a detailed petition filed on 5th January 1905 and a supplementary application filed before the Government of India (General Lord Curzon) as an additional measure also came to be rejected on 9th May 1905 citing that the king was competent to take the decision exercising his powers and that the Government of India does not intend to

intervene in the decision taken by him.

All in all, Rajopadhye had clearly lost on all counts in every legal action initiated by him. However, the entire class of priests was against the recital of Vedic Mantras (Vedokta). They kept conspiring and exploiting every pressure tactic available to them to press their stand. Although the Mutt of Shankaracharya situated in the princely state of Kolhapur was enjoying a perpetual grant, Vasudeo Shastri Bhilavadikar was opposing the recital of Vedic Mantras (Vedokta). Subsequently, he installed one of his disciples, Kashinath Buva Brahmanalkar, at the cardinal seat (Peetham). The king's approval was essential for such an action. However, he just ignored the compliance of the condition. Therefore, the grant for the cardinal seat (Peetham) was frozen.

Later on, some Brahmins submitted an application to the Shankaracharya praying for an appropriate ruling to determine the issue of whether the king was a "Kshatriya" and prescribing an appropriate manner to perform rituals for him. The Shankaracharya gave his ruling on 10th July 1905 observing that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj belonged to the lineage of a 'Kshatriya' family and ruling that there was no obstruction to perform rituals for him as per the manner prescribed in the Vedas (Vedokta).

Overall, this entire period of approximately six years was full of conflict. The crowned king had to suffer extreme humiliation during the period. A great amount of false propaganda was done against him through writings published in various periodicals and newspapers. He had to undergo this tremendous mental agony at a crucial stage in his life because of the orthodox Brahmins bearing the conformist point of view.

Seeking recognition from the Brahmins or asserting his 'Kshatriya' origin was not the focal point of the stand taken by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj over this period of six years. The king fought against the tendencies harbouring inequality. This struggle lit a flare of self-dignity, awakening and truth in the common masses (Bahujan). Subsequently, several social and administrative reforms were made in the princely state of Karveer too keeping this view in mind. Of course, that boosted the strength of Mahatma Phule's Satyashodhak movement ("Society of Truth Seekers"). Indeed, the Vedokta episode not only shaped Maharashtra's history but also gave a new progressive direction to the society.

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Eternal Essence of Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati

Sankalp



On June 26, 1874, a child was born who changed the shape of Indian history and culture. The child, who later went on to become the Maharaja of Kolhapur. This isn't a tale of an ancient ruler but of a contemporary one. A ruler who didn't rule at an arm's length but brought visible changes in the society.

The society as we see and live in today has clear imprints of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's wonderful regime. A regime that lasted for just 28 years but formed the bedrock for Indian societal changes for more than a century. This is not an ordinary tale but it is the story of Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati, a ruler whose nearly three-decade rule transformed the way India and Indians view society. A rule that changed perspective, built narratives and transformed the way we live our lives. A rule that broke taboos and stereotypes. A rule that uplifted the downtrodden, finished predatory practices, challenged the norms and served as a golden regime for future generations to follow and emulate. A rule that is a case study unto itself for societal harmony, societal transformations and for equitable and just society.

However, before we move onto the miraculous transformation brought forth by Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati, let's start by



understanding his life story. Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati was born in Kagal village and was named 'Yashwantrao' by his parents Jaisingh Rao and Radhabai. His mother died when he was just three-years-old. She belonged to the royal family of Mudhol. His father, a village chief, took care of his early education. When Shahu Maharaj was 10 years old, he was adopted by Queen Anandibai, widow of King Shivaji IV, of the princely state of Kolhapur. After adoption he was educated in Dharwad and his formal education was completed at the Rajkumar College, Rajkot. He took administrative lessons from Sir Stuart Fraser, a representative of the Indian Civil Services. He married Lakshmi Bai Khanvilkar in 1891. He had four children from her. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj ascended the throne in April 1894 and ruled till 1922. During his rule, he promoted education for all, reservation for the weaker sections, city development, dam development and sports like Kusti (wrestling). He earned the title of 'Rajarshi' from Koormi Kshatriya Sabha at Kanpur. During the fag end of his life, he was grief stricken by the death of his younger son Shivaji in 1918. He died of cardiac arrest on May 6, 1922, at the age of 48.

Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati was more than a ruler in history. He was an ideology that works on societal harmony and well-being for all. Shahu Maharaj's rule positively affected all quarters of the society. He was a pioneer in educational reforms, caste reservations, Vedic education, women upliftment and development. He was innovative in his policy making and broke many societal stereotypes. Shahu Maharaj introduced reservation in India. On 26 July 1902, he issued a notification in the Government Gazette that reserved 50% of government posts for backward class candidates.

This was a historic step that changed the landscape of India's society. It challenged the long-standing monopoly of a few and opened the Government service to all. Moreover, he worked extensively for abolishing untouchability. He released a Manifesto against Observance of Untouchability, 1919. This majorly ordered his subjects to promote equal treatment to all members of the society. There were no restrictions on anyone for use of public utilities like wells and ponds, as well as establishments like schools and hospitals. No discrimination or untouchability was allowed in any of these spaces.

He introduced the inter-caste and Inter-religion Marriage Act of 1919, through which inter-caste marriage and inter-religion marriage was allowed in the society. He also started a "Shree Shivaji Vaidic School" to train

non-Brahmin priests. This was a very novel experiment aimed at caste reforms in Hinduism. He also worked for nomadic tribes of his region. There was a nomadic tribe referred to by British rulers as 'criminal caste'. People from the so-called 'criminal caste' were compulsorily made to register their presence with the village administrator every day. Shahu Maharaj not only ended the practice but also offered them Government jobs to improve their plight in the society. Moreover, Shahu Maharaj abolished bonded labour. The weaker sections of the society were regularly engaged in bonded labour. Shahu Maharaj not only abolished it but also made sure that the labourers get their dues as well. Shahu Maharaj was way ahead of his time in terms of social reforms. He was greatly influenced by Jyotiba Phule in many of the changes, which he brought to the society. While many during his time were still contemplating on how to eradicate social evils, he codified laws and implemented policies to bring visible changes on ground.

Shahu Maharaj's work in the field of education is also commendable. He passed the Compulsory Primary Education Act of 1917 through which primary education was made compulsory to all irrespective of caste and creed. He also made education free for all and imposed a fine of Rs 1 on those who did not follow this. He opened hostels for various sects and religions to promote education in the society. Moreover, he introduced scholarships for students of weaker sections of the society to remove the financial burden from them. He also opened schools to introduce 'Vedic' learning to all castes of the society and promote Sanskrit and Vedic learning to all sections of the society.

