CHAPTER-III

NON-BRAHMAN MOVEMENT
DURING the latter half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century there emerged a few movements in Maharashtra that brought about the social and cultural change. Of these non-Brahman movement was the most prominent. It sprang up from the Satyashodhak Samaj which was founded in 1873. The Satyashodhak Samaj provided to the non-Brahman movement a theoretical base. This movement was undertaken and carried on by the non-Brahmans who were economically weak and educationally backward. They started it in order to obtain their social, cultural and political rights. This movement germinated in Jyotirao Phule's life time. The Satyashodhak movement was almost lifeless for about ten to fifteen years after Phule's death but it was again revived under the leadership of Shahu Maharaj. 

Gail Omvedt, while commenting on the nature of the non-Brahman movement under Shahu Maharaj's leadership, wrote "While the Maharaja of Kolhapur, Maratha ruling prince, provided important patronage for the movement and some basis for its more conservative forms and while the non-Brahman political party which sprang up in the 1920s was primarily an organization of the non-Brahman elite; it was the Satyashodhak Samaj that gave a reality to the claims of the movement as a whole to represent the Maharashtrian masses. Because of the Samaj,
the "non-Brahman movement" represented not simply the struggle of contending elites (as such movements are usually analysed) but also a form of attempted social revolution against the Indian intelligentsia and bourgeois elites.²

It was Shahu Maharaj who, after Mahatma Phule, undertook the task of uplifting the non-Brahmans and the untouchables. He challenged the Brahman monopoly soon after he acceded to the gadi. Shahu Maharaja's attempt to educate the non-Brahmans was widely criticized by the Brahmans because they sensed a danger to their social status and their age-old monopoly in the field of education. Attempts were being made to defame him. However Shahu Maharaj was not discouraged by this. He provided education to the non-Brahmans and the untouchables and gave them preference in government employ­ments in his own state. Such steps taken by Shahu Maharaj and his 'Vedokta Controversy' stirred up the non-Brahman movement.

When conflict began in connection with 'Vedokta' issue Lokmanya Tilak sided with the orthodox Brahmans against Shahu Maharaj. Hence Brahman non-Brahman dispute grew serious. Shahu Maharaj tried to reduce the Brahman dominance in whatever fields it existed in his own state. Later on the Brahman non-Brahman dispute then existing in socio-religious field entered the political field too.³

There is a fundamental difference between the Satyashodhak movement and the non-Brahman movement. The
Satyashodhak movement was basically a socio-religious reform movement. But the non-Brahman movement had political character too. The British Government declared that after the end of the first world war political power would be granted to the Indians by instalments. And it was after this declaration that the Satyashodhak movement was converted into a political movement. The purpose of this movement was to achieve social, economic and educational advancements of the non-Brahman masses by capturing political power. Shahu Maharaj, Walchand Kothari, Keshavrao Jedhe, Javalkar, Shrinatrao Shinde, Bhaskarao Jadhav etc. were responsible for converting the socio-religious movement into a political one.

Though the term 'Non-Brahman' is indicative of castes, other than Brahman, the movement as such was never communal in its attitude. V.R. Kothari put it as, "we used to call our movement as the movement of the educationally backwards. The aim of the movement was the social and educational uplift of the non-Brahmans and the down-troddens. But our opponents used to accuse us as being haters of the Brahmans. That made us communalists. Thus our movement came to be branded as the non-Brahman movement though we never desired it to be so."

The non-Brahman movement was an offshoot of the Satyashodhak movement. The Satyashodhak and the non-Brahman movements championed the cause of human equality in the social life of Maharashtra. The supporters of this movement truly
believed that the untouchables and the backwards must also be granted equality. Mahatma Phule was this responsible for this movement. The tradition was continued by Shahu Maharaj after Phule. Thereafter the movement with all its moral urges was carried on by V.R.Kothari, Maharshi V.R.Shinde, Keshavrao Jedhe, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil and others.

After Shahu Maharaja's demise the non-Brahman movement was led by Keshavrao Jedhe. No one had heard of the Satyashodhak Samaj after its first generation consisting of men like Mahatma Phule, Bhalekar, Lokhande etc. had disappeared. It could have so happened after Shahu Maharaja's death also but as luck would have it the non-Brahman movement got an able leadership of Keshavrao Jedhe. ⁷

Jedhe Mansion was an important Centre of the non-Brahman movement between 1917 and 1927. Keshavrao participated in the movement when he was hardly 17 years old. He was impressed by the social activities carried on by his brother, Baburao Jedhe, under the guidance of Shahu Maharaj. At the same time Keshavrao along with Maharshi Shinde took in social movements launched for removal of untouchability, carrying out famine-relief operations and imparting free and compulsory primary education to children. ⁸

Non-Brahman movement became a force to be reckoned with roughly since 1918. As the orthodox sections of Brahman community adopted a stance opposing a number of useful progressive measures introduced for benefit of the masses,
there occurred a series of Brahman-Non-Brahman conflicts in Pune for about a decade since 1918. Those conflicts were related to such issues as the Patel bill, the proposals to introduce compulsory education for both boys and girls, to Mahatma Phule's statue at Pune, to throw open the public tanks and taps to all the touchables and untouchables alike; Shivaji memorial plan, mela performances and publication of some propaganda pamphlets and booklets like 'Deshache Dushman' etc.

The Patel Bill

In 1918, late Mr. Vitthalbhai Patel had introduced in the central legislative assembly, a bill seeking to legalise all inter-caste marriages amongst the Hindus. An orthodox section of the society opposed it. The Kesari group regarded the bill as an attack on Hindu religion and especially Brahmanism. They invited protests against it from all over India. Keshavrao Jedhe and the followers of the non-Brahman movement were in the favour of the bill. The supporters of the bill decided to call their meeting in Kirloskar theatre on 20th December 1918, and to pass a resolution supporting the bill. Some progressive Tilakites like Tatyasaheb Kelkar were going to speak in favour of the bill in this meeting. But the followers of Tilak group created pandemonium in the meeting. They failed to recognize that Kelkar was a member of their own group. They did not allow the supporters of the bill to speak and the meeting ended in confusion.
Dinkarrao Javalkar wrote a play entitled 'Pranay Prabhav' to epouse the cause of Patel bill. The government banned the play even before it was staged for its controversial contents. Still the opponents of the bill complained to the government against the play and secured its proscription.

Reception to Tilak

On 24, September 1918, Lokamanya Tilak left for England in connection with the Chirol case. He returned to Bombay on 27th November 1919. The Poona people organized a function for extending warm reception and presenting an address to him on 7th December 1919. But before that a meeting of those who were opposed to the idea of presenting the address was convened under the chairmanship of Wrangler Shri P.P.Paranjpe on 4th December 1919. Those who opposed the idea of presenting an address to Tilak included Jedhe brothers, Shripatrao Shinde, Javalkar, Keshavrao Bagade and V.R.Kothari etc. non-Brahman leaders, and the moderate Brahman leaders like Wrangler Paranjpe, R.P.Kale, Deodhar and also Shivram Janba Kamble, a leader of the untouchables. While making a signature on the statement issued by these leaders Maharshi Shinde wrote: "As the social policy of Lokamanya was harmful to the principles of equality and self-determination it is not right to present him an address on behalf of all the citizens of Poona. Because of this drawback he is, in my opinion, not a national leader."
Tilak's well wishers, however, organized a function to present him with an address and the opponents decided to remain absent for the same. The programme did go well except the incident that a non-Brahman youth named Hari Piraji Dhaigude openly expressed his dissatisfaction regarding the function.

