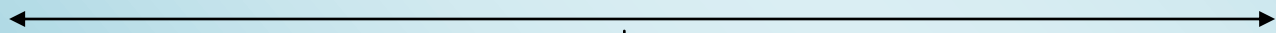


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## EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF SHAHU MAHARAJA OF KOLHAPUR

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*After Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaja made many of the spread education of masses. As the Brahmins were dominant in education during those days, by extending reservations to non-Brahmins, he made others to get education. Further, many of the schools and colleges were started by him and he donated generously for the educational development masses at Kolhapur state. The paper described the educational contributions of Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur state during the British period.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

After the Great Mutiny in 1862, the British passed the Sanad of Adoption, the rulers of Kolhapur were granted the hereditary right of adoption. Yashwantrao, who was born on June .26, 1874 was installed on the throne of Kolhapur on March 17, 1884 and was proclaimed 'Shahu Chhatrapati'.

Shahu IV (also known as Rajarshi Shahu) was the first Maharaja of the Indian princely state of Kolhapur between 1894 and 1922. His full official name was: Colonel His Highness Kshatriya- Kulawatasana Sinhasanadhishwar, Shrimant Rajarshi Sir Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaj Sahib Bahadur<sup>1</sup>. He was also known as Rajarshi Shahuji Chhatrapati and Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj. Shahu was born on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1874 as Yeshwantrao Ghatge, eldest son of Appasaheb Ghatge, Chief of Kagal (Senior) by his wife Radhabai, a daughter of the Raja of Mudhol [Karnataka]. He was named as 'Yashwant Rao' by birth. His younger brother 'Bapusaheb' was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1876.

Shahu was adopted by Anandibai, widow of Raja Shivaji-IV, on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1884. At the time of investiture ceremony, Shahu Maharaja was of only 20 years young. But, he had traveled all Maharastra and many of the places in India. As such he was realized the difficulties of people, poverty, and social discrimination based on caste, etc. Hence, he preferred to remove poverty and such other difficulties faced by people in his state through his first order passed. The order was passed and read at the end as "... our people should be comfort with all the

kinds of facilities and welfare. It is wished that our state should have to develop continuously. To fulfill these objectives all the small or big Jahagirdars, well wishers, Sardars, Inamdars, Labourers, farmers, traders and all others should fully cooperate in the administration. Further, I pray god to provide all round development and success during our administration”<sup>2</sup>.

### **EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS:**

When Shahu assumed powers of administration in 1894, the population of Kolhapur State was 9 lakh; the numbers of schools were 224 and the numbers of students were Fifteen thousand. But most of them belonged to the higher castes. The percentage of literacy among the Brahmins was 79 percent, while among the Marathas it was less than nine percent. Out of the total number of 441 students in the Rajaram High School, Brahmins were 368, and out of 61 students of Rajaram College, 55 were Brahmins<sup>3</sup>.

By observing the status of education, Shahu Maharaja uttered “I believe that it is essential that without education it is impossible become free. The history revealed that without education none of the nation has developed. No eminent leader was born in a nation where there is illiteracy and ignorance. Hence, it is necessary for India to provide free and compulsory education for all. It is dark side of our history that only one caste has got education. Manu and such other thinkers have restricted our people with their regulations based on castes. Similarly, they closed doors of education to lower castes. As such, they restricted that the except only few castes none of other castes should not read the epics, Dharmashastras and Vedas and such we can’t see such unfortunate effects in any of the religions other than Hinduism”<sup>4</sup>.

Such disparity in education made Shahu Maharaja to announce his educational policy on the following fourfold strategy –

1. To make primary education available for all and then, if possible, secondary education,
2. Positive discrimination in favour 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.

The untiring efforts shown by the shrewd Shahu in making primary education universal and compulsory are worth noticing. The Government of India has not been able to achieve this even during sixty-five years after

Independence. On the contrary, more than half the illiterates in the world are in India today. It is so not because the Indian Government lacks in means but because it does not have the political will, to do this. Shahu showed that political will.

