CHAPTER-VIII

HIS CONTEMPORARIES
KESHAVRAO Jedhe was a leader of the masses in Maharashtra in modern times. He worked in socio-political field for about four decades. No great man can ever afford to work in isolation but on the other hand he interacts with his surroundings. Keshavrao Jedhe awakened the illiterate masses in Maharashtra and organized them. He cherished the ideals of social change and political freedom. For fulfilling those objectives he himself whole-heartedly participated in a number of social movements and political agitations. He mobilized the rural masses to those movements and agitations and thereby strengthened the forces of change and quickened the process of socio-political change in Maharashtra. Even in the post-independence era he tried to remove socio-economic inequalities and fought against oppression and injustice. During the course of his public activities he came in contact with several persons. All these persons with whom Keshavrao had contacts, for sometime at least, are termed as his contemporaries. He received inspiration, encouragement, guidance and support from his senior contemporaries like Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, Maharshi V.R.Shinde and his elder brother Baburao Jedhe.
While carrying on socio-political movements and struggles, Keshavrao got cooperation, help and loyal support from such contemporaries who were, more or less, of his age. On the eve of our national independence in August 1947, Keshavrao Jedhe had emerged as the undisputed leader of the masses in Maharashtra. The influence of his leadership was widespread. A number of young and promising workers active in different fields of life came under the influence of his personality and leadership. A few of these younger contemporaries faithfully tried to carry forward Keshavrao's mission. During the four long decades of public life Keshavrao had on a few occasions difference of opinion with some of his contemporaries. Sometimes these differences grew deeper. It is intended to examine in the present chapter Keshavrao Jedhe's relationship with his contemporaries. This study will, it is hoped, bring to light some less known aspects of his activities and leadership.

Senior Contemporaries

Satyashodhak Samaj was revived at Poona in 1911 at the behest of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur. Baburao Jedhe began to participate in Satyashodhak movement enthusiastically. Soon he became an ardent follower of Shahu Maharaj. At that time Jedhe's house became the centre of Satyashodhak activities in Poona. These changes were taking place when Keshavrao Jedhe's personality was blossoming. Keshavrao got an opportunity to observe Shahu Maharaj and
other leaders of Satyashodhak movement from close quarters, watch their activities and listen carefully to their views on important issues. He passed under the influence of that atmosphere. He was profoundly influenced by Chh. Shahu Maharaja's thoughts and satyashodhak ideology. Keshavrao's ideals and views were shaped accordingly.

Another eminent social reformer who profoundly influenced Keshavrao Jedhe during the early years of his public career was Maharshi V.R. alias Annasaheb Shinde. It was V.R. Shinde who initiated young Keshavrao to the field of social activities. Keshavrao learnt from him important practical lessons of social work. Keshavrao received inspiration, guidance, encouragement from Maharshi Shinde. Keshavrao long associations with V.R. Shinde in social and political fields have already been discussed in details in earlier chapters. Maharshi V.R. Shinde always had affection and admiration for Keshavrao and blessed his activities.

Keshavrao Jedhe's two elder brothers Sakhrampant alias Dadasaheb and Baburao alias Appasaheb enabled him to undertake social work activities as per his desire. They also encouraged young Keshavrao to participate in social reform activities and political agitations and supported his multifarious activities. Keshavrao's eldest brother Sakhrampant shouldered entire household responsibilities after their father's death in 1909. He did not entangle Keshavrao in domestic affairs. He gave full liberty to Keshavrao to devote
himself to social work. This enabled Keshavrao to become one with social and political movements.¹

Baburao alias Appasaheb Jedhe (1890 - 1967) was Keshavrao's another elder brother. Baburao, to a large extent, was responsible for attracting Keshavrao Jedhe to social reform movements. To Keshavrao 'Jedhe Mansion' was a training school and Baburao was his first teacher. Both these factors were responsible for making Keshavrao a social reformer. In the initial stage Keshavrao used to take part in social activities along with Baburao Jedhe. Baburao always supported Keshavrao's various activities. It appears that both Baburao and Keshavrao Jedhe carried out social work jointly on a number of occasions. Both Baburao and Keshavrao tried to help poor, deserving students belonging to lower strata of society. They accommodated many such students in Jedhe Mansion itself. In 1920 Baburao accepted the responsibility of running the Maratha Free Boarding after its founder's death. Keshavrao assisted his brother in this matter.² In 1920, Maharshi V.R. Shinde launched several famine relief operations in parts of Nagar and Poona districts for helping the drought affected people. Both Baburao and Keshavrao Jedhe participated in those activities.³ They were the important supporting pillars of the Non-Brahman movement. Both of them played important role in Non-Brahman party politics also.⁴

Both Baburao and Keshavrao Jedhe worked together to awaken and organize the peasant masses. On 25th July, 1928,
Jedhe brothers organised the Bombay Provincial Conference at the Ray Market in Poona, to protect the interests of farmers, to conservative policies of the Government Keshavrao Jedhe had convened a meeting on 18th August, 1929, in Jedhe Mansion, in which "Bombay Provincial Farmers' Federation" was founded. Its president was Shankarrao Jayramrao Zunzarrao and Vice-Presidents were Baburao Jedhe and Raosaheb Adhav. Keshavrao Jedhe and Namdeorao Navale were its secretaries. Around 1930 Keshavrao entered the national freedom movement and continued to participate in social as well as political movements thereafter. In the latter part of his life Baburao Jedhe confined himself to social field. However, whenever Keshavrao was in the thick of political agitations and activities Baburao offered him valuable help directly or indirectly. Thus Keshavrao Jedhe throughout his life was indebted to Baburao Jedhe.

Comrades in Socio-Political Movements

Keshavrao Jedhe worked in the Non-Brahman movement for about twelve years and remained always at its forefronts. In 1930 he participated whole-heartedly in national freedom movement. After independence he founded the Peasants and Workers Party and led it for a few years. He also took part in the movements started for creation of Sanyukta Maharashtra and liberation of Goa. In all those movements Keshavrao got valuable help, co-operation and loyal support from a large number of his contemporaries who were more or less of his age. Let us now examine Keshavrao's relationship with his Comrades.
Dinkarrao Javalkar (1898 - 1932)

Dinkarrao Javalkar was Keshavrao's close associate in the Non-Brahman movement. Keshavrao's relationship with him has been discussed in details in an earlier chapter entitled 'Non-Brahman Movement'. In 1922 Dinkarrao Javalkar was attracted towards Keshavrao. They provided a powerful joint leadership to the Non-Brahman movement from 1922 to 1927. Shri Achut Balvant Kolhatkar in his book entitled 'Jedhe-Javalkar' described them as "the front rank gallant leaders" of the Non-Brahman movement. However, since 1927 there arose differences between the two leaders and consequently they parted company. Later on Javalkar tried to revive his friendly relations with Keshavrao Jedhe but Jedhe did not respond favourably. Keshavrao Jedhe and Dinkarrao Javalkar together made the Non-Brahman movement extremely popular and famous in Maharashtra during the period between 1922 and 1927. Keshavrao had steadfast belief in his life mission. He did not like opportunist workers. So he did not at all compromise with the opportunists.

Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil (1887 - 1959)

Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil championed the cause of mass education in Maharashtra. Through the spread of education he brought about an awakening among the rural masses. Although Bhaurao Patil was older than Keshavrao Jedhe by nine years there developed keen friendship between the two. Both of them received inspiration for social work from Rajarshi Shahu.
Maharaj. One of them awakened the masses by giving them education while the other aroused the society by giving a fight against the hegemony of the conservatives. Both of them fought for social equality.

In 1911 Shahu Maharaj revived the satyashodhak movement. Soon after that Bhaurao Patil began to participate in satyashodhak activities. Keshavrao Jedhe too was attracted towards it. Thus it was the satyashodhak movement that brought them together sometime in 1917. Bhaurao Patil used to attend satyashodhak conferences, meetings and jalasas. Whenever Bhaurao Patil visited Poona region in connection with satyashodhak conferences he used to stay in the Jedhe Mansion.

In 1919, the provincial satyashodhak conference was held at Kale (a village in Karad Taluka) under the presidency of Keshavrao Bagade. Keshavrao Jedhe too attended the conference. In this conference Bhaurao Patil announced the establishment of 'Rayat Shikshan Sanstha'. Thus Keshavrao was associated with Rayat Shikshan Sanstha right from the beginning.

In subsequent years the bonds of friendship between Jedhe and Bhaurao Patil grew stronger. Keshavrao Jedhe was a prominent leader of Non-Brahman party and Bhaurao Patil was one of its active members. Bhaurao frequently visited Jedhe Mansion in connection with meetings and conferences of the non-Brahman party. The Bombay Provincial Agriculturists' Federation came into being because of Keshavrao Jedhe's leadership. He was secretary of the federation and Bhaurao was one of its members.
A motion to establish this federation was moved by Jedhe himself. Another motion moved by Bhaurao Patil and it read, "there should be agitations in such talukas where there was an increase in revenue taxes after 1920" Jedhe, Barge, Javalkar expressed their views on this resolution.

