While going through the history of Modern Maharashtra one gets impressed by the social reform movement and the national freedom movement carried out in this region. Moreover, Maharashtra produced in modern times a galaxy of social reformers and political leaders. Shri Keshavrao Jedhe (1896 - 1959), as an eminent socio-political leader, occupies a significant place in the history of Modern Maharashtra. He was a prominent leader of the non-Brahman movement, a fearless and selfless patriot, an architect of powerful Congress organization in Maharashtra and also a founder member of the Peasants and Workers Party. It was he who won the non-Brahman masses in rural parts of Maharashtra to the Congress and brought them into the national freedom movement. He was also associated with various progressive social reform movements. He played a significant role in the agitations launched for the liberation of Goa-Daman and Diu and the formation of Sanyukta Maharashtra. Since my student days I heard a lot of things and read something about this great leader of the masses. Later on Life and Career of Keshavrao Jedhe attracted me the most. I, therefore, decided to undertake a project to study all the important aspects of his life and career. It is intended here to review Keshavrao Jedhe's role in various
movements, his views on contemporary issues and his contribution to the socio-political developments in Modern Maharashtra.

However, life and career of Keshavrao Jedhe remained a neglected topic for a long time. Scholars and historians did not turn their attention to this topic till recent time. Stray attempts were made in the past to write about some of Jedhe's activities. It was Achut Balwant Kolhatkar who wrote in 1927 a Marathi book entitled, 'Jedhe-Javalkar- Javal-karanchi Kaifiyat' in which he discussed the contribution made by Jedhe and Javalkar to the non-Brahman movement. In 1944, Shri D.S. Darekar wrote another marathi book entitled, 'Bahujan Samajatil Karmaveer' in which he reviewed Keshavrao Jedhe's manifold activities up to 1940 only. Bhai Madhavrao Bagal in his book 'Bahujan Samajache Shilpakar' provided a brief sketch of Keshavrao's Life and Career. It was only in 1982 that a renowned scholar Prof. Y.D. Phadake produced Keshavrao Jedhe's first definitive biography in marathi. It is entitled, 'Keshavrao Jedhe'. At the beginning of my study of this topic I carefully studied all these works.

This work is mainly based upon published as well as unpublished primary and secondary sources pertaining to the topic of research. For the preparation of the present work I carefully studied Pandharinath Patil papers,
Madhavrao Bagal papers and Shankarrao More papers. Shri Tulshidas Jadhav's personal papers and correspondence have been used for the first time in this work. There are a number of Home Department (special) files available in the State Archives at Bombay. As those files are related to the non-Brahman movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Faizpur Congress etc., they proved much useful for the present study. Old files of a number of contemporary newspapers have also been extensively used for this work. Moreover, informal interviews were carried on with many knowledgeable persons in order to get more information about Keshavrao Jedhe's various activities.

This thesis has been divided into eight major chapters followed by a small chapter containing an estimate of Keshavrao Jedhe. Bibliography of the work is given at the end.

First chapter deals with major socio-political trends as they existed in Maharashtra at the beginning of the 20th Century. This gives a clear idea of the situation which formed an immediate background of Jedhe's work.

The family atmosphere in which Keshavrao was born and brought up and the surroundings which shaped his personality and outlook during the early years of his life have been discussed in Chapter II.
Since Shahu Maharaja's death in 1922, Keshavrao Jedhe assumed the leadership of the non-Brahman movement. He spent about twelve years of his life in that movement. In Chapter III his role in the non-Brahman movement has been evaluated.

In 1930, Keshavrao Jedhe entered the national freedom movement and also mobilized the peasant masses in the rural parts of Maharashtra towards it. He was mainly responsible for spreading the freedom movement in every nook and corner of Maharashtra. Therefore, his role in the freedom movement has been discussed in Chapter IV.

Keshavrao Jedhe is rightly looked upon as an architect of powerful Congress organization in Maharashtra. He was twice elected as the president of Maharashtra provincial Congress committee. In Chapter V of the thesis Keshavrao's contribution to the building up of the Congress organization in Maharashtra has been discussed in details.

Keshavrao Jedhe was a founder member of the Peasants and Workers Party. His role in the formation of the PWP and the spread of its activities in the initial stage has been studied in Chapter VI.

Keshavrao was always prepared to fight against all kinds of injustice. After his re-entry into the Congress in 1953, he participated in the movements launched for
the liberation of Goa, Daman and Diu and the formation of Sanyukta Maharashtra. For that he had to defy the orders issued by the Congress high command. Therefore, his role in those movements has been analysed in Chapter VII of the thesis.

In Chapter VIII, Keshavrao Jedhe's relationship with a number of his contemporaries has been examined. This study enables to understand the various aspects of Keshavrao's personality.

Finally an attempt has been made to form an estimate of Keshavrao Jedhe who can be rightly described as one of the makers of Modern Maharashtra.

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