To include administrative learnings, he introduced administrative learnings to village heads. He was very modern in his approach for learning. He believed in mass education and removed all caste and sect hurdles prevalent at that time. His administration spent heavily on education. Between 1917 and 1922, he allotted 23% of his budget for education to all. In comparison to Bombay presidency budget of Rs 77,000, Kolhapur princely state allocated Rs 1 lakh between 1917 to 1922. He understood the need for educating society for a better future. He stressed on education as a means for upliftment of the poor and the downtrodden. He focused on bringing social reforms through transformation in education. He focused on shattering religious dogmas and stereotypes through innovative policies and practices.

Shahu Maharaj was also instrumental in improving the plight of women in the society. He



advocated women education and equal rights for women. He passed the Law for Prevention of Cruelty against Women, 1919, through which women were given a right to raise their voice against social injustices against them. He also allowed widow remarriage and legalised divorce to improve the plight of women in the society. He banned the 'Devadasi' pratha because of exploitation of women involved in it. He also worked extensively in the area of child marriage and made all possible efforts to stop child marriage in his regime. Shahu Maharaj also passed a law against domestic violence in 1919 to prevent the domestic abuse of women.



Building of Saraswatibai GSB Vidyarthi Vastigruh 1915

Apart from this, he focused a lot on women education for their upliftment. He introduced free education for girls from the scheduled castes. He opened schools and colleges dedicated to women to provide them an environment of learning free from the hustle of society. He also helped bright students through scholarships and also helped few girl students to study abroad. Shahu Maharaj through his all-round policy tried to eradicate the social evils prevalent against women and at the same time focused on their upliftment through education.

His policy was focused on curbing the atrocities against women and also inhibiting practices which served as an embargo on their growth and development. Shahu Maharaj realised the need for developmental activity along with social reforms. He resolved to construct the Radha Nagari Dam, construction of which started in 1907 and finally completed in 1935. He was instrumental in building railways in Kolhapur. Also, he built avenues for Kusti in the region. He was responsible for the rejuvenation of Rankala lake. He built Shahu

Chhatrapati Spinning and Weaving Mill, to promote industry in the area. He also set up a dedicated marketplace for farmers and weavers of the region. He also brought in a credit system to provide financial assistance to farmers and also established the King Edward Agricultural Institute to instruct farmers in increasing crop yield and related techniques.

Shahu Maharaj was instrumental in promoting economic activity in his region. He brought in technology and also ran an efficient credit and market system to mobilize the economy of his region. His vision of Radha Nagari Dam was pivotal in making Kolhapur self-sufficient in water supply. He was a great visionary who understood the necessity of development for the upliftment of the masses. The very principle which we see today being reiterated by many politicians.

The life and rule of Shahu Maharaj is an inspiration to the contemporary generation as well as the future ones. His work holds the same importance today as it did a century ago. The greatness of Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati lies in his timeless vision. His ability to take on societal norms and improve it for the better. He has given us jewels of thought to ponder upon for the betterment of the society. Shahu Maharaj was the first person to codify reservation in India. Many before him had discussed the need for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the system but he streamlined it through laws and institutional changes. This is one of the many path breaking changes he introduced. From setting up hostels for different sects to bonded labour eradication, Shahu Maharaj broke one malpractice after another through innovative policy making and its implementation. This is the need of the hour in this transforming India. Even after 74 years of independence, India still struggles with various social stigmas and institutional colonial hangovers. The society today is ruptured by red tapism, inefficient public offices, colonial education, eighteenth century laws and institutions. All this needs radical changes for the betterment of the society. New and innovative policy making is the only way to loosen the threads which are holding the country back. The leaders of tomorrow for a better future need to envision the necessary implementation of technology in policy making and implementation along with its pros and cons. The vision for the future does not demand incremental changes but requires exponential changes. Just like Shahu Maharaj it requires a visionary to break the stereotype and red tapism for a better future for one and all.

Today, like 125 years ago, education is the



biggest tool for empowerment. Shahu Maharaj focused a lot on education among all sections of the society irrespective of the caste, creed, religion and race for bridging the crevices of the society. Shahu Maharaj back in the early 1900s promoted free and compulsory education to all and India had to wait for 93 years after him to make the same decision. He spent heavily on education as much as 23%. Today, the expenditure in the budget is still in initial numbers. However, more than the traditional divide, society today is facing many new forms of divide, the most prominent of which is the digital and the economic divide. Both digital and economic divide today demand new policy and structural changes. A person sitting in rural India does not have the necessary amenities to even study properly. The situation has worsened due to Covid, where digital education has seen a boom, many had to drop out because of not having proper technology. From payment to education, with everything going digital in the future, it is necessary to set up institutions to spread digital literacy in the nation. Also, necessary equipment along with technology need to reach the remotest person for creating a prosperous and just society. Economic divide is also a reality which needs a revisit. Employment opportunities along with industry need to reach Tier I, Tier II and Tier III cities of India to provide necessary employment and well-being to all sections of the society. To achieve this, leaders need to have a foresight like Shahu Maharaj and eradicate the societal embargos for creating a just and equitable society.

India needs a visionary like Shahu Maharaj who can realise the importance of necessary changes. Shahu Maharaj brought reservation in India seeing the necessity for it. After that India included affirmative action in the Constitution through Article 15 and Article 16 of the Constitution. What is more important than the act of Shahu Maharaj is the purpose behind it. The purpose was to break stereotypes and open an equal playing ground for the downtrodden. He was a revolutionary, who pictured a better society with a structural change that was the need of the hour. There is a lot to learn from him in this. Society has changed dramatically since then. The definition of poor and downtrodden has subsequently changed as well. But, the politicians of today are still stuck in the old age formula to win over votes. Reservation today for politicians is more for votes than actual upliftment of the downtrodden. This is a major inhibition for them in bringing the necessary changes. Though I must concede that democracy is different

from monarchy, however, now more than ever it is important to identify new systems of affirmative actions for a just society. Affirmative action can be based on caste, economy, region or even religion. All have its merits and demerits but what is important is to identify what the society needs right now. Bringing necessary affirmative action was a vision of Shahu Maharaj and the necessity depends on the times we live in. Identifying the current necessity and then acting on it is an important lesson for all to imbibe.

Shahu Maharaj's life is an epitome of how to stay true to one's culture and heritage. He brought Vedic education to the non-brahmins. He believed in spreading Vedic education and also opened up Vedic pathshalas to educate on Vedic rituals. He even banned cow slaughter. He promoted Arya Samaj and Theosophical society. He also promoted gurukul education for Arya Samaj. He helped Bal Gangadhar Tilak in the publication of 'Geeta Rahasya'. Shahu Maharaj, even though received modern education, was deeply rooted to his civilisational. He understood the importance of spreading Vedic education in society. Not restricting Vedic education to Brahmins, he wanted everyone to imbibe the treasure of Vedic knowledge. This was his true wisdom. He understood the demands of the Hindu society and used it for the welfare of all. This is also an important lesson for the future leaders to understand the importance of being true to their roots. It will help in understanding the problem faced by the society at large. Using societal behaviour and culture for everyone's benefit should be the goal for the future generations.

Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati more than a man, is an idea, an institution, an ideology. He is an example to live by and a principle to die for. He aimed for an inclusive society free from malice and discrimination. He provides us with a set of ideals which are as relevant today as they were a century ago. The current year is the death centenary year of Shahu Maharaj. We celebrate this year with his goals, ideas, vision and ambition that still inspire millions. The essence of his presence penetrates our soul and his impact in the society is eternal. His life on earth has worked for our betterment in the past, it influences our present and it will very well shape our future.

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Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and education

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj realized the facts about education as merit good. Even though Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj thought that if we provided the education for only a few people we should allot the administrative duties to the few, which will be dangerous to society. Hence, the Chhatrapati Shahu decided to provide education as compulsory merit good to the all. The author feels that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj has applied the concept and its applications in this regard.

Dattatrya


Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was the Maharaja or the king of the Indian princely state of Kolhapur and was known as the great social reformer. He wanted society to be based upon equality, justice, liberty and fraternity. He was the first person, who passed many laws for the upliftment of women as stopping parade system, child marriage, sati system, dowry system etc. He was the first person, who granted maternity leave to women by making law. He was the first person who passed laws for women to stop them from working in mines. He was the first person, who passed re-marriage registration going against Manusmriti.

He patronized Satya Shodak Samaj. He was the first person, who made primary education compulsory and free by making law. He was the first person to construct hostels and schools for the downtrodden. He was the first person, who provided 50% reservation to downtrodden by making law. He helped Dr. B. R. Ambedkar with finance and sent him abroad for higher education, who provided all the human rights to downtrodden and women in the constitution. He provided scholarships to the students to get

education. He provided good jobs to backwards who were excellent in their academic career. He was the father of the green revolution in India. For this he constructed laws in India for productivity. He formed various laws against customs, casteism and untouchability. He tried to develop the scientific attitude of people. He was the first person, who allowed Shudras to enter Government dispensaries and wanted doctor's to be punished if they developed discrimination. He was the first person who made arrangements for the education of Adivasi and constructed houses for them in villages. He was the founder of labour unions in India. He was the first Indian who did a lot for downtrodden women.

Strategy of Educational Policy

1. To make primary education available for all and then, if possible, secondary education.
2. Positive discrimination in favors of the disadvantaged classes while making education available to them.
3. To open Boarding Houses in the city for students of all communities coming from rural areas.



4. To arrange for employment of the first learners in the backward classes, so that their faith in education, as a means of advancement, was not shaken.

On assuming powers, Shahu undertook an extensive tour of the state to know at first hand the start of things in the education system. He, particularly, identified the village offices, chavadis – the temples, that could be one kirtikar to it.

Development of Universal and Free Primary Education:

Brahmanism did not allow downtrodden and women to get education but Shahu Maharaj wanted downtrodden and women to get free from educational slavery. Therefore, he implemented free and compulsory law in state. In 1896, he opened many primary schools, in which downtrodden and women could get education easily. He appointed many teachers for this purpose. He sanctioned Rs. one lakh for this scheme. He tried his best to spread primary education. He tried to open one school in every village and he suggested that schools should be run by that upliftment of the backward class and so they tried to deviate him from his purpose but Shahu Maharaj was intelligent enough to ignore their useless demand.

Shahu Maharaj always wanted an equal society. He provided facilities to scheduled castes and non-Brahmins for education, employment etc. which was against the prestige of Brahmins and so they rebelled against it.

Initiatives for Compulsory and Free Education:

The underprivileged people are not aware about the benefit to them of getting education. However, they were aware of the sacrifice required and obstacles for taking education in that period, but they were not aware about the benefits to them in terms of future benefits (Bhagat, 1999). Therefore, with education, as with other merit goods, there is a significant information failure in terms of expected benefits. There is no evidence about the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. But the author feels that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj has applied the concept and its applications in this regard. He realized the facts about education as merit good. Even though Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj thought that if we provided the education for only a few people we should allot the administrative duties to the few, which will be dangerous to society. Hence, the Chhatrapati Shahu decided to provide education as compulsory merit good to the all. He was very familiar with the concentrated power of administration of bureaucracy in

the hands of forward communities in those days. So, he tried to spread knowledge in all societies before the transfer of power and made education compulsory to all.

Inclusiveness of Free and Compulsory Education:

In general, it's found that the bureaucratic and administrative power is always in the hands of educated and economically empowered people. But there is a close association between education and economic empowerment. He examined the strong relationship between education and economic empowerment status.

Women Education:

The history doesn't focus on the efforts taken by the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj for women's education. However, he tried to provide education to the women belonging to the backward communities. On March 3, 1913 he announced Radhabai Akkasaheb Maharaj Scholarships and Shri Nandkumar Maharani, Bhavnagar Scholarships for lady students in Kolhapur State. That time the backward community girls' hesitating to take education at the schools and colleges. Hence, to solve this problem Maharaj had appointed the lady servants belonging to backward communities to ensure lady students. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj also took efforts to provide English language education to the girl students, during 1911 to 1914 total 8369 girls had been educated through this system. For this purpose, six lady teachers were deputed for training to female training College and one lady teacher from the Matric Class has been awarded scholarship on the condition that she undertakes to serve in this State.

Technical and Industrial Education:

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was aware about the different types of education needed to the society. He thought that different people have different needs to get educated either doing agriculture, industrial work, profession, trade etc. Hence, he expressed his opinion at public addresses that different communities want different sorts of institutions. He mentioned that there is a need for military education, arts education, including technical or industrial education. Chhatrapati Shahu also advised the workers to be educated because it is very easy to unite an educated society.

Agricultural Education:

The importance of agricultural education in the state of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had started at the King Edward Agricultural Institute, Kolhapur. This institute was specially meant for education and training in modern agriculture. For this purpose, he collected a donation of Rs.



30,000 and deposited it in the state treasury at six % of interest rate while having annual Rs. 2100 of interest income and he himself added Rs. 1200 per year for the appointment of better teachers in agriculture. Nowadays agriculture is becoming methodical and to get success in regards to agricultural education in India. He didn't believe only the importance of agriculture but also the agricultural education.

Support for Higher Education:

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj has recognized the importance of not only primary education but also higher education. During the 1910 – 1911 he sent 15 Students and 1911 – 1912 in 10 students for taking higher education at Bombay, Pune, Madras and other places (Latthe, 1924). In regard to higher education Shahu Maharaj not only sent these students for conventional education but also professional education in medical Science. During the 1913 – 1914 he sent students to Medical College, Bombay, Medical School Poona, and Deccan College, Pune.