A meeting of the Non-Brahman party was held in Jedhe mansion on 10th November 1929. It was attended by eleven members including Bhaurao Patil. In this meeting there arose differences between Jedhe brothers on one hand and Bhaskarao Jadhav and Javalkar on the other hand regarding the proposed foreign tour of Javalkar and Gupte. In this meetings Keshavrao Jedhe proposed a motion in which he described Bhaskarao Jadhav's decision, to send Javalkar and Gupte to the foreign countries, as illegal. Keshavrao's motion was seconded by Bhaurao Patil. Bhaurao like Keshavrao disliked Bhaskarao Jadhav's Pro-British policies and his attempts to form his own group within the Non-Brahman Party. Moreover Bhaurao too detested Bhaskarao's policy of giving opportunities to only those who belonged to his group.

Another meeting of Non-Brahman party was held in Jedhe mansion on 19th July 1930 to determine party policies regarding the Simon Commission and the proposed Round Table Conferences. Bhaskarao Jadhav presided over it. Sardar Ligade, Keshavrao Vichare, Bagade, Jedhe brothers, Bhaurao Patil etc. 30 to 40 members attended the meetings. In it a number of resolutions were passed. One of the resolutions
stated that the recommendations of the Simon Commission were unsatisfactory, inadequate and disappointing. The second resolution stated that the Non-Brahman party should extend its co-operation to the proposed Round Table Conferences. Keshavrao Jedhe in his motion demanded that Mahatma Gandhi should be realized from jail and invited to attend the Round Table Conferences. It further demanded that the Non-Brahman party should co-operate with the RTC only if the political prisoners were released from jail. This significant motion was seconded by Bhaurao Patil.

In 1930, Keshavrao Jedhe entered the freedom struggle. Bhaurao Patil also participated in the freedom movement for sometime but later he concentrated solely upon educational activities. Jedhe always supported Bhaurao Patil in his work. He helped Bhaurao Patil in his difficulties. In 1948, after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination there were widespread communal riots all over Maharashtra. At that time in a meeting held at Satara Bhaurao Patil criticized the policies of Kher ministry in regard to communal disturbances in Bombay Province. As the Govt. did not like Bhaurao Patil's criticism, it discontinued the grants-in-aid to Rayat Shikshan Sanstha. At this juncture Jedhe skillfully organised Public opinion in favour of the Sanstha and eventually compelled the government to release the grants-in-aid to the Sanstha.
When there were moves to lay the foundations of the Peasant and Workers Party Bhaurao Patil worked in close co-operation with Keshavrao Jedhe. He attended all the meetings held in the context of forming the PWP. Both Bhaurao and Keshavrao were responsible for Krantisinh Nana Patil's entry into the PWP. Both of them jointly tried to spread the activities of PWP. For that purpose they together toured Poona and Khandesh region. Though Jedhe later left the PWP, relations between Bhaurao and Keshavrao remained cordial. Keshavrao Jedhe had love for Bhaurao Patil's mission. He frequently expressed his high appreciation of Bhaurao's work. Barrister P.G.Patil, a true disciple of Karmveer Bhaurao Patil and also a keen scholar of social history of Modern Maharashtra observed, "The life mission of both of them was the same. Both wanted to awaken the masses and establish social equality in the society. One lit the lamp of knowledge in every house and the other alerted the illiterate and poor peasants about his rights."14

Pandharinath Sitaram Patil (1901 - 1978)

Pandharinath Sitaram Patil was a famous social worker of the Non-Brahman Party in Vidarbha. He belonged to Buldhana district. He wrote first Marathi biography of Mahatma Jotiba Phule. He also worked for eradication of untouchability. Due to influence of Jedhe brothers he was attracted towards the Non-Brahman movement. The Non-Brahman Conference of 1929 conferred on him the title 'Samajbhushan'.
In 1938, he joined the Congress and participated in the national freedom movement. In the post-independence period, he was also elected as a member of Rajya Sabha. Pandharinath Patil was closely associated with socio-religious and educational movements.

In 1921, a function was organized at Poona a function to lay the corner-stone of Shri Shivaji Memorial at the hands of Prince of Wales. Pandharinath Patil attended this function. At that time a session of Bombay provincial Patil parishad was convened in the premises of Maratha highschool, Poona. Chh. Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur impressed this conferences. Pandharinath Patil attended the session of Patil Parishad. It was at this time that he got acquainted with eminent non-Brahman leaders like Maharshi V.R. Shinde, Jedhe brothers Shripatrao Shinde, Walchand Kothari, Bhaskarrao Jadhav etc. At the time of Patil Parishad Pandharinath Patil put up in Jedhe Mansion. The enthusiastic atmosphere in Jedhe Mansion enthralled Pandharinath Patil and he decided to devote himself to the cause of awakening the masses.

Pandharinath Patil tried to make the non-Brahman movement more effective in Vidharbha region. He also made ceaseless effort to awaken the rural masses in Vidharbha. Whenever Keshavrao Jedhe and Dinkarrao Javalkar, the two leaders of non-Brahman party toured Vidarbha region especially Buldhana district Pandharinath Patil extended to them all help and co-operation and also worked with them.
On 30th December 1934, Pandharinath Patil convened first session of Buldhana District Maratha Parishad at Janephal in Mehekari Taluka. Keshavrao Jedhe presided over this session. At this session a number of decisions were taken. They were: religious activities should be done at the hands of the non-Brahman Priests, these priests should not be given any remuneration, dances, tamashas, and drinking of wine should be banned. It was also decided to establish Maratha Boarding in every taluka and to give scholarships to Maratha students. Pandharinath Patil worked for the implementation of those resolutions.

Though Keshavrao Jedhe entered the national freedom movement under the banner of Congress, he continued to have cordial relations with Pandharinath Patil. Whenever Pandharinath Patil happened to visit Poona he put up in Jedhe Mansion and Keshavrao used to guide him regarding the non-Brahman movement. It was Keshavrao who brought Pandharinath Patil in the Congress and the freedom movement in 1938.

On 19th October 1938, 9th session of the Madhya Prant, Varhad Non-Brahman Conference was held at Nagpur and Keshavrao Jedhe presided over it. In his presidential address Keshavrao made an appeal to the non-Brahman masses in Vidarbha and Madhya Prant to join the Congress. Due to his powerful appeal many non-Brahman leaders there including Pandharinath Patil joined the Congress. Subsequently Pandharinath Patil actively participated in the
freedom struggle. Due to the common ideals of awakening of the masses, social reforms, national freedom etc. Keshavrao Jedhe and Pandharinath Sitaram Patil came closer and worked together for a number of years. However, there is no evidence to assume that Pandharinath Patil supported Keshavrao Jedhe in his political activities in the Post-independence period. We are not in a position to comment upon their relationship after 1948.

Prabodhankar Keshav Sitaram Thakare (1885-1973)

He was a famous writer and effective orator. He was one of those who made a remarkable contribution to the work of awakening the masses. As he used to bring out a weekly named 'Prabodhan' he came to be popularly known as 'Prabodhankar Thakare'. Through the columns of his weekly he severely criticized the superstitions, outdated traditions and customs, Brahman conservatism and communalism. He fought against injustice. Sometime in 1922 Keshavrao Jedhe and K.S. Thakare got acquainted with each other. At that time non-Brahman movement was growing from strength to strength under Keshavrao Jedhe's leadership. Prabodhankar Thakare championed, through his writings, the cause of the non-Brahman masses and their movements. The relations between Jedhe and Thakare were quite friendly. When the non-Brahman movement was at its glory in the 1920s, K.S. Thakare had set up a printing press at Poona. Both Keshavrao Jedhe and Dinkarrao Javalkar used to visit
his residence frequently and have a lot of discussion on various topics. Due to this friendly relations developed between them. Between 1922 and 1926 (Thakare shifted to Bombay in 1926) K.S. Thakare openly and whole-heartedly supported Keshavrao Jedhe's leadership and his movements. In the absence of evidence we cannot state as to why there did not exist any kind of relationship between Jedhe and Thakare after 1926.

Kakasaheb Gadgil (1896 - 1964)

Narhar Vishnu alias Kakasaheb Gadgil and Keshavrao Jedhe provided a powerful twin leadership to the Congress organization and the national freedom movement in Maharashtra for a number of years in Gandhi era. It is a happy coincidence that both of them were born in the same city i.e. Poona, in the same year i.e. 1896 and chose to work in the same field i.e. the socio-political field. They came in contact with each other in 1922 not as friends but as opponents.