On assuming powers Shahu Maharaja undertook an extensive tour of the state to know at first hand the state of things in the education system. He particularly identified the village offices, the temples that could be used for starting new schools. He abolished the post of Deputy Director of Education and created the post of Director of Education with full powers and appointed Mr. Kirtikar as Director of Education in the state. Later on the same powerful post was occupied by such competent officers as Prof. Annasaheb Lathe, Rao Bahadur Dongare and D. R. Bhosale. Shahu took personal interest in the working of the Department of Education. He opened a separate division for primary education and appointed Prof. Apate as Director. An announcement was made on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1917 that free and compulsory primary education would be introduced in the State from the Ganesh Festival of that year i.e. from 30<sup>th</sup> September 1917<sup>5</sup>. Shahu appointed a committee of Rao Bahadur Karamarkar, Krishnaji Dhonde, Marathe, Prof. Panditrao and Vishupant Kale to work out the details of the scheme for compulsory primary education. The report was to be submitted by Rao Bahadur Dongre, the Educational Inspector. The Department was to be treated as a part of the Revenue Department. Shahu sanctioned Rs. 1 Lakh for the scheme. A village having a population of 500 to 1000 was to have a school at a convenient place.

The 'Kesari' congratulated Shahu Maharaja on introducing the scheme of compulsory education and wanted to know if the British Government would follow Shahu's example. Shahu believed like Mahatma Phule, that more congenial relation between the teacher and the taught is created when both belong to the same social status. He therefore saw that the teacher appointed was from the majority community in the village. These new schools were started in the temples, 'Dharmashalas', 'Chavadis' (Village Offices), wherever ready accommodation was available. Whenever there was a demand from the people for building a new temple, it was to be so built that in one half of it a school could be accommodated and in the other, the Chavadi, i.e. the village office. It was made compulsory that a part of the income of the temple was spent on meeting the expenses of the school. The up keeping and maintenance of the school building was the responsibility of the village officer. In order to ensure that all children attend school, Shahu issued a declaration to his subjects that it is the responsibility of the parents to send their children to school when they attain the school going age. If they fail to

do so within 30 days, the teacher was to report the names of the parents to the Mamledar, who fined them Rs. 1 for every month of delay<sup>6</sup>.

In order to make learning more interesting and useful Shahu got the courses of study revised. He applied strict tests while selecting teachers. The teachers were well paid and efficient teachers were rewarded with promotion. In order to meet the expenditure on education Shahu levied educational cess from doctors, pleaders, officers, money lenders and Inamdars whose income was more than Rs. 100. He also levied educational tax of Rs. 1 per house in the state<sup>7</sup>.

The scheme was started on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1917. In 1918 there were 1296 students in 27 schools and in 1922 the number of schools rose to 420 with 22000 students in them. Shahu also followed the policy of establishing libraries in different parts of the state and gave grants to them. Shahu paid special attention to the education of the Backward classes. In 1896, there were six backward class schools with 196 students. This figure rose to 22 schools in 1910 and the number of students 694, as a result of Shahu's encouragement to them<sup>8</sup>.

Latthe (1925) stated that in 1894 excluding the number of college students, the number of total students was 10844 in Kolhapur State. In 1922, the same number was increased to 27830 and the untouchable students were 234 and increased to 2162. But, the number of College students increased from 79 to 265. It is also noted that the number of Brahmin students was 2522 and increased to 2722<sup>9</sup>.

From his private funds he ran Boarding houses for them in his Station Bungalow, Rukadi and Sontali Camps. However, later on, as a better policy, the schools which were exclusively run for the Backward classes were closed from 1919 onwards. Shahu wanted to stop the practice of observing untouchability in society. He issued a declaration that the boys of the Backward classes were to be admitted in the regular schools for all communities and that: they were to be treated on an equal footing with other students. Shahu arranged separate scholarships and freeships for them in schools. He liberally helped Backward class hostels even outside the State, at Nasik and Nagpur. He issued an order in 1911 that the Backward class students in the Rajaram High School, and Rajaram College, be given freeship. Similarly, it was not possible for farmers to send their children to schools, as their children were assisting their parents in agriculture. Hence in July 1919, Shahu made rule that such children must have to attend the school for at least two hours and the remaining time, they may work in agriculture<sup>10</sup>.