The history doesn't focus on the efforts taken by the Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj for women's education. However, he tried to provide education to the women belonging to the backward communities. On March 3, 1913 he announced Radhabai Akkasaheb Maharaj Scholarships and Shri Nandkumar Maharani, Bhavnagar Scholarships for lady students in Kolhapur State.

Conclusion


Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj stressed on universalization of education for all, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex and poverty. Shahu Maharaj had done a lot in his life to reform society, to fight for establishing equality in society. As he wanted education for all, the same is the motto of the present education system, to provide education to all. Following the principle of Shahu Maharaj, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has compiled the constitution in which we have provision for free and compulsory education and universalization of education in the constitution in the article 45 but the target of this article is yet to be achieved which was to be achieved within ten years from the commencement of the constitution. Thirty crore people of India are illiterate. 32,000 of Schools are without buildings

and students. Two lakh schools are without buildings. There is only one teacher each in one lakh and 75 thousand schools. According to the Kapil Sibbal report, 36 crore children leave their schools after 5th class. 13 crores have not seen the face of schools yet.

Higher education is out of range for the poor people because it is very expensive. In our constitution the provision was made that free and compulsory education will be provided within 10 years from the commencement of the constitution but till now this target has not been achieved rather we are far from the achievement of this aim. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is going on, which shows that we are still behind to achieve what our ancestors had thought for. Even USA has rechecked the nations of the world and analyzed that if masses are to be educated to the extent; their potentialities are to be converted in their capabilities. So, there is still a need for the philosophy of Shahu Maharaj and is very much relevant in present time also. Even today govt. is framing various policies keeping in view the ideas of Shahu Maharaj.

Unless political democracy is change into social democracy based upon the principles of justice, cooperation, fraternity, liberty and equality, unless caste system is abolished, unless fair and impartial policies are framed on the part of government, unless exploitation against women, minorities, weaker section of the society is abolished, unless representative is given according to their number, unless male dominated society is abolished, unless cruelty against these is abolished, unless constitution of India implemented seriously, unless right to education is implemented properly, unless all Indian become educated, which is the property of a nation, unless investment in the field of education is considered the best investment for the development of our nation, unless expenditure on education is increased at least up to the extent which has been mentioned into our nation, unless expenditure on education is increase at least up to the extent which has been mentioned into our constitution (6% of the GDP was to be spent but at present less than 2% is being spent on education) unless felling of universal brotherhood is developed, unless new social system without exploitation, without discrimination and without sorrow is implemented the ideology of Shahu Maharaj will remain relevant because for this cause Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj fought for the whole life.

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The visionary architect of Modern Bahujan India

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj, the ruler of the princely state of Kolhapur, was not just a king; he was a compassionate human being, whose efforts significantly shaped modern India. He is particularly remembered for his unwavering support for the education and upliftment of the Bahujan community, including the Dalits. One of his notable contributions are assisting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in pursuing his education, thus playing a crucial role in shaping the future of one of India's greatest social reformers.

Shahu Maharaj ascended to the throne of Kolhapur in 1894, during a period when Indian society was deeply entrenched in the caste system. Recognizing education as a powerful tool for social change, he initiated several reforms aimed at providing educational opportunities to the marginalized sections of society. Under his reign, the number of non-Brahmin students in Kolhapur increased from 8,088 in 1894 to 21,027 by 1921-22. Similarly, the number of Dalit



students rose from 234 to 2,163 during the same period. These figures illustrate Shahu Maharaj's commitment to breaking the barriers of caste-based discrimination and promoting educational inclusivity.

Shahu Maharaj's support for Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a testament to his forward-thinking vision and humanistic values. Despite being a king, he travelled from Kolhapur to Mumbai in 1919 to congratulate Dr. Ambedkar, a gesture that underscored his genuine commitment to social justice and equality. This act was significant not only because of the travel involved but also because it broke social norms, highlighting the importance he placed on recognizing and supporting the contributions of marginalized leaders.

In the Mangaon Parishad, Shahu Maharaj proclaimed, Indian Bahujans have got their leader, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. This endorsement was a crucial moment in the Bahujan movement, as it recognized Dr. Ambedkar's leadership and paved the way for his future endeavours. Dr. Ambedkar, in turn, acknowledged Shahu

Maharaj's contributions and urged every Dalit and Bahujan to celebrate Shahu Maharaj's birthday as a national festival, signifying the deep respect and mutual admiration between the two leaders.

Shahu Maharaj's role as the chief architect of Dalit and Bahujan education is an integral part of his legacy. Following in the footsteps of Mahatma Phule, the pioneer of Bahujan education, Shahu Maharaj implemented policies that made education accessible to the underprivileged. He established hostels for students from marginalized communities and provided scholarships to ensure that financial constraints did not hinder their educational pursuits. These efforts laid a strong foundation for the Bahujan movement, ensuring that education became a means of empowerment for the oppressed sections of society.

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was the first person in India to introduce reservations for untouchables. On July 26, 1902, he issued a historic order to reserve 50% of government jobs for lower castes in his princely state of Kolhapur. This was one of the earliest instances of reservation for lower castes as a matter of state policy. His pioneering initiative was aimed at ensuring that marginalized communities had equal opportunities to participate in the administration and governance of their state, laying the groundwork for similar policies across India in later years.

Even after his death in 1922, Shahu Maharaj's impact on the Bahujan movement remained strong. The movement continued to have a significant presence in Maharashtra, particularly in the Kolhapur region, due to the robust foundation he had established. In 1950, Kolhapur witnessed the installation of the first statue of Dr. Ambedkar, a historic moment made possible by the progressive environment fostered by Shahu Maharaj. Remarkably, this installation took place while Dr. Ambedkar was still alive, reflecting the deep-rooted respect and admiration for his contributions to social justice.

Shahu Maharaj's legacy is a testament to his visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to equality, freedom, and brotherhood. His efforts in promoting education and social reform transformed Kolhapur into a beacon of progress and inclusivity. By championing the cause of the Bahujan community, Shahu Maharaj not only uplifted the marginalized sections of society but also inspired future generations to continue the fight for social justice and equality.



During the Great War, the Indian troops found themselves trapped by Turkish forces in Kut-al-Amara. Their supplies were completely exhausted, and the situation grew dire as they faced the grim prospect of slaughtering their horses for food. However, the Indian soldiers refused to eat the horse meat. They feared that if they did so, they would be ostracized upon their return to India. The soldiers were deeply concerned about the social repercussions, as consuming horse meat would violate their cultural and religious beliefs.