Keshavrao Jedhe was a leader of the non-Brahman movement while Gadgil was a young, Promising Tilakite who worked as a Congressman. During the Ganesh festival of 1924, a scuffle took place in front of Gaikwadwada between the supporters of Chhatrapati Mela and the Tilak group. It was N.V. Gadgil who reported this incident to the D.S.P. and requested him to keep bandobast on the day of Ganesh immersion. The D.S.P. took from Jedhe brothers an undertaking
stating that they won't disturb peace in public life. The procession ended peacefully.²⁰

In 1925, Keshavrao Jedhe moved, in Poona municipality, a number of resolutions putting forth some progressive demands. However, those resolutions were turned down. On 17th September 1925, a meeting of Tilak group was held under the presidency of Laxmanrao Apte to condemn Jedhe for his resolutions. In that meeting a resolution censuring Keshavrao Jedhe was endorsed. This censure resolution was moved by Kakasaheb Gadgil.²¹

N.V.Gadgil occasionally contributed articles to a newspaper named 'Sangram' started by Nanasaheb Gokhale. It was mainly started to counter the attacks launched through another newspaper named 'Majoor' which represented the outlook of the Non-Brahman party. However, Gadgil did not identify himself completely with the anti-Jedhe campaign launched by the conservative Brahmans and Kesari group.

In course of time Gadgil realized the importance of Jedhe's work. He also understood the fact that the non-Brahman movement was, in fact, meant for diminishing conservatism of the Brahmans and awakening the masses. Both Jedhe and Gadgil wanted to end the Brahman - non-Brahman controversy at the earliest. They also wanted that gulf between the Brahmans and non-Brahmans should be bridged. For this purpose Gadgil left the Tilakite group and joined
hands with Keshavrao Jedhe. Both of them worked together in socio-political field thereafter.  

In 1930, Keshavrao Jedhe entered the national freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. He actively participated in the Civil Disobedience movement. Since then the twin leadership of Jedhe and Gadgil emerged in Maharashtra Congress. Both of them participated in the nationalist agitations and were sentenced to imprisonment on several occasions. The accounts related to the role of Jedhe and Gadgil in freedom movement have been elaborately discussed in the earlier chapter entitled 'Freedom movement'. The friendship between Jedhe and Gadgil proved useful to consolidate nationalist movement in Maharashtra.

In 1934, both Jedhe and Gadgil contested election to the central legislative council as Congress candidates and won splendid victory. From 1930 to 1948, both of them toured all over Maharashtra, organized and addressed hundreds of public meetings and thereby consolidated the position of Congress organization in the province. Jedhe and Gadgil had a lion's share in making the Faizpur Congress of 1936 a grand success. In 1938, Keshavrao Jedhe was unanimously elected president of Maharashtra Provincial Congress. At that time Jedhe's name was suggested by Senapati Bapat and Kakasaheb Gadgil. Similarly when Kakasaheb Gadgil was elected president of the M.P.C.C. in 1939, it was Keshavrao Jedhe who had suggested Gadgil's name.
Both Jedhe and Gadgil were largely responsible for narrowing down the gulf between the Brahmans and non-Brahmans. In the course of freedom movement and at the time of election campaigns they toured different parts of the province and visited a large number of places. Sometimes they experienced strange things. Once they had to undergo a wonderful experience at Junner when they were invited for meals by a Brahman advocate. At that time Jedhe, being a Maratha, was served a separate Thali. When Gadgil noticed it he took Jedhe's Thali for himself. Keshavrao was deeply hurt by this incident. However, this incident speaks volumes for their enviable friendship. 

In 1948, Keshavrao Jedhe left the Congress Party. In the general elections of 1952, Keshavrao Jedhe and Kakasaheb Gadgil were rival candidates in Poona Lok Sabha constituency. Jedhe contested this seat as the PWP candidate. However, the election rivalry did not affect their old friendship in any way. 

Jedhe-Gadgil friendship which lasted till Keshavrao death in 1959, is a living example of candid friendship in politics. In Maharashtra due to the joint leadership of Jedhe and Gadgil, communal differences were narrowed down, freedom movement was strengthened and the Congress organization was consolidated.
Shankarrao Deo (1895 - 1974)

Shankarrao Deo was a well-known Gandhian leader of Maharashtra. He stabilized the base of Gandian politics in Maharashtra. He was also responsible for strengthening the Congress organization in Maharashtra during the early phase of Gandhi era. Congress in Maharashtra remained under his influence for a number of years. Shri Deo had taken part in almost all the political struggles in Gandhi era. Both Shri Deo and Jedhe worked together in the socio-political field for about three decades.

Shri Keshavrao Jedhe entered the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-34, launched under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership and thereby joined the Congress. As Jedhe wielded powerful influence upon the rural masses in Maharashtra, Shankarrao Deo and Kakasaheb Gadgil felt happy because of Keshavrao's Congress entry. About it Prama Kantak wrote,

"Jedhe's entry into the Congress widened its dimensions. Also the Congress brought to an end its parochial outlook." 26

Shri Jedhe and Deo came in contact with each other for the first time in 1920. However, they started working together only since 1930. As both Deo and Jedhe participated in the national freedom movement, the satyagraha campaigns in it and the work of Congress propaganda, closer ties came to be established between the two. In 1932, Jedhe alike Deo was sentenced to imprisonment for his active participation
in Civil Disobedience movement in its latter phase. This
time both of them were detained in Nasik jail. Since the
days of Civil Disobedience movement a collective leadership
of Deo, Jedhe and Gadgil proved very effective in Maharashtra
politics. This trio had prominent place in Congress organi-
zation in Maharashtra. In 1934, Keshavrao Jedhe and Kakasaheb
Gadgil contested election to the Central Legislative Council
as Congress candidates from Poona joint constituency. It was
Shankarrao Deo who had suggested Keshavrao's name for the
party candidature. It clearly shows that by the time of
1934 elections, Deo had well realized the fact that Keshavrao
enjoyed lofty prestige and wielded powerful influence among
the common masses in Maharashtra. As per Deo's expectations
Keshavrao contributed a lot in spreading the Congress
activities in rural parts of Maharashtra and consequently
the whole of Maharashtra passed under Congress influence.
Keshavrao Jedhe and Kakasaheb Gadgil enabled Shankarrao Deo
to make the Faizpur Congress of 1936 a grand success. During
the individual satyagraha campaign of 1940-41, Deo and Jedhe
worked together. Shri Deo, Jedhe and Gadgil were important
leaders in Congress parliamentary board in Maharashtra from
1934 to the beginning of 1946.

Sixteen years after Jedhe's Congress entry
differences arose between Deo and Jedhe. They could not see
eye to eye with each other on many issues. Shankarrao Deo
was both a practical and selfish politician. He desired to
retain his personal sway over Congress in Maharashtra at all cost. He was unwilling to relinquish the Congress presidency. Deo looked upon Jedhe as a handy weapon for safeguarding his own political interests. Till 1946, Deo utilized Jedhe's influence over the masses for strengthening the freedom movement and Congress organization in Maharashtra. In 1946, the national situation was changed. National freedom was seen round the corner. Deo thought that he did not need Jedhe's help any more. Deo desired that Jedhe should not remain prominent in Maharashtra Congress and so he tried to sidetrack Jedhe.  

In 1946, while preparing the list of party candidates for elections to provincial legislature, Deo allotted maximum number of party tickets to his followers and neglected Jedhe group. After election Deo did not consult Jedhe and Gadgil regarding B.G.Kher's election as Prime Minister of Bombay Province and formation of ministry. Consequently differences within the party increased. On this background election to presidency of provincial Congress committee was held in May 1946. In it Jedhe defeated Shankarrao Deo and Raosaheb Patwardhan. Kher ministry functioning according to Deo's advice failed to satisfy the aspirations of the toiling masses. Jedhe was unhappy with Kher ministry. He founded within Congress the 'Shetkari Kamgar Sangh' for protecting the interests of the working classes. Deo group tried to ban these activities. Because of this dirty politics Keshavrao Jedhe
left the Congress and founded the PWP in 1948. Although Jedhe reentered the Congress in 1953, he did not work with Deo from 1953 to the end of his life in 1959.

**Prema Kantak (1906 – 1985)**

Prema Kantak was a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and a close associate of Shankarrao Deo. She was also a prominent leader of the woman front in Maharashtra provincial Congress Committee. She was born at Bombay on 1st July 1906. During her student days, she was profoundly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. Due to Gandhiji's influence on her she decided to devote her life to service of the nation. She lived in Gandhiji's company at Sabarmati Ashram from 1929 to 1933.

Shankarrao Deo along with Acharya Bhagwat founded the 'Kasturba Ashram' at Saswad in Poona district on 5th August 1934. Deo entrusted its responsibility to Prema Kantak. Sometime in the year 1934, Keshavrao Jedhe and Premabai got acquainted with each other. Both of them were active Congress workers and regarded Gandhiji as their ideal hero.

When a decision was taken to hold the Congress session at Faizpur in December 1936, a need to have a separate women volunteer corps was felt. Shankarrao Deo entrusted this responsibility to Prema Kantak. In the creation of this volunteer corps she received co-operation
from Jedhe, Gadgil, S.M. Joshi etc. In subsequent time also she got help and co-operation from Jedhe, Gadgil, S.M. Joshi and Others. Prema Kantak, Jedhe, Gadgil and S.M. worked together for the success of Faizpur Congress.