Compulsory Education

In 1919 there emerged in Poona a strong movement demanding free and compulsory education. A proposal of free and compulsory education to boys and girls was then pending before the Poona Municipal Council for consideration. Some leaders tried to reach at a consensus that as the entire project involved so much expenditure, for the time being only boys should be brought under the scheme of free and compulsory education and not girls. Many leaders of the Tilak party agreed to this suggestion. On the contrary Maharshi V.R. Shinde supported by other members of the non-Brahman party launched a movement for the free and compulsory primary education for girls too. When the general body of Municipal Council was going to meet to discuss this proposal, on the same day Maharshi V.R. Shinde organized a big procession of women demanding free and compulsory primary education for girls. Ramabai Ranade, widow of the late Justice M.G. Ranade too organized a similar procession. Such a huge mob had gathered for the procession that the municipal meeting had to be adjourned. A committee, headed by Prin. Rajwade.
appointed to examine the proposal of free and compulsory education, gave its favourable report. Yet the municipal leaders pretending to test public opinion on the vital issue called a general meeting of the citizens of Poona in Kirloskar Theatre. The Chief Officer of the municipality, Shri Shankarrao Bhagwat, was elected its president. Lokmanya Tilak was also invited from Sinhagad, perhaps in order to impress the people. Maharshi V.R. Shinde too attended the meeting with all his co-workers. Maharshi Shinde strongly opposed Tilak and suggested that Tilak should not speak in this meeting. Despite this, Tilak rose to speak. The audience grew restive and some of them threw eggs and bhajis at Tilak. At last Maharshi Shinde had to intervene to shelter Tilak from the peoples' wrath. Thus the meeting had to be dissolved without doing any business. Thereafter, supporters of the Tilak party attempted to hold a meeting in Gaikwadwada but there also it was disrupted by some non-Brahman youths like Palkar brothers, Keshavrao Jedhe, Shankarrao More, Ramrao Barge etc.

After the midnight of 31st July, 1920 Tilak passed away but conflict between his followers and the non-Brahmans continued further. Even after Tilak's death Kesari continued its practice of severely criticising Chh. Shahu Maharaj. In Oct. 1920, in a meeting held under Shahu Maharaj's chairmanship in Bhavani Peth, rowdyism was created by the followers of the Kesari group. The conflict between the Brahmans and non-Brahmans was thus increasing day by day. It was
keenly felt in Poona. The Tilakites and the non-Brahmans filed suits and counter suits against each other in the law courts. Sometimes attempts were made by both the parties to give colours of the Brahman-non-Brahman controversy to some purely personal disputes.

The Shivaji Memorial Plan

Khasesaheb Pawar of Gwalior and Khasesaheb Jadhav of Baroda were the first to put forth the idea of Shri Shivaji Memorial in 1917. Shahu Maharaj felt that this memorial should be erected on behalf of the Marathas. Alijabahadur Madhavrao Shinde assured Shahu Maharaj that if Shahu Maharaj so desired he would abide himself by Maharaj's words. Shahu Maharaj too joined this plan at the request of Madhavrao Shinde, so did Jedhe brothers. A delegation consisting of Khasesaheb Pawar, Madhavrao Shinde, Daphale Maharaj of Jath, Pawar Maharaj of Dewas, as its members called on the Governor on 15th August 1921. Shahu Maharaj and Alijaba­badur Shinde too saw the Governor and invited the Prince of Wales to lay the corner-stone of the Shivaji memorial. But the Governor explained that the Prince of Wales would not accept the invitation if the memorial was to be set up by a particular caste. So Shahu Maharaj gave up the idea of owning the memorial by the Marathas only. The corner-stone was laid at the hands of the Prince of Britain. This function was arranged in Poona. However, Maharshi V.R. Shinde remained
absent for the function because he didn't like the idea of laying the cornerstone of Shivaji Memorial at the hands of a European. 

Shahu Maharaj passed away in 1922. Thereafter the Shivsmarak Committee came under control of the King of Gwalior who had financially backed this project. He insisted on making this Shivsmarak Committee more broad-based and decided to include in it the representatives of all castes including the Brahman caste. Gopalrao Deodhar and Patwardhan the Sangli King were the two Brahman members nominated on this committee.

The conflict between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins was intense during those days. The Brahman domination had been injurious to other castes. Keshavrao Jedhe had bitter experience of it. Keshavrao Jedhe and his co-workers believed that if Brahmans were included in this committee they will soon dominate it and that others in the committee would be overshadowed. So they rebelled against Shinde Sarkar. Keshavrao Jedhe, Javalkar, Palker brothers and B.L.Patil formed a youth group.

While analysing the outlook of the youth group led by Keshvarao Jedhe towards Shivaji Memorial, Gail Omvedt wrote, "Their grounds involved an appeal to the tradition of Shahu Maharaj and mixture of caste and nationalist themes, they argued that the Maratha memorial should be 'owned' by
Marathas (the term used was malik) and not other communities, and described their opponents, primarily Gwalior, as an anti-nationalist 'rich party' yielding to British pressure indeed, the lines of conflict tended to throw loyalist, upper class non-Brahmans like Bhaskarrao Jadhav together with Maratha oriented to the outside princely states against the 'youth group' which won over the support of the nationalist Maharshi V.R. Shinde and important non-Brahman newspapers such as 'Vijayi Maratha' and 'Rashtravir'.

Maratha community which intended to set up Shivaji memorial was thus divided within. Efforts were made to bring about reconciliation between Alijabahadur Shinde Sarkar and Keshavrao Jedhe and his youth group. But those efforts failed.

Keshavrao and his friends continued their powerful campaign against the rich Shinde party. Keshavrao began 'Shivsmarak' a weekly in order to raise his voice against the rich Shinde party. Javalkar published 'Shivsmarak Puran' under the pseudonym 'Agyavetal' which he wrote as a part of the opposition campaign. Dinkarrao Javalkar was one of Keshavrao Jedhe's colleagues in the non-Brahman movement. He was born in a Patil family at Alandi (chorachi) in 1898. He came of a poor family and was educated upto matriculation only. His writings were effective and his oratory was fiery. On seeing this Shahu Maharaj called him to Kolhapur where
Javalkar managed a paper named 'Tarun Maratha' and severely criticized rivals. After Shahu Maharaj's death he came back to Poona. The non-Brahman movement in Poona in those days was going on under the leadership of Keshavrao Jedhe. Javalkar was attracted by the task undertaken by Keshavrao Jedhe and thus Jedhe and Javalkar became close friends.