In this desperate situation, the British officers sent a written message to Maharaja Shahu, explaining the entire predicament. Understanding the gravity of the situation, Maharaja Shahu immediately responded with a reassuring message to the Indian troops. Maharaja Shahu's message read, "Go ahead and eat the horse meat without hesitation. I take full responsibility for your social and marital concerns. I assure you that I will personally ensure that your caste and marriage matters are taken care of when you return. I will even guarantee alliances within families related to Mine".

When the military officers read this message aloud to the starving soldiers, a wave of relief and jubilation swept through the ranks. Overcome with gratitude and hope, the troops erupted in joyous chants, praising Maharaja Shahu and the legendary Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The British officers, witnessing the profound influence of Maharaja Shahu, were astonished by his ability to transcend religious and social boundaries.

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj's life and work exemplify the power of visionary leadership in bringing about social change. His support for Dr. Ambedkar and his pioneering efforts in promoting education for the Bahujan community have left an indelible mark on Indian history. As we remember and celebrate his contributions, it is essential to continue his legacy by advocating for equality and justice for all, ensuring that his vision of an inclusive and progressive society becomes a reality. Maharaja Shahu's remarkable decree during the Great War further underscores his commitment to the well-being of his people, transcending social and religious boundaries to offer support and compassion in times of need.

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BJP's Mohan Charan Majhi elected new CM of Odisha

Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Mohan Charan Majhi has been elected as the new Chief Minister of Odisha. Majhi, a four-time tribal MLA from the Keonjhar assembly, was chosen as the Leader of the BJP Legislative Party in Odisha. He was also sworn in for the new responsibility.

In the 2024 Odisha assembly elections, Majhi secured 47.05% of the votes, defeating Minu Majhi of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), who received 40.84%. The BJP's historic victory in the state saw the party winning 78 out of 147 seats. The announcement of Majhi's election was made by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Bhubaneswar, with Union Minister Bhupender Yadav attending the meeting as an observer. Majhi will take oath as the Chief Minister of Odisha on Wednesday, June 12, at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar.

UGC enforces strict measures to curb caste discrimination

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued a stern notice to higher education institutions across India, demanding stringent actions to prevent caste-based discrimination on campuses. Following persistent reports of harassment faced by Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) students, the UGC mandates the prohibition of discriminatory acts by faculty and staff, establishment of dedicated complaint mechanisms, and the formation of grievance redressal committees.

Institutions must create a dedicated webpage for SC/ST students to lodge complaints and maintain a complaint register. Grievance redressal committees must include representatives from SC/ST/OBC communities, ensuring fair and unbiased handling of complaints. Universities are required to report compliance actions for the year 2020-21 on the UGC's University Activity Monitoring Portal (UAMP) by July 31, 2024. The notice underscores the importance of creating an inclusive environment and warns of disciplinary actions against non-compliant institutions, signalling a firm stance against caste discrimination in academia.

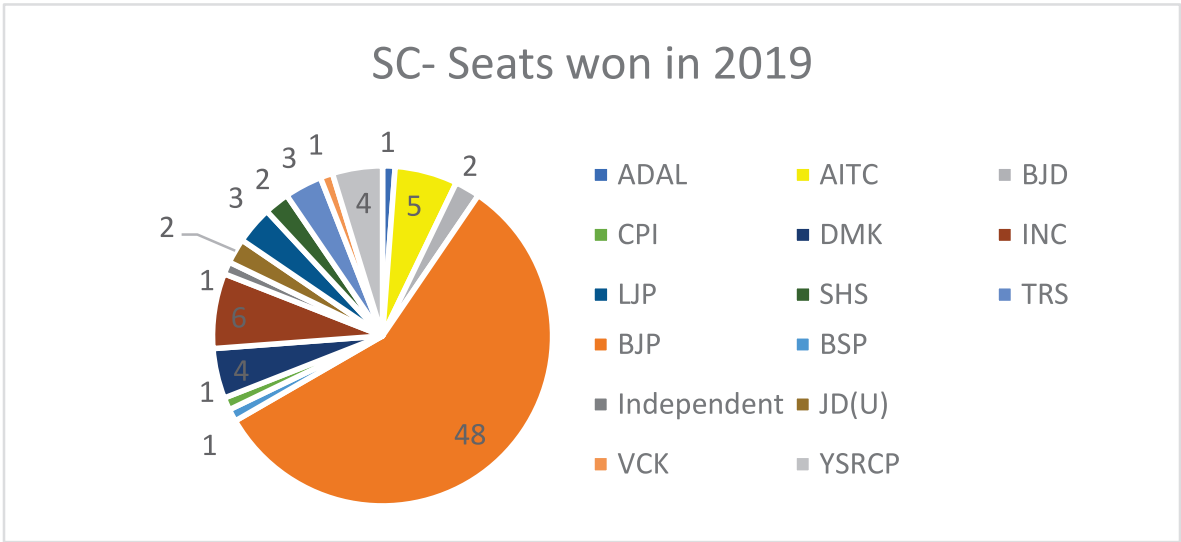
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Message of 2024 Elections

2024 Lok Sabha election has once again changed course of political scenario. It has once again marked period of coalition. However, outcome of Assembly election cannot be neglected. Odisha result has particularly shocked political pundits as it gave BJP a big boost. BJP has picked up a tribal leader for the post of Chief Minister. As against this, Andhra Pradesh result is expected as YSR Party was in trouble even if it implemented a series of welfare schemes.

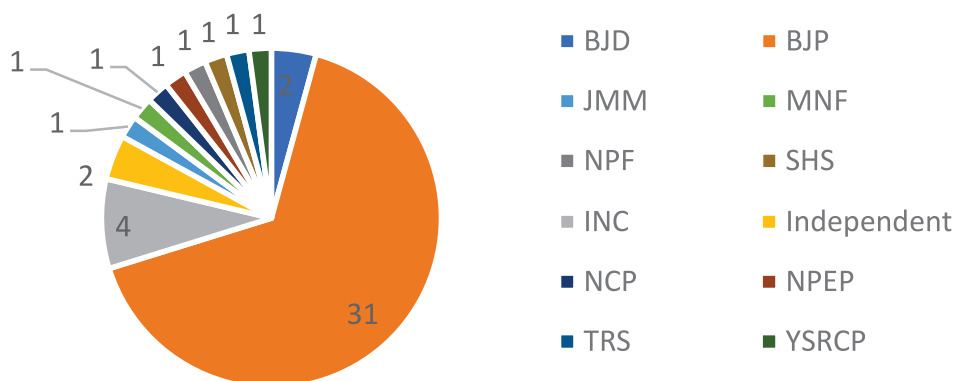
Loksabha SC- 2019



In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, 84 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. In that election, BJP won 48 seats, INC won 6 seats, All India Trinamool Congress won 5 seats, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Yuvajana Smarika Rythu Congress Party won 4 seats each, Lok Janshakti Party and Telangana Rashtra Samiti won 3 seats each, Biju Janata Dal, Janata Dal (U), and Shivsena won 2 seats each, and Apna Dal, Bahujan Samaj Party, Communist Party of India, Independent, and Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi won 1 seat each. BJP won 57% of the seats, INC won 7%, AITC won 6%, DMK and YSRCP won 5% each, LJP and TRS won 4% each, BJD, JD(U), and Shivsena won 2% each, and ADAL, BSP, CPI, Independent, and VCK won 1% each of the SC reserved constituencies.