During the later years of her life, she devoted herself to constructive work. Jedhe always extended his support to her work. Relations between Jedhe and Prema Kantak had been throughout cordial. When Jedhe was PCC Chief, he used to visit frequently Saswad Ashram. In May 1947, a workshop of women workers was organized at Saswad Ashram. On 31st May 1947, Jedhe presided over its valedictory function there. Shri Jedhe praised Premabai's social work.

In a public meeting held under Gadgil's presidency at Saswad Ashram in 1953, Keshavrao Jedhe announced his reentry into the Congress. At that time Premabai welcomed him. She had high regards for Keshavrao's work. So she wrote,

"Jedhe occupies an important place in the freedom struggle after 1930. He brought the Bahujan Samaj into the freedom struggle. He was also responsible to provide a democratic form to the non-Brahman movement".

Shankarrao More (1889 - 1966)

Shankarrao More was a learned lawyer, a thinker, a rationalist and also a powerful orator. At the same time
he was often a controversial figure. He worked in different movements like the non-Brahman movement, national freedom movement, and organizations like the Peasants and Workers Party and the Congress. Shankarrao More was one of such youths who got attracted to the non-Brahman movement carried on under the leadership of Jedhe and Javalkar. As More also became an active worker of the Non-Brahman party he got acquainted with Keshavrao Jedhe sometime in the year 1922.  

In 1930, when Keshavrao Jedhe joined the national freedom movement Shankarrao More also accompanied him. During the period of national freedom movement the bonds of their friendship got strengthened. Due to Jedhe's support, Shankarrao More could occupy the position of the President of Poona district local Board from 1934 to 1939. More worked with Jedhe and Gadgil in carrying out Congress propaganda. Jedhe, Gadgil and More were foremost among those who used to visit regularly the Congress Bhavan at Poona and discuss the party programme. Shankarrao More was also chairman of the Local Self Government Inquiry Committee set up by the MPCC on 8th April 1939.  

At the time of the elections to the Bombay Provincial Legislature in 1946, Jedhe insisted on inclusion of the names of Shankarrao More and Babasaheb Ghorpade in the list of Congress candidates. Jedhe, More and Tulshidas Jadhav were foremost among those who formed the 'Shetkari Kamgar Sangh' within the Congress. Further they founded the PWP in 1948.
Shankarrao More prepared the set-up of the PWP while Jedhe and Tulshidas Jadhav looked after the work of its spread and organization. The administrative skill of Shankarrao More and the organizational skill of Keshavrao Jedhe proved quite useful for the party. The contributions made by Jedhe and More to the establishment and growth of the Peasants and Workers Party in Maharashtra and the nature and causes of their differences have thoroughly been discussed in an earlier chapter entitled, "Peasants and Workers Party".

Due to some glaring defects in Shankarrao More and his ever growing ambition his relations with Keshavrao Jedhe were strained. After the Sangli session of the PWP, differences between Jedhe and More reached to a point of no retreat. So Jedhe left the PWP in 1953 and reentered the Congress. In 1960, Shankarrao More also joined the Congress but Jedhe had passed away before that. So long as Jedhe and More worked together, they proved to be a source of strength for the movements and organizations in which they worked. But when differences arose between the two the PWP lost much of its vitality.

Tulshidas Jadhav (1905)

Tulshidas Jadhav is a veteran Congressman, a renowned freedom-fighter and a true Gandhian worker in Maharashtra. In 1930, he leaped into prominence as a fearless, young nationalist who tried to defy the Martial Law authorities in Sholapur city. Since long he has been carrying on
constructive work to ameliorate the conditions of the rural poors in Solapur district.

Shri Tulshidas Jadhav and Keshavrao Jedhe got acquainted with each other sometime in the year 1927. Jadhav extended his active support to the agitation launched by Keshavrao Jedhe, against the Anti-Small Holding and Fragmentation Bill of 1927. Like Jedhe, Tulshidas Jadhav too began to actively participate in the national freedom movement since 1930. In the course of freedom movement both Jedhe and Jadhav participated in several political agitations, courted arrest and served different terms of imprisonment on a number of occasions.

In 1934, large parts of Solapur district suffered from a fearful drought. At this juncture Tulshidas Jadhav voluntarily came forward to provide relief to the famine affected people of the district. Shri Ravji Sakharam Doshi and some other merchants of Solapur generously donated to the famine relief fund. It was Jadhav who made a fair distribution of the donated sums and essential commodities to different famine affected villages and towns in the district. In this humanitarian task Jadhav was accompanied by Keshavrao Jedhe who rendered him useful help. During this period the bonds of friendship between Jedhe and Jadhav grew stronger.

In 1947 when Keshavrao Jedhe was president of the Provincial Congress Committee, Tulshidas Jadhav was also a
member of the executive committee of the PCC. Shri Jedhe, More, Jadhav etc. founded the 'Shetkari Kamgar Sangh' (Peasants and Workers Union) within the Congress in order to safeguard and promote the interests of the working classes in Maharashtra. Both Jedhe and Jadhav toured different parts of the province with a view to explain to the people the aims and objects of the Union. In 1948, they addressed several meetings at a number of places for that purpose. For example, they addressed meetings at Nasik between 8th and 10th April at Deolali on 12th April and at Sangli on 13th April 1948. From 19th to 24th April 1948 they jointly addressed a number of meetings at Penur, Mohol, Solapur, Pimpri, Kurduwadi, Pandharpur etc. places in Solapur district and tried to convince the people of the need to have a peasant organization.

In 1948, Jedhe-More-Jadhav trio left the Congress and founded the Peasants and Workers Party. The main pillars of the PWP were Jedhe, Jadhav, More, Raut and others. Shri Tulshidas Jadhav looked to the organizational aspect of the party and worked for its spread. Like Jedhe Tulshidas Jadhav also tried to serve the cause of the toiling masses in Maharashtra in his own way. Later on Shri Jadhav was also disappointed because of the internal power politics in the PWP, feelings of frustration among its workers and lack of public contacts of the party. Like Jedhe Jadhav also left the PWP and reentered the Congress in 1955.
between Jedhe and Jadhav were always cordial. About Shri Keshavrao Jedhe's work Tulshidas Jadhav states,

"Keshavrao's whole life was a Yadna. He has stirred the social and political life of Maharashtra. He opposed the high caste and white-collared leadership. Jedhe is responsible for the emergence of present leadership in Maharashtra. Jedhe was a mass leader. He was a straightforward, simple and non-violent socio-political worker". 40

Madhavrao Bagal (1896 - 1986)

Bhai Madhavrao Bagal was an eminent leader of Kolhapur State Praja Parishad. He was a versatile genius. His father was a social worker. Madhavrao Bagal also worked in various fields. He was, therefore, associated with religious reforms, temple entry agitations, efforts for eradication of untouchability, workers movements, establishment of Kolhapur State Praja Parishad, Peasant Conferences, National Freedom Movement, the Peasants and Workers Party etc. Moreover, Bhai Bagal was a prolific writer, a famous orator and an accomplished artist. He was very much influenced by socialist ideas.

Keshavrao Jedhe and Madhavrao Bagal got acquainted with each other at the time of an Agriculturists' Conference held in 1930. Both of them took part in the freedom movement carried on under Gandhiji's leadership in British territory. Their friendship grew in course of national freedom movement. 41
Intimacy between Jedhe and Bagal further developed owing to Jedhe's crystal-clear character and his selfless work.

When the powerful tide of the Quit-India movement subsided and when Mahatma Gandhi was released from jail, Congress workers began to organize a series of conferences for awakening the masses. Jedhe organized a number of such conferences. Bhai Bagal attended some them. At the time of the 1946 elections to the Bombay Legislative Council, Bhai Bagal joined Deo, Gadgil and Jedhe in carrying out the election campaigns of Congress candidates. On 3rd April 1948, a meeting of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee was convened. Madhavrao Bagal, in his capacity as the executive president of Kolhapur State Praja Parishad, attended the meeting. At that time differences between Deo group and Jedhe group had reached a high water mark. Bhai Bagal addressed the meeting. However, Shankarrao Deo did not like his speech and so he asked Bagal to wind it up. But Keshavrao Jedhe intervened and allowed Bagal to speak further.

Keshavrao Jedhe attended some of the sessions of Kolhapur State Praja Parishad which was led by Madhavrao Bagal. A session of Kolhapur Praja Parishad was held at Gargoti on 24th and 25th May 1947. Jedhe and Gadgil attended this session. In the session Jedhe stated that the sovereign authority of the state rests not with the king but with the
Another session of Kolhapur State Praja Parishad was held at Panhala on 9th April 1948. It was attended by Jedhe and More.