Javalkar's 'Shivsmarak Puran' is in verse form. An amount of Rs. Seventeen thousand out of the total funds collected for Shivaji Memorial had been allegedly misappropriated. Surprisingly enough the 'Shivsmarak Puran' too is in seventeen cantos. The 'Puran' consists bitter criticism on the rival party leaders. It also criticized Shinde Sarkar, P.C. Patil, Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Khasesaheb Pawar, Khaserao Jadhav, R.G. Shinde, Baburao Jagtap etc.

Jya Narala Iman nahi | Jya narala Dheyya nahi||
Jya Narala Bana nahi | To Ek Shandha Jana ||
Jya Narala Chad nahi | Jo nirlajya bhad khai||
Jo sada dravvas pahi | To ek Shandha Jana ||

(A man who doesn't have any loyalty, objective and self-respect should be treated as an importent. A man who has no scruples for right or wrong, who obtains profit by letting out female for prostitution, who is always after money, should be also known as neuter.)

Similarly it criticized Shinde Sarkar in the following words:

...
Alija Bahadur Shinde Sarkar | Srimant Pakshacha
Mukhya Adhar //
Gangajalicha ghamendkhor | Jor lavi dravyacha //

Alija Bahaddur Shinde who is the main-stay of the rich party
is proud of his wealth and exercises influence of wealth in
every undertaking.

On the other hand it praised Jedhe brothers in the
following words:

"Tarun pakshache Jedhe bandhu | Vate jayache
Charan Vandu //

Shahu Seva pahe sadhu | Sada mudra anandi //

(Jedhe brothers of the youth group are so respectable that
one feels like touching their feet out of respect.)
They are eager to perform such deeds that were dearer to
Shahu Maharaj and are always happy.

Keshavrao Jedhe and his colleagues thus raised
their voice against the rich party of Shinde Sarkar. However,
the workers of the 'Tarun Mandal' (young group) soon thought
that this split in the Maratha Society and the tirade against
one another would either lead to delay in or improbability of
founding Shivaji memorial and hence decided to strike a
compromise by abstaining themselves from the task of erecting
the Shivsmarak. They remained away from the Shivaji Maratha
Society too. In the meanwhile two chief conveners of the
Shivaji memorial committee expired. Khaserao Jadhav died on
5th October 1924 and Shinde Sarkar on 5th June 1925. As a result of these two deaths and the withdrawal of the Jedhe group from the memorial Chh. Rajaram Maharaj alone had to accomplish this task with the help of Divan Sir Raghunathrao Sabnis, Bhaskarrao Jadhav, A.B. Latthe, P.C. Patil etc. On 16th June 1928, ceremony to unveil Shivaji's statue was organized at the hands of Leslee Wilson the then Governor of Bombay. 17

The Chhatrapati Mela

The late Sardar Krishnaji Kashinath alias Nanasaheb Khajagiwale gave public form to the private Ganapati festival. When he had been to Gwalior in 1892, he saw there that the Ganapati festival celebrated publically with the royal grandeur. Similarly in Poona also the idea of publically celebrating Ganesh festival gained ground. In 1893 Khajagiwale, Mr. Chotawadekar and Bhau Rangari succeeded in installing three Ganesh idols publically.

A huge procession of Ganapati was organized on the day of Anant Chaturdashi in 1893. Along with the procession there was a mela organized under the leadership of Mr. Kashinath Thakuji Jadhav. Tilak liked the new tradition of setting Ganapati idols publically. He encouraged the tradition by writing in its favour in 'Kesari' on 26th September 1893. As a result of this the number of Ganapati idols installed
publically grew to 150. Thus the religious festival assumed public character. Tilak made it a means of public awakening. He could propagate the National Swaraj Movement through the Ganesh festival celebrations. The British rulers never liked the political nature of the Ganesh festival. However the government could not ban it since it had a religious bearing.

During the Ganesh festival a lot of Melas (singing troupes) came into existence. Of them the leading ones were, 'Sanmitra Samaj Mela', 'Pansangram Mela', 'Balaangit Mela', 'Swatantrya Mela'. There were in all more than 50 of them. But of those the most popular was the Chhatrapati Mela. The Ganesh festival in Poona was much influenced by Tilak and his followers from the beginning of the public festival till 1922. These festivals and Melas, while bringing about political awakening, praised Tilak and criticized the moderate leaders, the educated women and the reformers through the Mela songs. They criticized the reformers by singing verses. For example a verse about the reformers stated,

\[
\text{Aho, he sudharak navhe | pan asati vedzave } \| \\
\text{Yanche kalenat kave | mara yana paizar } \|
\]

(Oh, these are not reformers but fools. You don't know their tricks. Beat them with shoes.)

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Firozshah Mehta and Rajaramshastri Bhagwat were abused in the melas and also the girls who were receiving education and the untouchable women were despised there.
Keshavrao Jedhe first of all opposed the orthodox and the traditionalists like Tilak and his followers. Keshavrao's Mela challenged their dominance on the Ganesh festival. In the Ganesh festival melas of 1921 songs despising the gentle, educated women, the untouchables and the reformers were sung. Keshavrao Jedhe formed the Chhatrapati Mela to retort the orthodox and the blind believers of religion who under the pretext of protecting religion opposed the reformers. This Mela was founded in 1922, Dinkarrao Javalkar, Dinkarrao Mane and Palkar brothers etc. participated in this mela. Till the establishment of Chhatrapati Mela, Sammitra Mela belonging to Tilak party was quite popular. This mela supported by the Kesari brand newspapers was a great political asset of the extremists. It was through the mela songs of the Sammitra Mela that the follies and defects of the modernates and reformers were exposed previously. Though songs contained slander of the non-Brahmans as well as of the liberals like Gokhale and Wrangler Paranjape. Finally the slandering grew so much that the school going girls also came to be scoffed at publicly. Many right thinking persons got annoyed with this but they kept quite. In order to reply the Tilakites in their own language Jedhe and Javalkar organized Chhatrapati Mela.

While relating his reminiscences about the Chhatrapati Mela, Dinkarrao Mane wrote "It was Keshavrao Jedhe's idea to attack the Tilakites by organizing a Mela. He spent
his own money for this purpose. He was supported by the youth group and wrestling clubs (gymnasiums) in Poona. As drums of the Mela were beaten songs such as

"Ala, Ala Chhatrapati Mela | Pala bhatano pala"

(Oh, Brahmans take to your heels, the Chhatrapati Mela has arrived.) were sung. We used to participate in it with utmost enthusiasm. The mela performances were attended by large crowds of people. The scarlet turbans of the members of the mela were really attractive." 22

Mela Songs

The songs of this mela have been published by Dinkarrao Javalkar and this booklet containing mela songs is entitled "Chhatrapati Padya Sangraha" some of those songs have been composed by Javalkar while some others have been composed by Jedhe.23 But there is no mention as to which songs have been composed by Jedhe and which have been composed by Javalkar.

The Chhatrapati Mela involved the youths from the lower castes, the non-Brahman and often non-Maratha communities and also members of Jedhe's youth group. Jedhe brothers and other non-Brahman merchants gave financial support to the mela.