ST- Seats won in 2019

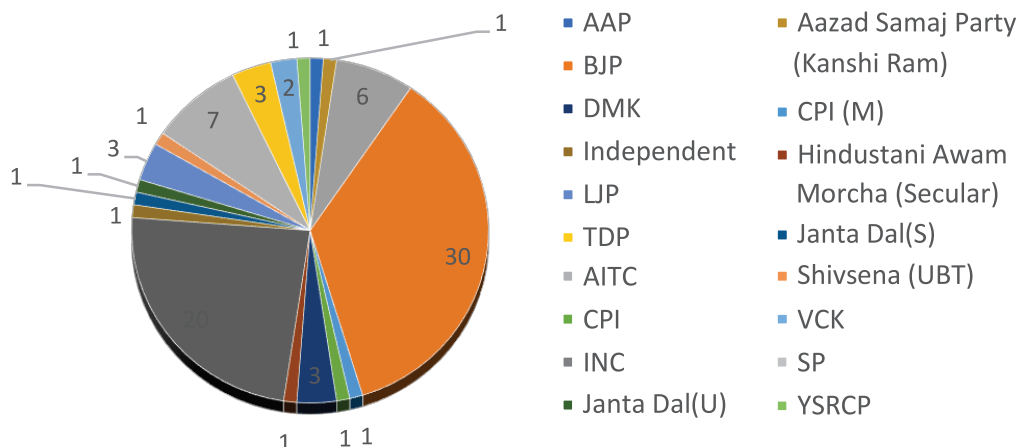


In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, there were 47 seats designated for Scheduled Tribes. Among these, the BJP secured 31 seats, while the INC clinched 4 seats. Additionally, the BJD and Independent candidates each won 2 seats. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Mizo National Front, Nationalist Congress Party, National People's Party, Naga People's Front, Shivsena, Telangana Rashtra Samiti, and Yuvajana Smarika Rythu Congress Party each secured 1 seat from these constituencies.

Breaking down the percentages, the BJP accounted for 66% of the seats, the INC for 9%, and both the BJD and Independent candidates for 4.26% each. Furthermore, the JMM, MNF, NCP, NPEP, NPF, SHS, TRS, and YSRCP collectively won 2% of the seats from the ST reserved constituencies.

Loksabha SC- 2024

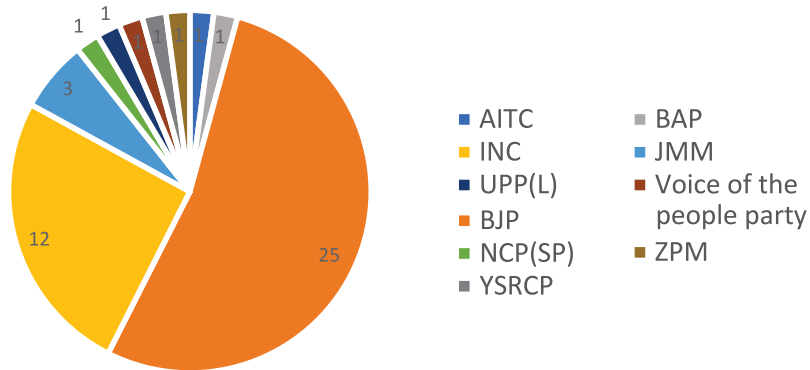
SC- Seats won in 2024



In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, 84 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. In 2024 election BJP won 30 seats, INC won 20 seats, Samajwadi Party won 7 seats, Ail India Trinmool Congress won 6 seats, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Lok Janshakti Party & Telgu Desam Party won 3 seats each, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi won 2 seats and AAP, AAzad Samaj Party(Kanshi ram), Communist Party of India(M), Communist Party of India, Hindustani Awam Morcha(Secular), Independent Candidate, Janata Dal(S), Janata Dal(U), Shivsena(UBT) and Yuvajana Smarika Rythu Congress Party won 1 seat each. BJP won 36% seats, INC won 24% seats, SP won 8%, AITC won 7%, DMK, LJP & TDP won 4%, VCK won 2% and AAP, Azad Samaj Party, CPI, CPI(M), Hindustani Awam Morcha, Independent, Janata Dal(S), Janata Dal(U), Shivsena (UBT) and YSRCP won 1% seats from SC reserved Constituencies.



ST- Seats won in 2024

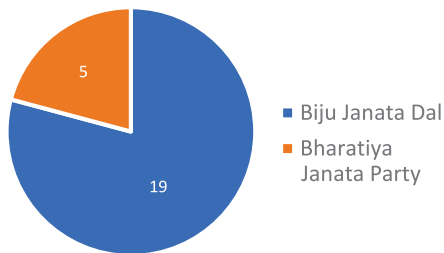


In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, there were 47 seats designated for Scheduled Tribes. Among these, the BJP secured 25 seats, while the INC clinched 12 seats. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha won 3 seats. All Indian Trinamool Congress, Bharat Adivasi Party, National Congress Party (SP), United People’s Party (Liberal), Voice of the People Party, Yuvajana Smarika Rythu Congress Party and Zoram People’s Movement, each secured 1 seat from these constituencies.

Breaking down the percentages, the BJP accounted for 53% of the seats, the INC for 26%, and JMM candidates won 6%. Furthermore, the AITC, BAP, NCP(SP) UPP(L), VPP, YSRCP and ZPM collectively won 2.13% of the seats from the ST reserved constituencies.

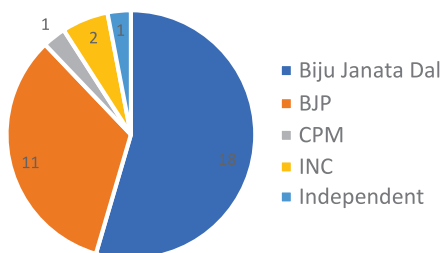
Odisha

SC- seats won in 2019

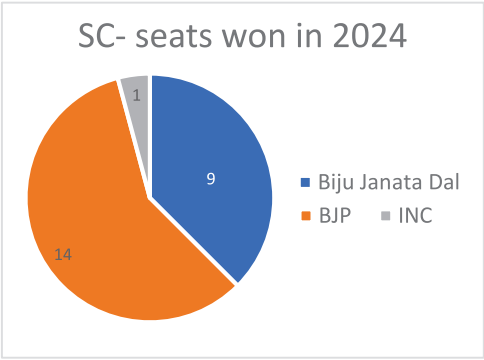


In the 2019 Odisha Assembly election, 24 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. Of these, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) won 19 seats, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured 5 seats. BJD captured 79% of the SC reserved seats, while BJP won 21% of these seats.