In February 1949, Madhavrao Bagal dissolved Kolhapur State Praja Parishad. On 1st March 1949, Kolhapur State was merged in the Indian Union. Thereafter, Madhavrao Bagal, along with his followers, joined the PWP. Even though Y.B. Chavan and Hire had requested Bagal to join the Congress, he preferred to join the PWP and it was solely due to Keshavrao's influence on him. Bagal and Jedhe worked in the PWP for a few years. When Jedhe resigned the primary membership of the PWP, Madhavrao Bagal called on him and requested him to withdraw his resignation. But Jedhe refused to do so. However, Madhavrao Bagal carried till the end of his life high regards and special admiration for Keshavrao Jedhe.

Bhausheb Raut (1904 -)

Shri Rajaram alias Bhausheb Raut comes from a poor fisherman family. He belongs to Khedanda, a small village in Raigad district. Bhausheb Raut is one of the senior politicians in Maharashtra who has been closely associated with the formation of the Peasants and Workers Party. He has continued his associations with the PWP till today.

On completion of his education he began to take part in social work and devoted himself to the welfare of the depressed classes. In 1930, he entered the freedom movement.
During the Civil-Disobedience movement of 1930-34, he first came in contact with Keshavrao Jedhe. In the course of subsequent years friendly relations developed between the two. In the freedom movement since 1930, both Jedhe and Raut came closer on many occasions and worked together to promote the cause of national freedom. Soon after the outbreak of the Quit-India movement Bhausaheb Raut was arrested on 10th August 1942 and sent to Yerawada jail. At that time Congress leaders like Jedhe, Gadgil, Jadhav, Deogirikar etc., had been detained in the same jail. During the period of their imprisonment at Yerawada jail Jedhe, Raut and Tulshidas Jadhav used to have discussions among themselves. They discussed the issue of leadership of the Provincial Congress Committee and the capitalist policies of Deo group. These discussions prepared the background for the formation of the PWP.

Soon after the end of second world war political situation in Maharashtra also began to change rapidly. The provincial congress committee was divided into two warring groups viz. Deo group and Jedhe group. Bhausaheb Raut one of those who consistently supported Jedhe's stand. First meeting of the forty MLAs supporting Jedhe took place at Raut's residence. In it the issue of inclusion of some MLAs in the ministry was considered and a few recommendations were made. A deputation consisting of Tulshidas Jadhav, Bhausaheb Shinde and Raut called on Deo and Kher and referred those recommendations to them. However, they refused to consider the recommendations. Later on a number of meetings related to the formation of the PWP were held at Raut's residence.
Shri Raut has played an important role in the formation of the PWP. In 1946, the PWP contested two assembly by-elections one each in Kolaba and Ahmednagar districts. Shri Bhausaheb Raut was returned to the assembly from Kolaba constituency. At that time Shri Jedhe had canvassed for him.

After the first general election of 1952, differences between Jedhe and More became quite acute and consequently Keshav Rao Jedhe decided to leave the PWP. On that occasion Raut, Bagal, Nana Patil and others in the PWP pointed out to Jedhe that his exit from the party would weaken it and they requested him not to leave the party. But Jedhe did not accept their advice. Although the founders of the PWP left it one after another, Bhausaheb Raut continue to work in the PWP. Shri Bhausaheb Raut had been a close associate of Keshav Rao Jedhe for more than 20 years.

R.K. Khadilkar (1905 - 1979)

Shri R.K. Khadilkar was one of Jedhe's important colleagues in the Peasants and Workers Party. He was an exponent of leftist philosophy. He was much influenced by the principles of socialism. Like hundreds of educated youths of his times, Khadilkar too came under the profound influence of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership in the late 1920s. Khadilkar began to participate in the freedom movement while he was a college student. It was during the course of national freedom movement that contacts were first established between R.K. Khadilkar and Keshav Rao Jedhe.
At the time of the Faispur Congress of 1936, R.K. Khadilkar worked as the Broadcasting Minister. During this period friendship between Jedhe and Khadilkar developed further. After the end of II World War Bombay Provincial Congress Committee led by Shankarrao Deo began to pass under the influence of the capitalists. Jedhe and his colleagues were disappointed by the activities of the pro-capitalist Congress leaders. So Jedhe and his colleagues started making preparations for the formation of the PWP. At that time R.K. Khadilkar got naturally attracted towards Jedhe activities.

Shri Gadgil, Jedhe, More and Jadhav had cordial relations with Khadilkar. They used to visit frequently his residence at Poona. Khadilkar always offered them kind hospitality and provided them with the various eatables of their choice. On one such occasion Jedhe told Khadilkar.

"Anna (R.K.K.)! there are Extremism, Marxism Socialism and Gandhism in politics. Our farmers don't understand these isms. However, if we name the philosophy that we are going to follow for welfare of the farmers and workers as 'Khardavad', our farmers would immediately follow it."

Relations between Jedhe and Khadilkar began to deteriorate since Jedhe's defeat in Lok Sabha election from Poona Constituency in 1952. The cause of Jedhe's defeat was the tricks played by Khadilkar and More. So Jedhe's differences with Khadilkar also began to increase since then. However when there soon arose differences between More and
Khadilkar within the PWP, Khadilkar realized that in Jedhe-More controversy Jedhe was perfectly right. Despite the political differences between Jedhe and Khadilkar their personal relations remained friendly till the end. Shri Khadilkar always held Jedhe in high esteem. About Jedhe Khadilkar wrote,

"Jedhe was a real leader of the Bahujan Samaj. Nobody had organized the Peasants and Workers. Jedhe did it for the first time. Because of it the peasants and workers favourably responded to Jedhe. Those uneducated, poor people could understand well who was their true well-wisher".53

Nana Patil (1900-1976)

Krantisinh Nana Patil was the legendary hero of the underground movement which led to the establishment of a parallel authority in Satara district during the days of Quit-India movement. He had deep involvement in social as well as political movements. He was a leader of the masses and also a very good public orator. Satyashodhak Samaj and the non-Brahman movement, freedom movement, peasant awakening, Peasants and Workers Party and Sanyukta Maharashtra movement were the common areas in which both Jedhe and Nana Patil worked. Due to Satyashodhak Samaj's activities they got acquainted with each other around the year 1925.
Shri Jedhe mobilized the rural masses to the Congress as well as the freedom struggle. It was because of this that Nana Patil also joined the Congress. He took the national tricolour on his shoulder and paid visits to a number of villages propagating the Congress message. Nana Patil also participated in the Civil Dis-obedience movement of 1930. During the days of the C.D. movement relations between the two became very thick. Nana Patil played a Pivotal role in Quit India movement of 1942. Both Jedhe and Nana Patil participated in the national freedom movement.

When the disillusioned Jedhe started making efforts for the formation of the PWP, Nana Patil attended several meetings held in that context. But he did not join the PWP immediately after its inception. Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil and Keshavrao Jedhe persuaded him to join the party because they felt that his powerful oratory and popular image would be useful for strengthening the PWP and to make it an effective alternative to the Congress. Eventually Nana Patil joined the PWP on 13th May 1948. Nana Patil co-operated with Jedhe, More, Jadhav etc. in propagating the objectives and policies of the PWP among the masses. For that purpose he along with Jedhe and Jadhav, addressed a number of public meetings in Nagar, Nasik, Solapur etc. districts. His public speeches were very effective and so he could win hearts of the rural masses.
Both Jedhe and Nana Patil had deep sympathy for the toiling masses. Both of them were noble, kind hearted, sober and the seekers of truth. Friendship between the two was enviable. Their public images proved beneficial to the PWP. However, both of them, it seems, left the PWP in 1953. Nana Patil joined the Communist Party of India in 1953. Both Jedhe and Nana Patil changed political parties often. They did not so for their selfish ends but for the fulfilment of their lofty ideals.

Nana Patil always had high regards for Jedhe. When Nana Patil decided to contest election to Loksabha in 1957 from Satara constituency against Congress candidate, it was Keshavrao Jedhe who paid the amount of Rs.500/- as his security deposit. Even though both belonged to two different political parties at the time of 1957 elections, Jedhe rendered useful help to Nana Patil in his constituency. Affection between these two great leaders lasted till the end.

Kakasaheb Wagh (1898 - 1973)

Shri Deoram alias Kakasaheb Sayaji Wagh was a prominent leader of the non-Brahman movement in Nasik district. He was also a close associate of Keshavrao Jedhe in the Peasants and Workers Party. He made a remarkable contribution in the fields of socio-educational reforms and co-operative movement. He always championed the cause of the Peasants and Workers in his district.
Kakasaheb Wagh belonged to a Peasant family of Ranwad a small place in Nasik district. He had received only elementary education. He was a contractor by profession. While working as a contractor he started taking part in social and educational work. Later he was attracted towards the non-Brahman movement carried on under Keshavrao Jedhe's leadership. Soon he started working in the non-Brahman movement in Nasik district. It was some time in 1925 that he first met Keshavrao Jedhe. Kakasaheb had high regards for Keshavrao's work.