There are sixteen songs in the Chhatrapati Padya Sangrah which had been approved by the censor committee.
In some of those songs attacks were launched on the Brahmans, Tilak and Chiplunkar, and some of those songs praised Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj and Gandhiji. The songs of the mela represented a clear nationalist orientation of the younger non-Brahmans. The melawallas carried pictures of Gandhiji, Shivaji and Shahu Maharaj.

In one of their famous songs: 'Naktyancha Bazar' the melawallas criticised the Brahmans for their extravagance in having spent an amount of Rs.16,000/- from the funds of the Poona Municipality for a statue of Tilak to the neglect of social welfare. They also sang that Poona Municipality was simply a market place of self interest. They decried the Brahman members of Poona Municipality as 'Nakate' and shameless.24

Another song sung by members of Chhatrapati Mela was:

(Bhat bokad moth | Jativar jatoy beta ||
.... Amhi dharmarakshak | Bhat dharma bhakshak ||)

In this song it is stated that the Brahmans are communal. They have perverted Hindu religion by their wicked deeds and hypocrisy. They are destroyers of religion. We, the non-Brahman are the real protector of dharma.25

Still another song reads:

(Kuthehi adwa bhat ala | Rajyachahi nikal hoil jail nashala... bandhuno sawadha wha ata ||
Swadesh karyi dya dhu dkuni | Adava bhat padata)
This song describes in brief the greedy nature of the Brahmans who can go to any extent for the capture of political power. In this song the Brahmans have been depicted as being ominous. It further states that the very association of the Brahmans with a kingdom will eventually bring about its decline and fall. So an appeal is made to the non-Brahmans to be ware of the Brahmans. It is also advised that if a Brahman jeopardizes national interests he should be pushed aside. The song also refers to the relationship between Chhatrapati and his Brahman Peshwas.

Chhatrapati Shahu of Satara appointed Balaji Vishvanath, a Brahman as his Peshwa. But the Peshwas later made him powerless and gradually concentrated into their own hands all the strings of administration. The Chhatrapati in course of time became merely non-entities. During the reign of Peshwa Bajirao II the Brahman ascendancy grew very much. Their political manoeuvres were responsible for the speedy decline of the Maratha Power.  

Some of the mela songs contain harsh criticism of the conservative Brahmans, Men Lokmanya Tilak, Tatyasaheb Kelkar, Annasaheb Bhopatkar, Bhalakar Bhausaheb Bhopatkar, Shri Shridhar Tilak alias Bapu etc. were the of attack. For example one of such songs contain the following line:

(Tatya, Anna, Bhau, Bapu, Khisekapu he Jamalele)

In this song it is stated that Brahman leaders such as Tatya, Anna, Bhau and Bapu etc. are selfish; They are not really
worried about national interests but in fact they are enemies of the nation. They deceive the people eventhough they use strength and support of the masses for elevating their own political positions. Therefore they have been described in the song as pickpockets.\textsuperscript{27}

A mela song entitled 'Olakha kon ha nakata' contains severe criticism on Lokmanya Tilak. It decried Lokamanya Tilak as communal and conservative.

There are some songs in Chhatrapati Padya Sangraha in which they ( the non-Brahmans ) praised Shivaji, Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur and Gandhiji. Most popular of the mela songs was:

Shivaji Amucha Rana | Marathi Amucha Bana ||
Keshavrao Jedhe himself used to sing this song. It described Shivaji as the protector of religion and the destroyer of slavery. It also emphasized that Shivaji belonged to all sections of the people and that the way of the Marathas was to reduce communal differences and destroy the bonds of religion.\textsuperscript{28}

There is another song on Gandhiji:

Aji Mahatma, dhanya Gandhi | Khyati tyachi sarva jagati ||

This song praises the work of Mahatma Gandhi. It says that only Gandhiji is a saviour of India and his fame has spread far and wide in the entire world. \textsuperscript{29}
All the songs in Chhatrapati Padya Sangraha either criticised the conservative Brahmans, Lokmanya Tilak and his followers. Ramdas Swami, the Peshwas and Nana Phadnis etc., or praised Chhatrapati Shivaji, Shahu Maharaj, Mahatma Phule, Mahatma Gandhi etc. They also contained an advice that the non-Brahmans should make their social and economic progress by throwing off the Brahman ascendancy.

The Tilakite Brahmans raised a volunteer corps in order to silence and intimidate the Chhatrapati Mela people. Keshavrao Jedhe did the same thing to turn the tables on his opponents. He organized a team of volunteers under 'Uchhanna Vastad'. Men like Palkar brothers, Keshavrao Jedhe, Dinkarrao Javalkar, Dinkarrao Mane, Shankarrao More etc., participated in the lathi classes. Javalkar and More had to struggle hard to learn it but Keshavrao Jedhe soon got proficiency in it.30

The conflict reached its peak in 1924. The Brahman audience who heard the songs of Chhatrapati Mela got so angry that they scuffled with the non-Brahmans. Both the parties tried to disrupt each others' meetings, recited songs containing slander of the rival party, published in newspapers inaccurate and misleading information reports about the opponents and tried to prove how their own party was on the right.

In 1924, when the Chhatrapati Mela troupe was passing in front of the Gaikwad Wada some four or five
hooligans (gundas) darted at the members of the troupe, hit them hard and disappeared in Gaikwad Wada. This resulted in a tumult. Keshavrao Jedhe was very furious. As the news reached Jedhe Mansion some 2 to 3 thousand people gathered to hit back. But finally men like Baburao Jagtap persuaded the restive people and led the troupe back.31

The conflicts between the Tilak party and the Jedhe party had increased in 1925. Keshavrao Jedhe's proposal for installing a statue of Mahatma Phule in Poona was turned down in the municipality dominated by the Tilak Party. So Jedhe and his friends got angry. It was but natural that the echoes of this situation were heard in the Ganesh festival of that year. The atmosphere was tense. All the Brahman leaders apprehending some aggressive activities of the Keshavrao Jedhe group invoked the British authorities and sought help. They had also thought that the non-Brahmans would dishonour Tilak's statue. As the Ganesh festival was in full swing someone spread a rumour that on Friday evening the non-Brahmans were going to attack the Brahman localities and this was also a cause of asking for the help. A delegation led by Narsopant Kelkar and Wrangler Paranjpe approached the Governor when he had come to Ganeshkhind and asked for police protection. The Governor sanctioned the requisite police force for handling the situation in Poona. Poona thus wore a look of a military camp. The police kept watch on the Tilak statue and Gaikwad Wada. A large number of
policemen had been stationed near Jedhe Mansion. So barring the few instances of violence the Ganesh festival of the year 1925 went off peacefully.32

The Kelkar group in order to humble down the Chhatrapati Mela men now started filing legal suits against them. Javalkar was then writing in 'Majoor' the newspapers run by Ramchandra Narayan Lad. Through it he carried on tirade against the Brahman men and women. R.G.Dandavate filed a suit against R.N.Lad, the editor of 'Majoor'. Lad sensed the situation and begged pardon.