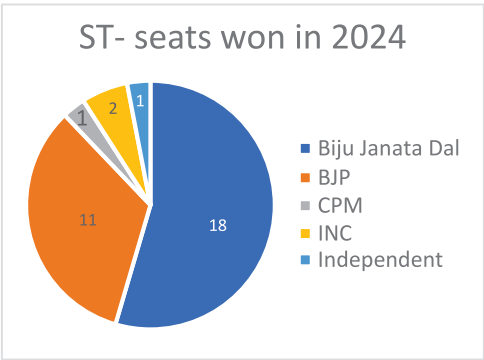
ST- seats won in 2019



In the 2019 Odisha Assembly election, 33 seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Of these, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) won 18 seats, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured 11 seats, the Indian National Congress (INC) captured 2 seats, and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and an independent candidate each won 1 seat. BJD won 55% of the ST reserved seats, BJP won 33%, INC won 6%, and both CPI(M) and the independent candidate won 3% of these seats respectively.

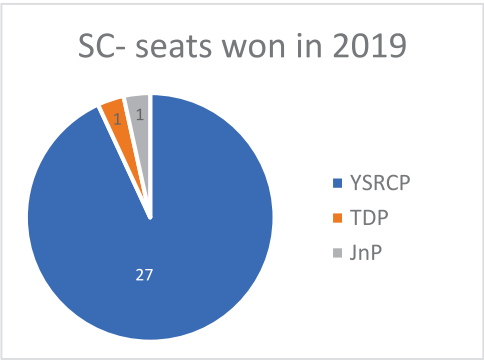


In the 2024 Odisha Assembly election, 24 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. Of these, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) won 9 seats, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured 14 seats, and the Indian National Congress (INC) won 1 seat. BJD captured 38% of the SC reserved seats, BJP won 58%, and INC secured 4% of these seats.

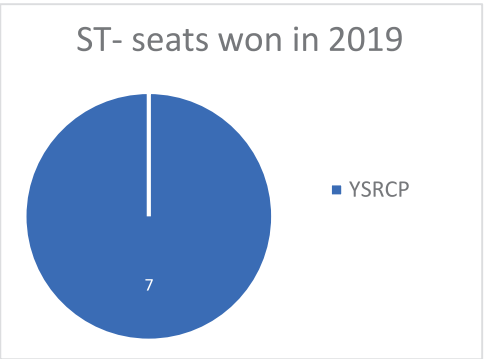


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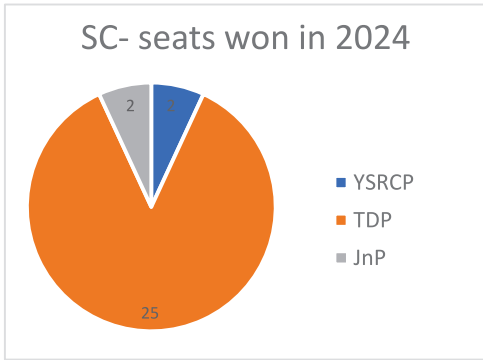
Andhra Pradesh



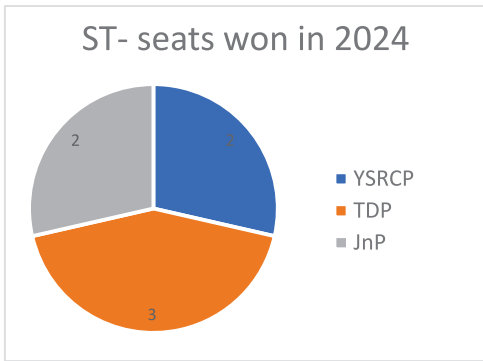
In the 2019 Andhra Pradesh Assembly election, 29 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. Of these, the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) secured 27 seats, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) won 1 seat, and the Jana Sena Party (JSP) also won 1 seat. YSRCP achieved a dominant victory by winning 93% of the SC reserved seats, while TDP and JSP each won 3.45% of these seats.



In the 2019 Andhra Pradesh Assembly election, 7 seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes. All of these seats were won by the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), giving them a clean sweep with 100% of the ST reserved seats.

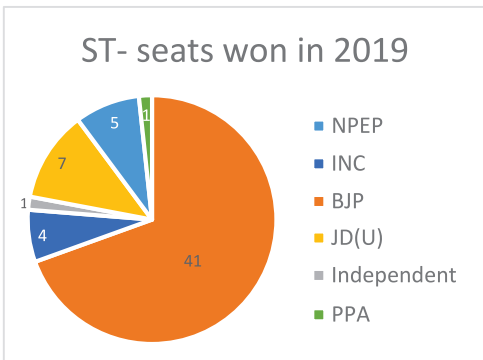


In the 2024 Andhra Pradesh Assembly election, 29 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. Out of these, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) won 25 seats, the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) secured 2 seats, and the Jana Sena Party (JSP) also won 2 seats. TDP won 86% of the SC reserved seats, while YSRCP and JSP each won 7% of these seats.

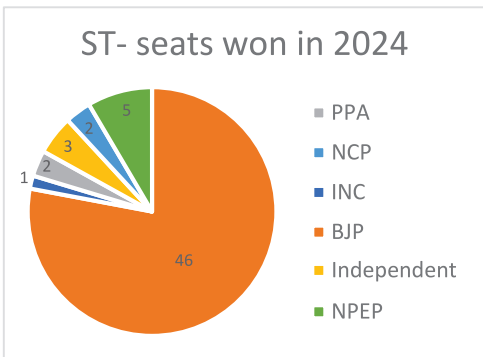


In the 2024 Andhra Pradesh Assembly election, 29 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. Out of these, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) won 25 seats, the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) secured 2 seats, and the Jana Sena Party (JSP) also won 2 seats. TDP won 86% of the SC reserved seats, while YSRCP and JSP each won 7% of these seats.