Shri Wagh in collaboration with Jedhe, did a good deal of work for the non-Brahman movement in Nasik district. Whenever, Kakasaheb Wagh visited Poona in connection with work of non-Brahman party, he put up in 'Jedhe-Mansion'. Thus it was in the course of non-Brahman movement that relations between Jedhe and Wagh developed further. Due to Kakasaheb Wagh's efforts a session of Bombay Provincial non-Brahman Conference was held on 15th May, 1927 at Dabhadi in Nasik district. Shrimant Khaserao Pawar presided over it. It was attended among others by Jedhe brothers. At the same time a session of the Nasik district non-Brahman party was held under the presidency of Shri Bagade. Jedhe attended it also. In this session Shri Wagh was elected as a party secretary of the district unit. As he was of the view that without socio-educational reforms political reforms would be meaningless, he did not follow Jedhe when the
latter participated in the national freedom movement in 1930. On the contrary, Wagh and other like minded workers organized the 'Maratha League' within the Non-Brahman Party and continued their socio-educational activities.

Shri Kakasaheb Wagh joined the Congress in 1946 only because he found that the peasant masses in Maharashtra had been influenced by the Congress by that time. Soon Jedhe and his colleagues started making preparations for the setting up of the Peasants and Workers Union within the Congress. Shri Wagh attended many of the meetings held by Jedhe in this context. When the said Union came into being Kakasaheb joined it. Latter on Jedhe, More and Jadhav founded on 13th June 1948 the Peasants and Workers Party. At that time Shri Wagh also left the Congress and joined the PWP. For the spread of the PWP, Jedhe and Wagh jointly toured Nagar and Nasik districts. Sometimes Nana Patil also joined them. It was due to Kakasaheb Wagh's leadership and efforts that the activities of the PWP spread everywhere in Nasik district. He organised several meetings and conferences in various villages for carrying on party propaganda when Jedhe-More-Jadhav conceded his demand of holding the annual session of the PWP in Nasik district, the same was held at Dabhadi in May 1550 due to Kakasaheb Wagh's initiative. He was also responsible for the Lasalgaon Session of PWP held in August 1950. Shri Jedhe who led the PWP at State level accompanied Wagh on various occasions.
When the Congress session was held at Nasik in September 1950, under the presidency of Shri Purshottamdas Tandon, a huge morcha was taken out by the workers of the PWP to protest against the reactionary policies of the Congress and its pro-capitalist leanings and doings. Some twenty five thousand peasants participated in it. Shri Kakasaheb Wagh was main organizer of the morcha. Shri Jedhe, V.N.Patil, G.D.Lad, Yashwant Chavan etc. were present there on the protest day.61

When differences between Jedhe and More became acute in the PWP, Nana Patil and Shri Wagh suggested that in order to save the party from total collapse secretaryship of the party should be transferred from More to Jedhe. But as More did not agree to it, split within the PWP became inevitable. After Jedhe's exit from the PWP, Kakasaheb Wagh also left the party along with Shri Datta Deshamukh.62

There were many similarities between Keshavrao Jedhe and Kakasaheb Wagh. Both of them had to change political parties often, but they did not forget at all their ultimate aims and objectives. Relationship between the two remained cordial throughout. Kakasaheb Wagh was one of the few persons who were present beside Keshavrao Jedhe's bed when the latter breathed his last.
S. M. Joshi (1904 - 1989)

S. M. Joshi was a veteran freedom fighter, a great socialist, an architect of Sanyukta Maharashtra and also an organizer of Rashtraseva Dal Movement. He was widely respected because of his fearlessness and selflessness. Though there were differences between S. M. Joshi and Keshavrao Jedhe they worked in close collaboration with each other on a number of occasions. Jedhe and Joshi first came in contact with each other in 1925.

The 'Youth League' was established at Poona in 1925. Shri Kakasaheb Gadgil was its President while Jedhe was its Vice-President. S. M. Joshi was a prominent member of this body. Both Joshi and Jedhe jointly carried out work of the Youth League. The famous Parvati Satyagraha was organized on 13th October 1929. Shri Jedhe, Gadgil and S. M. Joshi participated in it.

To protest against the Anti-Small Holding and Fragmentation Bill, a meeting of the peasants was organized by Jedhe brothers in the Ray Market at Poona on 25th July 1928. Shri Joshi had taken part in the meeting. When Jedhe was involved in the non-Brahman movement, S. M. Joshi was engaged in Seva Dal activities. Both of them entered the national freedom movement in 1930. He attaches great importance to Jedhe's Congress entry in 1930. In this regard he states,
"A senior leader of the Bahujan Samaj Keshavrao Jedhe joined the Congress in 1930. He was responsible for widening the base of the Congress organization and freedom movement in Maharashtra". S.M. Joshi co-operated with Deo, Jedhe and Gadgil to make the Faizpur Congress a success.

S.M. Joshi was profoundly influenced by the principles of socialism. He was one of those who organized the Congress socialist party in 1935. After his release from jail in 1936, he organized workers of the small scale industries in Poona and tried to secure justice for them. After having formed the union he declared strike of the worker which lasted for a week. It was Jedhe who intervened in the strike and brought about compromise. About this strike Shri Joshi states,

"It would have been very difficult for us to make the strike successful if Shri Jedhe had not sympathetically intervened for us in it. It is important to note that though he himself owned a utensil factory, he had taken lead to settle the strike amicably. This incident was also responsible for the development of my cordial relations with Shri Jedhe".

Soon after the attainment of national independence, Shri Jedhe and his colleagues founded the Peasants and Workers Party while Shri Joshi became one of the pioneers of the Indian Socialist Party. Still they were on good terms with each other.
In the general elections of 1952 the Poona Loksabha seat was contested by Shri Kakasaheb Gadgil of Congress, Keshavrao Jedhe of the PWP, S.M.Joshi of the Socialist Party and K.M.Mahajan of Hindumahasabha. Shri Jedhe felt it very awkward to contest elections against Gadgil, while S.M.Joshi felt sorry to contest it against Jedhe. In this context S.M. Joshi, in his autobiography, wrote,

"To speak about myself I should not have contested the Loksabha election.... I should have left that seat for Keshavrao." 67

Both Keshavrao Jedhe and S.M.Joshi worked together in the movement organized for the formation of Sanyukta Maharashtra. In 1956, Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti was set up. It consisted of thirty members representing different political parties. Keshavrao Jedhe was one of the special invitees on that Committee. Later on when Shri Jedhe's health began to deteriorate he said to S.M., "now you are the leader of the Sanyukta Maharashtra movement. You alone can do this work".68 As leaders of Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti knew well Keshavrao's work in and his support to the Sanyukta Maharashtra movement, the Samiti did not put up its candidate against Jedhe in Baramati Loksabha Constituency in the 1957 elections. Thus Jedhe and S.M., forgetting their political differences, often worked together for noble and constructive cause.
S.M. Joshi always had great regards for Keshavrao Jedhe. He used to visit Jedhe Mansion often to meet Keshavrao. About Keshavrao Jedhe in this interview, S.M. Joshi states, "Keshavrao Jedhe's and mine aim was the same. However, the ways were different. Keshavrao opposed capitalism and communism. He was a follower of democratic socialism. However, his way was straight and rought. In the history of modern Maharashtra, only after Mahatma Phule, he was the man who courageously came forward for the establishment of social equality and social justice".  

Keshavrao Jedhe and S.M. Joshi belonged to different social groups and political parties. Many times they held different political views. Yet there were certain similarities between the two. Both of them had innate love for the common masses and both of them always fought against injustice and oppression. Though their methods were different, their ultimate aims were the same. Therefore, despite the political differences, they came closer and worked together on a number of occasions.

Torch-Bearer Contemporary Y.B. Chavan (1914 - 1984)

During the latter half of Keshavrao Jedhe's public career, hundreds of youth workers passed under his influence. Many of them received from him inspiration, guidance and encouragement for participating in socio-political activities. Some of those inspired youths rightly understood Keshavrao's
aspirations and tried in their own humble way to promote the cause dearer to him. Y.B.Chavan represents many such big and small workers. So we are going to examine here Keshavrao Jedhe's relations with Yashavantrao Chavan.

Yashavantrao Chavan is an architect of modern Maharashtra emerging since 1960. He was a distinguished freedom fighter. He was an astute politician and a brilliant diplomat. He worked successfully as the state C.M., the Defence Minister, the Union Home Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of India.

Yashavantrao Chavan was much Junior to Keshavrao Jedhe. Jedhe was a leader of the first generation of Bahujan Samaj while Chavan was a leader of its second generation. During his student days Chavan was considerably influenced for some time by Keshavrao Jedhe's personality and leadership. In those days Jedhe and Javalkar addressed a big public meeting held at Karad. This was the occasion when Chavan heard Jedhe's for the first time.