Shahu paid particular attention to the education of girl students. Though girls were excluded from the jurisdiction of the Compulsory Education Act (it was natural in those early times) wherever he found girls taking education, he helped them liberally. He even started separate schools for girls where there was a demand, at places like Bhudargad. All girl students in Rajaram College were given freeship. He instituted special Darbar scholarships for clever lady students. He helped with funds girl students from the State for higher studies outside the State and-abroad. Krishnabai Kelavkar, who was thus helped, was, on completion of medical studies abroad, appointed in the State hospital<sup>11</sup>.

Shahu did not start formal traditional type of schools only. He was, even in those days, aware of the importance of vocational education. In his address to the Maratha Education conference in 1917 he says, "We should pay attention to all types of education. We should not aim at being farmers and soldiers only. We should enter other fields of employment like Commerce and Industry". In order to provide employment to his people after their schooling was over he introduced vocational courses in his schools. The courses in study were diversified and given vocational bias. This diversification and vocationalisation in a small State like Kolhapur was not to be found even in the regions under the British Rule. Shahu started a Technical school-Abraham Technical Institute, in 1903. Another industrial school, Chhatrapati Rajaram Audyogik Mandir, Padmala, was initially started in Radhakrishna Mandir in Shahupuri and then shifted to Padmala. A craft school also was started for craftman castes of Karajagars and Jingars. Shahu started two special schools. Delhi Darbar Patil School was started in 1911 to mark the occasion of Delhi Darbar. In this school village Patils were given lessons in village administration. The need of a similar school was felt to meet the exigencies that arose after the Vedokta incident. This school known as "Satya Shodhak School" was started in 1913 to train non-Brahmin youths to perform religious rites themselves, without the help of a caste priest. A book entitled, "Gharcha Purohit" -Home-made Priest - was specially prepared under the directions of Bhaskarrao Jadhav. This school was so famous that students from outside the State also joined this school and the practice of getting religious functions performed without caste priests, spread all over Maharashtra. In 1914 another special school for the Talathies was opened. After the confiscation of Kulkarni watanas, the village record was transferred to the Talati. He needed to be trained in how to maintain the record. After the creation of Kshatra Jagatguni Peeth, as a new seat of religion, another special school, "Shri Shivaji Vedik School" was started to train young non-Brahmin men in the performance of religious rites according to the Vedik system. The main purpose of starting these schools was to create a new order of social workers to rescue the illiterate masses from the clutches of the Brahmin priests.



Shahu liberally helped meritorious students from the State who went out of the State for study. During 1910-11, 15 bright students were sent out for higher studies at State cost. Shahu helped liberally even outsiders like Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, for study abroad. In this manner Shahu spent liberally from the State coffers on education. He regarded expenditure on education as investment in human resources, which yields ample fruit for the later generations. Shahu, as it were, laid the foundation of a far-reaching revolution which transformed the common people and enabled them to take their rightful share in the political and social revolution of modern Maharashtra. The first signs of this social revolution were seen even during Shahu's days in his State. In 1894 the number of students was 10844, which rose to 27830 in 1921-22. The number of students from the common majority communities increased to 21027 from the meager 8088 in 1894. Even the number of students from the untouchable communities rose from 234 to 2162. The expenditure on education mounted to Rs. 3 lacs from mere 70000<sup>12</sup>.