Arunachal Pradesh



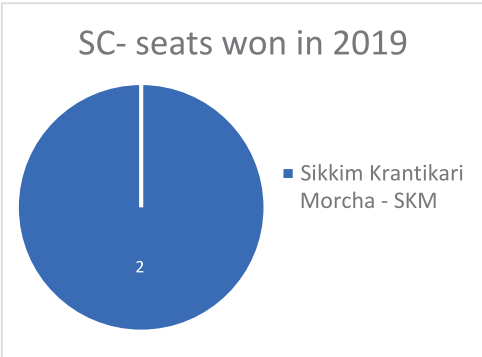
In the 2019 Arunachal Assembly election, out of the 59 seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes, the BJP secured victory in 41 seats, while the INC won 4 seats, Janata Dal(U) claimed 7 seats, and the National People's Party secured 5 seats. Additionally, one seat each was won by an independent candidate and the People's Party of Arunachal. Breaking down the percentages, the BJP garnered 69% of the seats, the INC secured 7%, JD(U) won 12%, and the NPEP secured 8%. The remaining 2% of the seats were won by independent candidates and the PPA from the ST reserved constituencies.



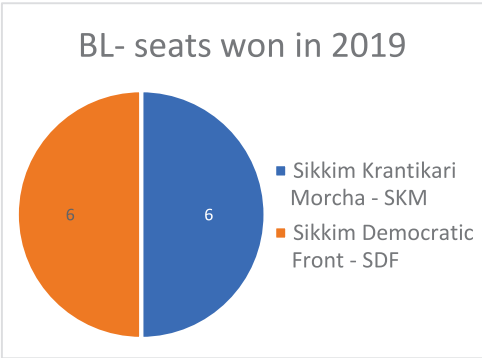
In the 2024 Arunachal Assembly election, 59 seats were designated for Scheduled Tribes. Among these, the BJP secured victory in 46 seats, while the INC claimed one seat, the People's Party of Arunachal secured two, and three seats were won by independent candidates. Additionally, the National Congress Party and the National People's Party emerged victorious in two and five seats respectively. Breaking down the percentages, the BJP garnered 78% of the seats, while the INC secured 1.69%. Both the PPA and NCP each captured 3.38%, independents won 5.08%, and the National People's Party secured 8.47% of the seats in the ST reserved constituencies.



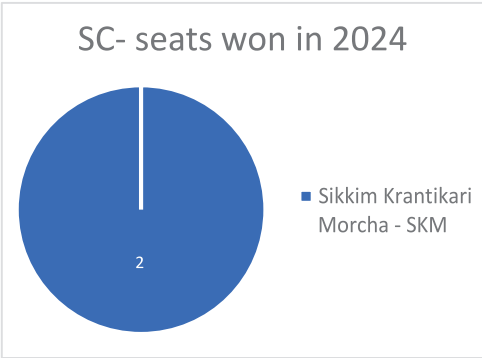
Sikkim



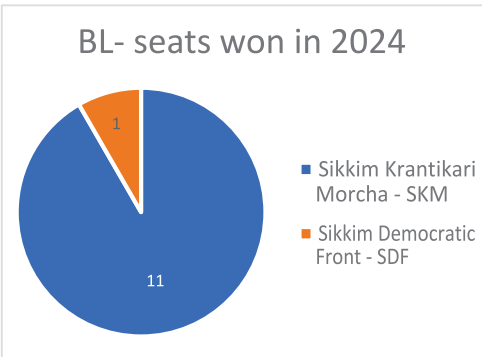
In the 2019 Sikkim Assembly election, 2 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. Both of these seats were won by the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, giving them a clean sweep with 100% of the SC reserved seats.



In the 2019 Sikkim Assembly election, 12 seats were reserved for the Bhutia Lepcha (BL) community, which includes Scheduled Tribes and ethnic tribes. The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha and the Sikkim Democratic Front each won 6 seats, sharing 50% of the BL reserved constituencies.



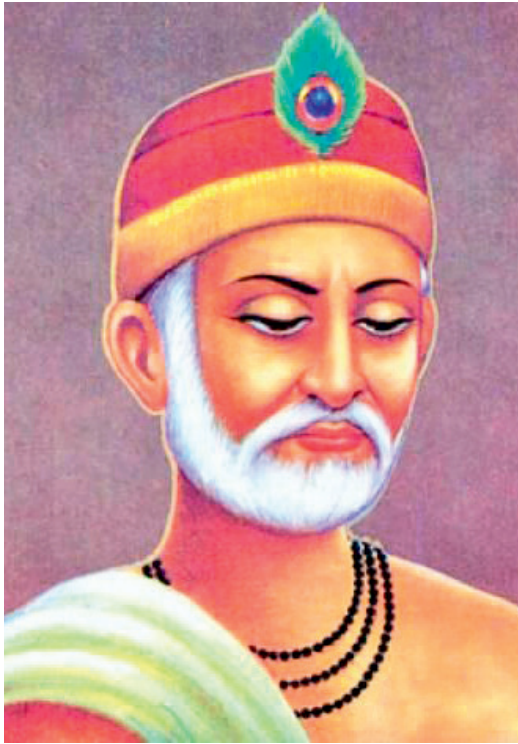
In the 2024 Sikkim Assembly election, 2 seats were reserved for Scheduled Castes. Both of these seats were won by the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, giving them a clean sweep with 100% of the SC reserved seats.



In the 2019 Sikkim Assembly election, 12 seats were reserved for the Bhutia Lepcha (BL) community, classified as Scheduled Tribes. The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha won 11 of these seats, while the Sikkim Democratic Front won 1 seat. This resulted in the SKM securing 92% and the SDF won 8% seats of the BL reserved constituencies.

DIN VISHESH

Remembering Sant Kabir



22nd June
Sant Kabir Birth Anniversary

Sant Kabir was also a great poet and social reformer. Sant Kabir devoted his life in social service. He took his steps forward against the evils, imposture, tyranny, untouchability in the society and contributed in all the fights for the society. He used to say that no religion is different, we are all a gift of one God, we are all created by one God. Then there should be no superstition on caste, untouchability. Sant Kabir Known for his straightforward and often satirical language, Kabir's dohas (couplets) challenge religious orthodoxy and ritualism, advocating a direct and personal experience of the divine. Kabir's teachings are rooted in the Nirguna Bhakti tradition, which worships a formless, universal God, transcending the boundaries of organized religion. His verses emphasize inner purity, personal devotion, and the futility of external rituals. Kabir criticized both Hindu and Islamic practices that, in his view, obscured true spirituality. Kabir's literary contributions are vast, with his poetry compiled in texts like the "Bijak" and the "Guru Granth Sahib." His work has left an indelible mark on Indian spirituality, influencing Sikhism and leading to the formation of the Kabir Panth, a community that follows his teachings. Kabir's enduring legacy lies in his message of unity, simplicity, and the universality of divine love, which continues to inspire spiritual seekers across diverse traditions. His life and works remain a beacon of wisdom and a call to transcend religious divides.



26th June
Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj
Birth Anniversary



4th July
Swami Vivekananda
Death Anniversary



6th July
Babu Jagjivan Ram
Death Anniversary

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