What appeared more important to Chavan was not Jedhe's leadership of the non-Brahman Movement but his mobilizing the rural non-Brahman masses to the national freedom movement in 1930. In this regard Shri Chavan wrote,

"A salient feature of the C.D. Movement of 1930 is that during this movement representatives of the rural masses went to jail on a large scale. It was not simple jail going
but it was something like accepting the creed of the freedom movement. When I think as to how such brilliant men emerged in such lifeless society, I feel that it must be the indirect effect of the freedom struggle over the year upon the social mind. Similarly respected for Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru must be responsible for it. To speak only about Maharashtra, credit for mobilizing the rural masses should go to Karmaveer V.R. Shinde and Jedhe. Both of them had participated in the movement of 1930 right from its beginning and gone to jail by defying unjust laws. It certainly influenced minds of the rural youths.... I had regards for both of them. We were especially happy when a young leader like Keshavrao Jedhe left the non-Brahman movement and joined the main stream of the freedom movement. In the freedom movement Karmaveer Shinde and Keshavrao Jedhe were Yashavantrao's ideals.

Yashavantrao Chavan was elected to the provincial legislature for the first time in 1946. Thereafter he joined Jedhe, More, Jadhav etc., in registering protest against the functioning of the Kher ministry. However, when Jedhe and others revolted against conservative leadership and pro-capitalist policies of the provincial Congress Chavan did not accompany him. He was not ready, it seems, to fight against the party high command. Later on when Jedhe and his colleagues founded the PWP, Chavan did not join them. Chavan's stand at this juncture has been interpreted differently by political
observers and scholars. Chavan thought that the newly founded PWP was confined to Maharashtra alone while Congress was a national party having the socialistic leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Hence he did not leave the Congress.  

Next generation of the Bahujan Samaj was very much benefitted due to the socio-political agitations carried on by Jedhe. Because of him a number of young leaders of the Bahujan Samaj including Chavan got opportunities to prove their mettles. Jedhe's work proved useful for Yashavantrao Chavan's future leadership. However, Chavan did not accept into all of Jedhe's views. They sharply differed on the methods to be employed for achieving the objectives of the formation of Sanyukta Maharashtra. As political and social workers Jedhe and Chavan came in contact with each other several times. Chavan always looked upon Jedhe with reverence. When Yashavantrao Chavan came to power he faithfully tried to bring many of Jedhe's ideals into reality and carry forward the torch of Jedhe's mission.

As there goes a saying "Man is known by the company he keeps", the above study of Keshavrao Jedhe's relationship with many of his contemporaries enables us to understand the various aspects of his multi-dimensional personality. For serving noble and constructive cause he, setting aside political differences, joined hands with all the concerned irrespective of their political parties. He possessed broad outlook and had a powerful mass appeal. He didn't like selfish
and self-centred persons. Keshavrao was loved and respected widely by the people as well as his contemporaries.
REFERENCES

2. Ibid., pp.69-79.
5. Rashtraveer, 27th August, 1929.
  Interview - Barrister P.G.Patil.
17. Pandharinath Patil papers - page of an advertisement.
18. Ibid.
20 Gadgil, N.V. Pathik, Part-I, pp.188-189

21 Phadake, Y.D. (Ed.) Vangmay, Dinkarrao Javalkar
Samagra Vangmay, p.20


24 Ibid., p.350

25 Ibid., p.310

26 Kantak, Prema. Satyagrahi Maharashtra, p.356

27 Idem

28 Jansatta, 7th May, 1949


31 Home Department (Special) The Non-Brahman Party -
First All India Conference, File No.143 EI, p.13.

32 Maharashtra Congress Patrika, September 1947, p.27.


34 Interview - Ravindra More, Interview - Bhausaheb Raut.

35 Maharashtra Prantik Congress Committeene Nemalelya
 Stanik Swarajya Chaukashi Samiticha Ahaval, March, 1940.

36 Andurkar, V.G. Khasadar Tulshidas Jadhav - Jeevan
 Darshan, p.23.

37 Maharashtra Congress Patrika, September, 1947, p.17.

38 Hand written Record of Tulshidas Jadhav - Dainandini

39 Interview - Tulshidas Jadhav
Idem

Interview - Madhavrao Bagal.


Ibid., p.141

Bagal, M.K. Jeevan Pravah, p.143

Akhand Bharat, 29th May, 1947


Interview - Bhausaheb Raut


Interview - Bhausaheb Raut

Kesari, 8th March, 1980

Kesari, 11th March, 1979

Gadgil, N.V. Pathik, Part II, p.566

Khadilkar, R.K. Gele te Divas, p.41

Shivanikar, Raghav. Sataracha Sinha (Krantisinha Nana Patil Charitra), pp.8-12


Interview - Raghav Shivanikar

Interview - Pratap Wagh

Dr. Phadake Sudhir. Karmaveer Kakasaheb Wagh - Kal Va - Karya, p.182.

Ibid., pp.189, 192, 198

Ibid., pp.202-204
62 Ibid., p.212
63 Interview - S.M. Joshi
64 Navalkar, H.N. Shivaram Janaba Kamble Yanche Charitra
    ani Parvati Satyagrahacha Itihas, p.81
65 Interview - S.M. Joshi
66 Joshi, S.M. Mee S.M., p.239
67 Ibid., p.175
68 Interview - S.M. Joshi
69 Idem
70 Chavan, Y.B. Yashavantrao Chavan Atmcharitra
    Krishnakath, p.30
71 Ibid., p.91
72 Joshi, Rambhau. Yashavantrao - Itihasache Ek Pan, p.96
73 Interview - Madhavrao Bagal
KESHAVRAO Jedhe as an important leader of the non-Brahman movement and our national freedom movement occupies a significant place in the history of modern Maharashtra. An attempt has been made in the foregoing chapters to study the life and career of this eminent leader of the masses from various points of views. This estimate of Keshavrao Jedhe as a socio-political leader which has been formed as a result of my studies.

He was born in a rich, prestigious family having glorious historical traditions. His house 'Jedhe Mansion' proved to be his early training school. The training received at home and the influences exercised on him by men like Rajarshi Shahu Chhatrapati of Kolhapur, Maharshi V.R.Shinde and his elder brother Baburao Jedhe together moulded Keshavrao Jedhe into a social worker first and a social leader later.

After Shahu Maharaj's death in 1922 he assumed leadership of the non-Brahman movement. He was an eminent leader of this movement. He spent about twelve years of his life in the non-Brahman movement. During the initial stage of his career he was engaged in fighting against Lokmanya Tilak and his followers for some years. His was a fight
against Brahman Conservatism and reactionary social policies of Tilak and his group. As a leader of the non-Brahman movement he always attempted to implement the Satyashodhak ideals of social justice and social equality. His role as the non-Brahman member of Pune Municipality is remarkable. He, as a member of Pune Municipality, proposed that Jotiba Phule's statue be erected at a public place in Pune. But his attempts failed and his dream remained unfulfilled at that time. He was also associated with the activities of Shivaji memorial in Pune. In politics he did not like the pro-British policy of the non-Brahman party. It was due to this difference that Jedhe had to part company with Bhaskarrao Jadhav and Dinkarrao Javalkar his old friend. Keshavrao Jedhe, though he was a leader of the non-Brahman movement, was a nationalist in his outlook from the beginning of his career. It was due to his progressive social outlook and views that he completely identified himself with the Mahad Satyagraha and the Parvati Satyagraha planned by the Dalit masses struggling under the inspiring leadership of Dr. Ambedkar.

As Keshavrao Jedhe was fed up with the narrow council politics of the non-Brahman party and as there was a growing influence of Mahatma Gandhi on him he entered the national freedom movement carried on by the Congress under Gandhiji's leadership. With him he brought the non-Brahman peasant masses living in the rural parts of Maharashtra into the freedom movement. Consequently freedom movement in Maharashtra
became broad based. Thus Keshavrao was responsible for winning the non-Brahman masses to the Congress side. He was twice president of the Provincial Congress Committee. He built up a strong organization of Congress party in Maharashtra and also spread Congress activities throughout the province. In the 1934 elections he was a Congress candidate along with Kakasaheb Gadgil and he won the election. Jedhe and Gadgil worked together for a pretty long time in Congress. Jedhe and Gadgil provided a powerful joint leadership to Maharashtra till 1948. His efforts to further the cause of Congress and the freedom movement in Maharashtra were numerous and praiseworthy.

From the beginning of his career Jedhe championed the cause of the peasants. So he was seen in the forefronts of the famine relief operations. He was mainly responsible for organizing a strong peasant organization to protest against the Anti-small Holdings Bill and Land Tax increase proposed by the Bombay Provincial Government. In 1948 he along with Shankarrao More, Tulshidas Jadhav, Bhausaheb Raut etc. laid the foundations of the Peasants and Workers Party. As the Congress in Bombay Province was passing under the influence of the capitalists and as the Congress government led by B.G.Kher failed to implement the welfare programmes for the benefits of the toiling masses, Jedhe and his colleagues had to leave the Congress and founded the PWP. Within six years of that he realized that the PWP too had
also failed to achieve its objectives. For a short period Jedhe-Mbre joined leadership of PWP was extremely popular in Maharashtra. Unfortunately soon there arose sharp differences between the two leaders. Keshavrao Jedhe didn't like Shankarrao More's pro-communist policies and his attempts to form an alliance with the Communist Party. He felt that it won't matter much even if the PWP remained confined to the Marathi speaking regions but it should always strive to achieve its objectives. More on the other hand, was eager to develop both party as well as his leadership to national stature. Soon ideological differences came on personal level. Keshavrao Jedhe left the PWP and re-entered Congress in 1954.