In October 1925, Tilak's son Shridharpant filed a suit in Magistrate Fleming's Court complaining that due to the Chhatrapati Mela songs his father was being defamed. Mr.Lad was the printer of the Chhatrapati Mela anthology and Javalkar's name was printed on it as a compiler. Keshavrao Jedhe could not be implicated in the case, even though he had composed a few of the songs, because no where his name had been mentioned. Magistrate Fleming gave the judgement. Both Lad and Javalkar were sentenced to a fine of Rs.500 each or imprisonment for five months. The accused went in appeal to the higher court and the fine of only Rs.50/- was collected.33

When the down-trodden rise in a revolt against injustice or disgraceful life that had been imposed on them; they are apt to use obscene language. Keshavrao Jedhe attacked the orthodox and traditionalist Brahmanical propaganda. He organized Chhatrapati Mela to retort Sanmitra Mela of the Brahmins and he attained considerable success in his endeavours.
Jedhe's Progressive Proposals in Poona Municipality

Keshavrao got elected as a Member of the Poona Municipality in March 1925. In those days the Poona Municipality was dominated by the Brahmans and they had monopolized almost everything. By entering the municipality he aimed at breaking the monopoly of the Brahmans there and to do some work for the betterment of the society. The Poona Municipality then consisted of forty three elected members. Of these, five were reserved for the Muslims, and of the remaining thirty eight seats ten were occupied by the Brahmans, twenty one by the non-Brahmans and two by the Madrasis. The municipality was dominated by the Tilak party though the Brahmans had no clear majority in it. Some non-Brahman leaders like Narayanrao Gunjal, Rangoba Ladkat, Kirad, Baburao Phule, Barne always supported Tilak party.34

Members of the non-Brahman party viz. Keshavrao Jedhe, Maturkar, Patole, Vitthalrao Zende and Sanas etc. formed a minority group. Laxmanrao Apte, who was President of the Municipality, was a lawyer and belonged to the Moderate Group. In a meeting of the municipality convened on 31st July 1925 Keshavrao Jedhe moved a resolution seeking to throw open the public tanks and taps maintained at the cost of the municipality to all the touchables and the untouchables alike. The resolution was opposed by the Brahman members such as Lawate, Chandrachud, Damle, Dandawate, Gokhale and Dr. Phatak etc. The president himself stated "This resolution will give rise to a lot of quarrels and conflicts in Poona. We will be blamed if the
resolution is passed. Our women are not ready for this. So I request all the members to reject this resolution." 35

Keshavrao Jedhe took exception to this statement. There was an exchange of angry words between the two. At last the resolution was voted upon and was rejected by 15 versus 12 votes.

The Statue of Mahatma Phule

In July 1925 Keshavrao Jedhe had sent a resolution, signed by nine councilors to the municipality requesting it to install a statue of Mahatma Phule at a public place, by spending Rs.20,000/-. During the previous year on 22nd July 1924 Tilak's statue was unveiled by Motilal Nehru and in September 1924 Chiplunkar's statue was unveiled at the hands of Mahatma Gandhi. At that time Shri N.C.,alias Tatyasaheb Kelkar was the president of Poona municipality. Keshavrao Jedhe keenly felt the absence of Mahatma Phule's statue in Poona, the place where he worked. Bhalakar Bhopatkar while criticising the resolution said "what service Jotirao Phule had rendered to Pune so as to set up his public memorial? He was not a public figure but he was a sectarian.... Phule's statue should be erected in Kolhapur and not in Poona".36

The resolution concerning Mahatma Phule's statue was discussed in a meeting of the municipality held on September 4, 1925. Keshavrao Jedhe proposed twelve other resolutions. While proposing the resolution Jedhe spoke, "The municipality has erected, statue of two 'Bhatas' (Brahmans)". As the president
did not like the derogatory term 'Bhata', there was a clash between Jedhe and the President. The president asked Jedhe to withdraw that word. Jedhe challenged the president to declare that Tilak and Chiplunkar were not born as Bhats but were English, German or Japanese by birth. So he refused to withdraw the word 'Bhat' and protesting the president on his face he left the meeting. Messrs Wayachal, Zende, and Sanas etc. members followed him. However, Mathurkar and the government nominees such as Nasiruddin Kazi and Subhedar Ghadge tried to plead Keshavrao Jedhe's point of view regarding the resolution but the resolution was rejected by majority of votes. Then in the meeting, both the Brahmans and conservative non-Brahmans proceeded to attack Phule as a destroyer of Hindu religion and a convert to Christianity. They summed up the whole series of Satyashodhak challenges in the streets of Poona and in the Satara rebellion as the cases of social and religious anarchism. The meeting ended by rejecting the statue resolution and passing a reprobation of Jedhe for improper behaviour.

'Deshache Dushman'

Pet themes were composed upon which mela songs were projected through the non-Brahman pamphlets, booklets of the period. About eight or ten short-books were produced, between 1924 and 1925; primarily by Javalkar, Shankarrao Khakurdikar and R.N.Lad. Two newspapers such as 'Majoor' and 'Mulukh Maidan' were started by Javalkar, Lad and Khakurdikar respectively. These newspapers criticized Brahmanism.
with an equally vigorous pamphlets, literature and by starting a newspaper named 'Sangram' sponsored by the Kesari group but edited by an orthodox Maratha G.M. Nalawade. Both the sides used strongly worded, most provocative and idiomatic language. Javalkar's language in particular was powerful and sharp. Javalkar wrote a book "Deshache Dushman" in 1925. Keshavrao Jedhe was its publisher and R.N.Lad was printer of the book. Introduction to the book was written by Keshavrao Bagade a non-Brahman lawyer. Dinkarrao Mane of Kagal wrote in his memoir that while Javalkar was writing the book Keshavrao Jedhe too was sitting beside him and he too contributed to its writing.

Javalkar used to state that Chiplunkar and Tilak were enemies of the country and instead of erecting their statues, their paper effigies should be burnt publicly. He had used obscene words such as devil, national robber, Mhasoba to describe Tilak. He called Chiplunkar a dog and suggested that he should be shot for having abused Mahatma Phule through the columns of his Nibandhamala. Javalkar further stated that the Brahmans desired to maintain their own caste superiority and consolidated their power through treachery and by fabricating a web of religious slavery which set up a social hierarchy of superiority and inferiority and divided the masses. Further Javalkar criticized that the Brahmans were not the real nationalists, but the ethnic communities were the real nationalists. Some non-Brahman leaders like Prabodhankar Thakare and Shripatrao Shinde admired Javalkar for writing a book 'Deshache Dushman'. But Palekar, the
The editor of 'Jagrati' expressed his disapproval.

As Javalkar criticized Chiplunkar and Tilak, the Tilakites also indulged in bitterly criticizing Mahatma Phule. Ganpatrao Nalawade published a booklet entitled 'Satyashodhak ki christ shodhak'. In it true as well as false allegations were made against Jotiba. "There is no direct evidence to show whether Jotiba had actually accepted christianity or not. He was the propagandist of the christians" thus Jotiba was accused in the introduction to the book written by the grandson of Jotiba's cousin who called Jotiba a traitor to his own religion and country. He further wrote that he was ashamed of telling that such a treacherous man was born in his clan. As the Mali community excommunicated him for his indecent writings about Jotiba, he begged pardon. The Tilak party proteges made such dirty accusation that the child brought up by Jotiba was the one he had begotten from a widow. Thus they tried to bring disgrace on Jotiba. Thus both the sides were making allegation and counter allegations against the revered leaders of each other.