Shahu's educational activities were not confined to his State only. The non-Brahmin communities outside the State also looked up to him as their saviour and guide and Shahu has also cared them. He not only liberally helped the Deccan Maratha Education Society of Gangaram Mhaske but accepted its Presidentship. He also helped another educational institution of Poona, namely the Shivaji Maratha Education Society for its boarding house which was named, as per Shahu's desire, "Chhatrapati Tarabai Maratha Boarding House". In 1913, two Maratha workers of Nasik, Raosaheb Thorat Patil and Ganpatrao More Patil, started a boarding house, "Udaji Maratha Vasati Graha" with Shahu's inspiration. Shahu laid the foundation stone of the Boarding building in 1920 and helped it financially. During Shahu's visit to Nasik, the members of the Nabhik community invited him to lay the foundation stone of the Sant Sena Nabhik Vasati Graha. Shahu donated Rs. 5000 to the Boarding. Shahu started two boarding houses at Pandharpur, one for the Marathas and the other for the untouchables. A free alms distribution centre was being run at Pandharpur by the Karaveer Chhatrapatis. The priests who were in-charge of the centre were misusing the money. Shahu noticed this and stopped the centre, and the money thus saved was used for running the two Boarding Houses. Thus Shahu was the first social revolutionary to use the income of the temples and durgas for educational purpose. He succeeded in persuading the Lingayat Swamis of the Mathas in Karnatak to utilize the resources of the Mathas for running hostels for students of the community. The Swami of the Mooru Savir Math of Hubli, accepted Shahu's rational approach towards religious centres and acted on it. The result is the number of educational institutes run by the Lingayats in the whole of Karnatak. Most of these are patronized by the Mathas.



The 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference of All India Maratha Shikshan Parishad was held at Khamgaon, Vidarbha, in 1917, under Shahu's chairmanship. Shahu met a number of social workers from that area and discussed about the spread of education among the masses in Vidarbha. One of the persons Shahu met was Panjabrao Deshmukh, who had just returned from England after completion of higher education there. Shahu impressed upon this youngman the need of bringing education within the reach of the poorer classes. Shahu promised all help; the result was the birth of Shivaji Education Society of Vidarbha, that runs today a network of educational institutions all over Vidarbha. Shahu wanted his efforts to spread education among the masses to be converted into a massive movement, an all embracing awakening among the masses. For that purpose an umbrella organization was needed. He therefore began to bring together all workers of the masses, the Sardars and Jagirdars and draw them into his welfare activities for the masses. He assigned to Bhaskarrao Jadhav of Kolhapur and Khaserao Jadhav of Baroda, the task of forming an organization called 'All India Maratha Shikshan Parishad'. The first conference of this organization was held at Dharwar on 30 Dec., 1907 under the Chairmanship of Khaserao Jadhav and then till Shahu's death in 1922, annual conferences were held in Bombay, Amravati, Baroda, Nagpur, Dhule, Nasik, Pune, Ahamednagar, Satara, Khamgaon, Dhar, Gwalher, Kalyan etc. Wherever the meetings were held the workers, small and big, were urged to undertake educational activities for the masses by starting Boarding Houses. Hence the large number of Boarding Houses spread all over Maharashtra.

Shahu Maharaja's exemplary endeavour to spread education among the common masses gave inspiration to a number of social workers in Maharashtra to establish educational institutions for the masses. Some of these are:

1. Dr. Karmaveer Bhaaurao Patil: The Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, Satara
2. Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh: Shivaji Education Society, Amravati.
3. Karmaveer Bhausaheb Hire : Maratha Shikshan Sanstha, Malegaon
4. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar : People's Education Society, Bombay.
5. Shikshan Maharshi Bapuji Salunkhe : Swami Vivekanand Shikshan Sanstha, Kolhapur.
6. Karmaveer Mamasahab Jagdale : Shivaji Shikshan Sanstha Barsi, and others.

During those days, it was matter of pride to pass Matric examination for the Bahunans or non-Brahmins. As such, Pandurang, son of a common Maratha man Chimanaji Patil passed Matric in 1899. Shahu Maharaja invited him and enquired about the facilities that are available to study and pass such examination. During the discussion, Pandurang Patil said that "there are no boarding facilities and shelter for the non-Brahmin students in

the city. Rs. 5 per month is charged to eat in Brahmin's boarding. It is highlighted that Marathas have to wash their plates on their own or clean the leaves that are used to eat. As such, he used to eat at Maratha's house for Rs. 3.50 per month. The student used to study in Gym near his High School as there were no facilities in the city to study". By hearing about problems faced by Pandurang Patil, Shahu Maharaja thought to establish boarding and lodging facilities for the Maratha students in the city<sup>13</sup>.