However since 1954 he was given a secondary position in the Congress party. Yet his reputation in the society remained unimpaired. His role in the agitations for the Goa liberation and for the formation of Sanyukta Maharashtra is significant. He enthusiastically participated in those struggles. He even led for some time the Goa Vimochan Samittee (Goa Liberation Committee). During those struggles he often openly criticized the unwise policies of the Congress government. Thus it becomes clear that Keshavrao Jedhe strengthened the various movements and organizations in which he worked from time to time.

It was Keshavrao Jedhe who provided a firm base to Gandhian politics here and who also implemented Gandhiji's
Keshavrao devoted himself to the implementation of constructive work programmes. From 1944 to 1946, he ceaselessly propagated the policy of prohibition and sincerely worked for the eradication of untouchability. In a number of public meetings he severely criticized the hoarders and black-marketeers for causing harassment to the common public. In the Post-war period due to scarcity conditions peasants became the worst sufferers everywhere in India. Under such circumstances British Government imposed upon the peasants scheme of compulsory Levy of food grains which caused a lot of hardships to the peasant masses. It was Jedhe, who openly opposed the Levy Scheme. During this period he also tried to awaken and organize the peasants.

Keshavrao Jedhe, though a political leader, was never after political. He never indulged in the game of power politics. On the contrary he always remained away from it. Therefore, essential qualities of a shrewd politician who wins power by hook or by crook were lacking in him. He was a fearless patriot, an organizer, a straight-forward politician and an eminent leader of the rural peasant masses. Thinker, Organizer, Agitator are the three broad categories of political leadership. Every political leader fits into one or more of these categories. Keshavrao was a constant agitator and a good organizer but not a thinker.
He was highly respected as a valiant leader of the freedom struggle and also as an architect of the Congress organization in Maharashtra till the end of his life. Keshavrao Jedhe regarded his commitment to the masses more important than that to his party and so he changed the parties on some occasions. Despite of that he possessed an overwhelmingly popular image throughout his life. It is because of his own political image and his long standing services in the public life that he got elected to parliament in the 1957 elections on Congress ticket when many other Congress leaders had been defeated.

Soon after India attained independence a problem of integration of the princely states arose. At that time Jedhe in his capacity as the PCC chief expressed his views on this issue. In fact he was associated with the people's movement in the Deccan states. He was of the opinion that sovereign authority in a princely state rests with the people and not with its ruler and so decision regarding merger of princely states should be taken as per people's desire.

After the integration of Hyderabad in 1948, the PWP launched a Satyagraha campaign there against the rigorous Levy Scheme. However, Jedhe could not participate in it. Government authorities had prohibited the main leaders of the PWP either to enter Hyderabad region or to make public speeches regarding Satyagrahas.

In his long public career spreading over four decades, Keshavrao Jedhe came in contact with a large number of
contemporaries. He received inspiration, guidance and encouragement from Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj, Maharshi Shinde and Baburao Jedhe who happened to be his senior contemporaries. In many struggles and agitations he received valuable help, co-operation and loyal support from his comrades who were, more or less, of his age. Hundreds of youth workers were influenced by Jedhe's leadership and personality. Many of these inspired youths tried to carry forward in their own way Keshavrao's mission. A study of Keshavrao's relationship with his contemporaries enables us to understand the various aspects of his multi-dimensional personality. He disliked selfish and self-centred persons. Moreover, he was quite outspoken. He did not spare anybody if one was found on the wrong side. He did not hesitate to publically scold a man like Acharya P.K. Atre. He had a broad outlook. He could rise above party differences and join hands with people belonging to different shades of political opinion for serving a noble cause. Keshavrao Jedhe had a powerful mass appeal.

In 1954, when Keshavrao Jedhe left the PWP and joined the Congress, Shankarrao More, criticizing Jedhe, stated that Jedhe always needed somebody's support in his political life. Out of this need he joined hands with Javalkar, Gadgil and me and as soon as the need was over he threw all of them aside. But More's criticism of Jedhe is prejudiced one because at that time More, as he was removed from the General Secretaryship of the PWP, was angry with Keshavrao Jedhe. More over if one reviews Keshavrao Jedhe's relationship with Javalkar,
Gadgil and More one won't fail to understand that he was second to none of them.

A socialist leader N.G. Gore, too, while forming an estimate of Jedhe, stated "Keshavrao Jedhe remained throughout an unskilled politician and hence he required others' eyes to see and go on. He used the eyes of Kakasaheb Gadgil or of Shankarrao More or else those of his brother Baburao Jedhe". Gore's views are quite identical with those of More. Of course Gore's criticism also seems to be biased. Prof. Y. D. Phadake while disproving N.G. Gore's views stated, "Had Keshavrao seen with others' eyes always he would not have parted company with Javalkar and More nor would he have political differences with Kakasaheb. Even though he loved his elder brother very much, his brother did not like that Keshavrao should have participated in the satyagrahas of 1930-32 under Gandhi's leadership and courted imprisonment. Baburao Jedhe said that all this happened due Keshavrao's attachment to Karmveer Shinde. Many leaders can be pointed out who were superior to him regarding scholarship, learning intellectual capacities, oratory and statesmanship etc. If Keshavrao's life is compared with those of other great leaders from different angle of vision we find that Keshavrao Jedhe was second to none of these great leaders regarding the virtues like selflessness, honesty, straightforwardness, fearlessness, simple living etc."
After Keshavrao's death a reporter of 'Sakal' wrote: "He worked for the masses and the peasants in the former half of his life. But in the latter half of his life the field of his activities couldn't go much beyond Poona. He could not come forward to undertake any work on his own as an accomplished leader. This is the sum substance of his life". This is an absolutely wrong estimate of Keshavrao Jedhe. His work was never limited to Poona. He was highly reputed throughout the Marathi speaking regions. Though we cannot put him in the row of national leaders like Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru etc., he certainly occupies a significant place among those Congressmen who formed second line of leadership in pre-independence era. None can refuse to admit the fact that it was only because of Keshavrao Jedhe the P.W.P. got importance in its initial stage.

Madhavrao Bagal of Kolhapur, a veteran leader of the non-Brahman movement while evaluating Keshavrao Jedhe's personality, wrote: "Keshavrao was a born leader of the masses in Maharashtra. The growing ambitions of the masses were reflected in his life. He did not stick up to the party but stuck up to the society at large. He proceeded according to the growth and needs of the society. Otherwise he wouldn't have stepped out of the social movements. It is not true that he was guided by others and he acted according to the whims and advice of the others. Even in case of intellectual differences, he did have regards for friends, leaders or
ministers. It was not that he was a learned scholar or a very intelligent person. Yet in politics he followed his own path."  

Shri V.S. Madiwale, a Senior Journalist who worked for 'Kesari' wrote the following about Keshavrao Jedhe in his book,

"Keshavrao was an absolutely self-made man whether he was in the Congress, the PWP or any other movement, his very presence gave strength and greatness to that party. He was a selfless, virtuous, and unassuming man who firmly opposed injustice. He was an iron-man of Maharashtra who occasionally made bitter and harsh criticism. Maharashtra will forever remember his service".

In 1967 while unveiling the statue of the late Keshavrao Jedhe, Yashavantrao Chavan, by way of forming an estimate of the departed leader, stated, "Even though different inspirations are seen working at the different stages of his life, his life on the whole appeared like a quiet flow of a river. Keshavrao was such a self-respecting man who accepted people's captainship in their fights against injustice wherever it existed. Maharashtra is much indebted to Jedhe". Chavan further stated, "He fought against the oppressor whosoever he may be. He fought against the Brahmans, the British, the Congress government after independence and also the Portuguese for the liberation of Goa. In all that his stand was to fight against injustice. He had the nobility
of mind to admit his own faults. It was Jedhe who fostered the feelings of freedom and organisation among the rural people. Tatya strived hard to strengthen the nationalist movement. 7

Keshavrao Jedhe, who started his public career as a social worker and spent twelve years of his life in the non-Brahman movement, was one of the prominent leaders of that movement. Yet he was essentially a political leader and as a political leader he had always been a nationalist in his outlook throughout.
REFERENCES

1 'Kesari'. 20th April, 1954

2 Phadake, Y.D. 'Keshavrao Jedhe Shri Vidya pp.266-267.

3 Ibid., pp.266-267.

4 'Sakal'. 13th November, 1959.

5 Bagal, M.K. 'Bahujan Samajache Shilpakar' p.81

6 Madivale, V.S. Aish hi Bikat Vat, p.162.