On 17th September 1925 a meeting was held in Shivaji Mandir to protest against Keshavrao Jedhe and to congratulate Laxmanrao Apte, president of the municipality. Both the proposals were carried. Thereafter, members of the Tilak party filed suits against Jedhe, Javalkar, Lad, Bagade etc. Shrikrishna Mahadev Chiplunkar the nephew of the late Vishnushastri Chiplunkar filed a suit in the court of the city
magistrate, Mr. Fleming stating that the book 'Deshache Dushman' has been defaming his family. When the 'Deshache Dushman' trial was in progress there occurred an incident in Poona which created tense atmosphere there. On 19th August 1926 Maratha Youth Hari Narayan Dhanawade held with evil intention the hand of Dwarkabai Bavdekar the daughter of Sardar Bavadekar as she was passing through a street and attempted to outrage her modesty. But as she shouted loudly he fled. The Brahmans connected this incident with the non-Brahman movement only because the youth happened to be a non-Brahman. They told the Brahmans that the non-Brahmans have plotted to attack the Brahman women in the broad daylight and asked them to defend honour and dignity of their respective families.

N.P. Bamangaonkar of Amrawati who was an editor of a newspaper named 'Uday' belonged to Tilak party. He held the followers of Satya Shodhak Samaj responsible for the incident. While commenting on this untoward incident, Khanderao Bagal, editor of 'Hunter' wrote, "It is inhuman to attack a woman of whatever caste. We too protest against such deeds. But it is not proper that the editors of Kesari should have connected the incident with Satyashodhak movement. How can the whole community be blamed for a fault of an individual?" V.D. Ghate and Devrao Naik also appealed to the Brahmans not to find connection of the incident with the non-Brahmans.
All the Brahman leaders in Poona, making capital out of this episode, began to raise their voice against the non-Brahmans. Wrangler Paranjpe too joined hands with them. Maharshi V.P. Shinde and Keshavrao Jedhe grew so angry that they wrote in 'Vijayee Maratha' an article entitled 'Wrangler's Wranglings'. A meeting was held in Jedhe Mansion on August 23, 1926 to protest against the attempts made to establish connections between the incident in Poona and the non-Brahman movement.

In due course Hari Narayan Dhanawade, who had attempted to outrage the modesty of Dwarkabai Bavdekar was sentenced to nine months rigorous imprisonment by the City Magistrate Mr. Fleming. 46

The proceedings of the Deshache Dushman trial were going on before Mr. Fleming who gave his verdict on this trial on 15th September 1926. Dinkarrao Javalkar, the author of the book and Lad the printer were sentenced to one year's simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs.250/- each or three months imprisonment if they would fail to pay the fine. Keshavrao Jedhe and Keshavrao Bagade who wrote the foreward were sentenced to six months imprisonment and a fine of Rs.100/- each or two months imprisonment if they would fail to pay the fine. 47

However, there was a great inconsistency between the two judgements of Mr. Fleming. One was of the 'Deshache Dushman'
trial and the other was of the defamation trial against Baburao Phule instituted by the grandson of Jotiba's cousin. Dr. Ambedkar detected this inconsistency and he suggested Jedhe and Javalkar to go to the sessions court in appeal against this judgement. Dr. Ambedkar himself appeared as a defence lawyer in the sessional trial.

Keshavrao Jedhe and Bagade were in the prison along with Javalkar since 15th September 1926, till they were bailed out on 28th instant.

Javalkar in his memoirs elaborately wrote about their imprisonment. He stated, "Maharshi V.R. Shinde and the other leaders gathered in the court as soon as we were sentenced. The court-yard was crowded by the students of Shivaji Maratha Highschool..... A Motor car came to take us to the prison. When we were walking to the motorcar people began to garland us. Even though the officer accompanying us shouted at the people and asked them not to garland the convicts they continued to do so. Accepting the garlands and listening to the chorus of the slogans 'Shivaji Maharaj ki jay' 'Mahatma Phule ki jay' Jedhe, Bagade and myself started off towards the prison camp at Yerawada. It was our first experience of the imprisonment. We were given a plate and bedding and sent to the dark-cell. Next morning we were served sour gruel as per the prison rules. Keshavrao Jedhe could not drink it since he was born and brought up in a well-to-do family. I closed
my eyes and drank it at a stretch. As I had been addicted to
drinking tea I thought of warming my throat somehow....
Thereafter we were served the bhatta which included bread
and vegetables. Nobody could eat more than half a piece of
bread because it was for the first time we were eating that
kind of food. But soon we got habituated to that kind of
food....... Other prisoners used to call Jedhe 'Shetsab',
Bagade 'Vakilsab' and Javalkar 'Mastersab'. Besides the
tasteless food of prison, doctor gave us quinine and conse­
quently Keshavrao Jedhe started vomiting. Keshavrao was not
disheartened till then. On the contrary sometimes he used to
sing loudly the songs like "Shivaji Amucha Rana | Maratha
Amucha Bana| " in the closed cell of the prison. 48

On October 18, 1928, J.D.Lawrence, the sessions
Judge gave his judgement on the Deshache Dushman trial and
acquitted all the accused. He passed orders to refund the
amount of fine recovered from them. The Tilak party was taken
aback by Mr.Lawrence's judgement.

As Jedhe and Javalkar had been imprisoned for some­
time in connection with the Deshache Dushman trial their
popularity increased. They were the first two non-Brahman
leaders to go to jail. Gail Odmyet while commenting on the
consequence of the Phule statue episode and the Deshache
Dushman trial on Jedhe Javalkar wrote "In the context of a
radicalism that only seemed quixotic, he was really oriented
to mass politics, to support from the streets and from larger
non-Brahman communities outside of Poona itself. And this fact he won. It was the 'Phule statue affair' that seems to have spread Jedhe's name throughout much of Maharashtra at this time, just as 'Deshache Dushman' made Javalkar known...