On the occasion of laying the foundation of the 'Udajiruo Maratha Boarding' at Nasik Shahu Maharaja observed, "Just as England is the 'Mother of Parliament', Kolhapur is the 'Mother of Boarding Houses". With the help of Mamasahab Khanvilkar, Appasaheb Maisalkar, Bhaskar Rao Jadhav, Daji Rao Vichare, Jeevaji Rao Savant and such other Marathas, on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1901, the first Hostel, "Victoria Maratha Boarding" was started in Kolhapur city<sup>14</sup>. This shows how proud Shahu was of the number of Boarding Houses established by him in the city of Kolhapur. These boarding houses helped the students from different places to pursue their higher education. It was the Shahu's idea of starting separate hostels for students of different castes was meant for serving more than one purpose. It was a multipurpose strategy, adopted by the sagacious Shahu. It was indeed an epoch-making movement that spread over the whole of Maharashtra. A new wave of awakening and enthusiasm swept over the hither-to-uncared for and down-trodden millions, not only in the State but in the whole of Maharashtra. The seeds of modern Maharashtra were sown in these Boarding Houses.

Establishment of Boarding Houses was a novel experiment of Shahu for the spread of education. There was not a single Boarding House in the whole of Bombay presidency, or the whole of India for that matter. There were hostels or clubs attached to colleges. Shahu Maharaja started another Boarding attached to the Rajaram College, for students of all castes. The meals for them were subsidized by the State. In the beginning students of both high and low castes took admission. But later on only students of high castes remained and all low caste students left the Boarding, as high caste students ill-treated them. One Mr. Gokhale was in-charge of the arrangement. In the end not a single low caste student remained in it. This is how a common arrangement for high and low caste students failed. Shahu was forced to stop it and make separate arrangements for different castes. But there were no Boarding Houses run by a community or any other social or religious organization, for students of that community. Shahu consulted his close friends and some experts in education before taking this revolutionary step to start separate Boardings for various castes in his State.

Shahu started about 23 Boarding Houses in Kolhapur during his life time. They were as follows:

1. The Victoria Maratha Boarding (1901)
2. The Jain Boarding (1901)
3. The Muslim Boarding (1906)
4. The Lingayat Boarding (1907)
5. Miss Clerk Hostel (1908)
6. The Namdev Boarding (1911)
7. The Kayastha Prabhu Boarding (1912)
8. The Sarswat Boarding (1912)
9. The Panchal Boarding (1912),
10. The Indian Christian Hostel (1915)
11. The Daivadyna Boarding (1916)
12. The Arya Samaj Gurukul (1918)
13. The Vaishya Boarding (1918)
14. The Dhor Chamar Boarding (1919)
15. The Shahu Vaidik Boarding (1920)
16. The Som Vanshiya Arya Kshatriya Boarding (1920)
17. The Prince Shivaji Maratha Free Boarding (1920)
18. The Sutar Boarding (1921)
19. The Nabhik Boarding (1921)
20. Shri Dewarig Boarding (1921)
21. The Bhorl Samaj Boarding (1921)
22. The Rajaputwadi Boarding (1921)
23. Rukadi Boarding

Thus for some 25 years from 1896 to 1921 Shahu was trying his experiment of running Boarding Houses as an effective Strategy of spreading education and creating awareness among the masses. He urged them, “to learn, to unite and to fight for their rights”.

**CONCLUSION:**

To conclude, Shahu Maharaja formulated education policy declaring 'education is for all'. It was also become controversy as many of the Brahmins were opposed to it. He made free and compulsory education for all irrespective of caste, class or religion. Education scheme formulated by Shahu Maharaja was started on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1917. In 1918 there were 1296 students in 27 schools and in 1922 the number of schools rose to 420 with 22000 students in them. Shahu also followed the policy of establishing libraries in different parts of the state and gave grants to them. Shahu paid special attention to the education of the Backward classes. In 1896, there were six backward class schools with 196 students. This figure rose to 22 schools in 1910 and the number of students 694, as a result of Shahu's encouragement to them. He also encouraged many of the associations and organizations to open schools. He also ordered to open hostels for the students of different castes and communities.

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