... Satyashodhak meetings in Wardha, Amravati, Satara, Ahmednagar and Bombay also congratulated Jedhe for his work"49

Anti-small Holding Bill Agitation

During 1928-29 Keshavrao Jedhe was busy in the peasant movement seeking to redress the peasant grievances. Sir Chunilal Mehta the then Home Minister of the Bombay Government had introduced in the legislature small holding bill in 1927. The opponents of the bill believed that if bill was passed into a law the farmers would lose their smaller pieces of land and they will have to work as factory workers. On the other hand the government believed that bill would facilitate large scale farming and it would also be beneficial. The bill was soon followed by a proposal of land tax increase. Both these proposals were unjust. The financial conditions of the government had deteriorated as it had undertaken expensive projects like the Backbay Development and Sakkar Barrage and also due to its chaotic administration. In this situation government in order to raise money somehow proposed the land tax increase. 50 Keshavrao Jedhe started a movement against the 'Small Holding Bill' and land tax increase proposal. Jedhe and Javalkar protested against the bills in their speeches in
a public meeting at Baramati on 1st July 1928. They supported
the Bardoli Satyagraha led by Sardar Patel. Jedhe brothers
organized Bombay Presidency Peasant Conference at Ray Market
in Poona on 25th July, 1928 to protest against the anti-small
Holding bill and the proposal of land tax increase. Five
thousand peasants attended the conference. Maharshi V.R. Shinde
was president of the conference and Baburao Jedhe was chairman
of the reception committee. Leaders like Tatyasahab Kelkar,
Shivrampant Paranjpe, K.F. Nariman etc. participated in the
conference. The delegation consisting of Jedhe brothers, V.R.
Shinde, Kelkar, Paranjpe and Ramrao Shinde approached the
members of the legislature and expressed their resentment
against the bill. They also submitted a representation to
Lalji Narayan bearing signatures of sixty thousand peasants.
In view of the protests invoked by the bill and the proposal
of land tax increase, opposition of all the parties and the
peasant conferences the government postponed the discussion
of the bill. But the opponents of the bill were still not
satisfied. In the peasant conference held at Poona they
decided to continue the agitation against the bill. An
executive committee consisting of members like Maharshi V.R.
Shinde, Jedhe brothers, Bagade etc. was formed and its
secretary was Keshavrao Jedhe. He exhorted the farmers not
to stop the agitation against the bill and land tax increase.
He asked them to hold meetings all over and to send the
representations registering their protests to the government.
He himself organized several meetings and vigorously carried on the agitation in Poona district. At last the government withdrew the bills. Karmaveer V.R.Shinde wrote about this conference, "... most of the credit of the conference goes to Jedhe brothers. They at their own expenses served meals to all the farmers who attended the conference. Because of the powerful agitation the government surrendered and withdrew the bills. No other public movement could have been so successful".52

Keshavrao Jedhe seems to have made ceaseless efforts to solve problems of the peasants. He organized several meetings to bring about awakening among the peasants. As a result of this Keshavrao's popularity among the farmers and in the rural areas increased.

Non-Brahman Party Politics

Keshavrao Jedhe and Dinkarrao Javalkar were most popular leaders of the non-Brahman movement between 1917 and 1927. They became one with the movement socially and politically and fought against Brahmin Orthodoxy. On the other hand some leaders participated in the movement only for political gains.53

According to the Montagu Declaration of 1917, the British government declared that political power would be transferred to the Indians by instalments. Consequently the Satyashodhak movement took a political turn and degenerated
into non-Brahman movement because many of its members saw an opportunity to capture political power.54

In the elections held as per the Montagu Chemsford reforms towards the end of 1920 many of the non-Brahman party candidates got elected to the legislative assembly. Most of them decided to co-operate with the government. Maharshi V.R. Shinde, V.R.Kothari, Keshavrao Jedhe didn't approve of this policy of the non-Brahman legislators. V.R.Kothari criticized this policy through his paper 'Jagruk'. So Bhaskarrao Jadhav, Latthe, Kambli etc. leaders were displeased with V.R. Kothari.55

As Kothari didn't like the pro-government policy of Jadhav, Latthe, Kambli etc. he left the non-Brahman party in 1922. Bhaskarrao seems to have been benefited by his policy of supporting the government. He was nominated by the government to the legislative assembly in place of Sir Kasavji Jahanagir in 1922. Latter on Bhaskarrao got elected as a candidate of the non-Brahman party in 1923 and 1926 elections.

Mahatma Gandhi came to Poona in 1924. He was invited to Jedhe Mansion by the non-Brahmans on 4th September 1924. Keshavrao Jedhe himself sang a welcome song (Aji Mahatma Dhanya Gandhi | Jyachi Khyati Sarva Jagati ||) which praised Mahatma Gandhi and stated that he was famous throughout the world.56 He advised the non-Brahman party men to run the movement on their own and not to depend upon the British government.
The popularity of Jedhe and Javalkar also helped in increasing the non-Brahman party membership. They travelled widely in order to propagate the non-Brahman movement. In May 1927 they toured C.P. and Berar (Varad). They visited Wardha, Morshi, Yavatmal and addressed the public meetings there. Keshavrao Jedhe made a speech in a meeting held in the townhall at Yawatmal under the presidentship of Dada-saheb Kothekar on 25th May 1927. Jedhe in his speech explained how the Brahmans had perverted form to Hindu religion. Javalkar too made a speech. The Brahmans attempted to disrupt the meeting. Kothekar, the president, granted permission to the Brahmans also to express their views. The Brahman orators made speeches but they could not plead their case. Keshavrao spoke from the bottom of his heart and his zeal and sincerity impressed the audience. Javalkar was a first rate speaker. He used to speak for hours together.

Bhaskarrao Jadhav, in view of Keshavrao Jedhe's increasing popularity and sound political position decided to reconcile with him for the sake of future politics. He used Jedhe's popularity for consolidating the position of the non-Brahman party. As Jedhe, Javalkar and Jadhav came together the party membership increased considerably. There were 15,000 party members in Satara district alone. As Khanderao Bagal put it, "Javalkar's language, Jedhe's maturity and Bhaskarrao's knowledge and experience fused together and yielded fine results".
The non-Brahman party steadily gained more and more ground. But Jedhe-Jadhav unity didn't last longer and it was not possible also. Jedhe while carrying on the movement was ready to oppose the government if needed in order to achieve his goal. On the contrary Bhaskar Rao Jadhav decided to run the movement with help of the government. Javalkar too broke off from Keshavrao Jedhe and passed under the influence of Bhaskar Rao Jadhav.

On 8th July 1926 a meeting of the executive committee of the All India non-Brahman party was held under the presidency of the king of Pangal. In the meeting it was decided that if a member of the non-Brahman party is found to be a member of some other political party he should be asked to resign the membership of the other party and if he does not do so he should be driven out of the non-Brahman party. It was also decided that the non-Brahman party should not be restricted to the Hindus only but it should be open for all those Indians, irrespective of their castes and religions except the Brahmans, who believed in the objectives, rules and methods of working of the party. It posed problem before the radical non-Brahman youths who were attracted towards Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. As the Congress under Gandhi's leadership had favourably responded to the non-Brahman demand of basic social transformation, the non-Brahman leaders like Keshavrao Jedhe were attracted to it. Khanderra Bagal also wrote in his paper 'Hunter' "Rashtriya Sabha (Indian National Congress) is our mother. There are
some defects in it still, but the non-Brahman party can't achieve success by turning its back on the congress".

Many non-Brahman leaders were attracted towards the Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi. The Madras non-Brahman party in its Coimbatore session held in 1927 gave permission to its members to become members of the Congress party if they so desired. Taking into consideration these things Keshavrao Jedhe called a meeting of the non-Brahman leaders on 24th July 1927 in 'Jedhe-Mansion' to decide whether to enter the national Congress or not. A notification of the meeting appeared in the issue of Brahmanetar of 20 July 1927. At that time Bhaskarao Jadhav's group was powerful in the non-Brahman party of Maharashtra. This group opposed the idea of entering the Congress. However, Keshavrao Jedhe was attracted to freedom movement led by Gandhiji and lost interest in the non-Brahman party, and its narrow council politics.

### Shridharpant Tilak's Friendship with Jedhe

Another remarkable event of the year 1927 was that Shridharpant, Tilak, son of Lokmanya Tilak, started cultivating friendship with Keshavrao Jedhe. Same Shridharpant had previously filed defamation cases against Jedhe and Javalkar. The conflict between the trustees of 'Kesari' and Lokmanya Tilak's some Rambhau and Shridharpant had reached its climax. Shridharpant thought that the struggle carried on by Keshavrao Jedhe and his colleagues against Brahman
conservatism was right and so he started visiting 'Jedhe Mansion' frequently. He developed friendship with Keshavrao Jedhe, Shripatrao Shinde and Javalkar. On 27th November 1927 Mahatma Phule birth centenary celebrations were organized in Maharashtra. Several functions were organized in Poona and Bombay. Shridharpant presided over the function organized at Bombay and made a speech in it. A function was arranged at 'Jedhe Mansion' in Poona too. Maharshi Shinde presided over it and made a speech on the occasion. Shridharpant underwent such a change due to the impact of Keshavrao Jedhe. But the Tilakites didn't appreciate Shridharpant's behaviour and criticized him severely. He established a branch of Samata Sangh in Gaikwad Wada under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar on 8th April 1928. The Brahmans, the non-Brahmans and the untouchables had a combined ten party in Tilak's drawing hall. Dr. Ambedkar too admired this work. The office bearers of the Samata Sangh founded by Shridharpant were: Shripatrao Shinde - President, P.N. Rajbhoj - Secretary and Keshavrao Jedhe - Member of the Executive Council.

As a result of Jedhe Shridharpant alliance, differences between the Brahmans and the non-Brahmans and the caste Hindus and the untouchables were being minimized. But at such a crucial juncture highly sensitive Shridharpant, who was fed up with the conflicts with the trustees of Kesari, committed suicide on 25th May 1928. Keshavrao Jedhe, Javalkar, Shripatrao Shinde etc. his new friends bemoaned the sad death
of Shridharpant. After the demise of Shridharpant Jedhe brothers supported Rambhau in his struggle against the trustees of Kesari.

Differences in the non-Brahman Party

In 1927 British government appointed Simon Commission to consider the problem of granting more political rights to the Indians. All the members of the commission were British. There was no Indian member on the commission. So the Congress and some other Indian political parties boycotted Simon Commission. However, the non-Brahman party was divided on the issue of boycotting the Commission. Jedhe brothers, Maharshi Shinde, Keshavrao Bagade, Shripatrao Shinde, Bhaurao Patil etc. were in favour of boycotting the commission. On the other hand Bhaskarao Jadhav and Javalkar thought that they should co-operate with the commission. This ultimately led to a rift between Jedhe and Javalkar. A meeting of Poona district non-Brahman party was held under the chairmanship of Nanasaheb Amrutkar, a pleader, on 30th December 1927. In it a resolution boycotting Simon Commission was passed because Jedhe group was predominant in the Poona non-Brahman party. The provincial conference of the non-Brahman party was held under the chairmanship of Raobahadur Naidu. As this conference was dominated by Bhaskarao Jadhav group a resolution asking to co-operate with the commission was passed in it. This clearly established the majority of Bhaskarao Jadhav's group. Maharshi Shinde,
Jedhe brothers, Bagade, Bhaurao Patil etc. opposed the resolution. Javalkar though an old friend of Jedhe changed his side and went over to Bhaskarrao Jadhav. Jedhe too was taken aback by this. Thereafter Javalkar gradually passed under Jadhav's thorough influence.

The non-Brahmans started a newspaper named 'Kaiwari' in Bombay in 1928, and its editor was Dinkarrao Javalkar. Bhaskarrao Jadhav was President and Baburao Jedhe was the Vice-President of its advisory committee. Javalkar after having passed under Bhaskarrao Jadhav's influence became secretary of provincial unit of the non-Brahman party due to Jadhavrao's blessings. He criticised Jedhe brothers, Bagade, V.R.Shinde etc. through the columns of 'Kaiwari'. Bhaskarrao did not take exception to this criticism. So Baburao Jedhe resigned his post in the advisory committee. Bhaskarrao Jadhav was a pro-British loyalist. He had managed to get a resolution passed in the non-Brahman party meeting asking it to co-operate with Simon Commission rather than boycotting it. His loyalties paid him rich dividends. He was made Minister for Agriculture and Excise in Sept. 1928. Due to Jadhav's effort and the favours bestowed by the British government Javalkar could visit England. Hereafter, Jadhav-Javalkar group and Jedhe group differed sharply.

The Congress leaders of Bombay province established a peasant organization called 'Land-League' on 23rd July
1929. There was a problem before the executive committee of the peasant conference headed by Maharshi V.R. Shinde whether to co-operate with the land league or not. V.R. Shinde was in favour of co-operation with the league but Jedhe brothers did not like this idea. However, when V.R. Shinde persuaded Keshavrao, he accepted the work of the land league. Bhaskarao Jadhav and Javalkar were not ready to co-operate with the 'Land-leage' as it was backed by the Congress party. So Javalkar began criticising Maharshi V.R. Shinde and Keshavrao Jedhe through 'Kaiwari'. Thus Jedhe-Javalkar relations were strained. Jedhe disliked Javalkar's habit of making money by publishing advertisements of the wineshops in 'Kaiwari'.

It was decided in a secret meeting convened by Bhaskarao Jadhav on 8th October 1929 that a delegation should be sent to England to represent the non-Brahman party case after the Simon Commission has completed its tour. Javalkar and K.S. Gupte were selected as delegates. This was going to be Javalkar's second visit to England due to Bhaskarao Jadhav's blessing. Keshavrao Jedhe was not present for the meeting. When he learnt about the selection of delegates he expressed his protest through a letter published in 'Dnyanprakash' and Rashtraveer. He insisted that the non-Brahman party should send only such delegates who have command of English language, worked for the party and who are trust-worthy.
Keshavrao Jedhe too convinced a meeting of non-Brahman party in 'Jedhe Mansion' on 10th November 1929 to discuss the nomination of Javalkar and K.S. Gupte as delegates to visit England. This meeting was attended by about forty members including Shripatrao Shinde, Rambhau Nalawade, Bhaurao Patil, Raobahadur S.K. Bole (Bombay) Annasaheb Shinde, Keshavrao Bagade etc. In this meeting proposed England tour of Javalkar and Gupte was discussed. Keshavrao Jedhe opposed that tour and protested Bhaskarrao Jadhav's policy. Members present for the meeting supported Keshavrao. Despite Jedhe brothers protests Javalkar and Gupte, due to Jadhavraos efforts went to England. Thus conflict between Keshavrao Jedhe and Bhaskarrao Jadhav started. In the party meeting they used to have exchange of hot words.

On 3rd February 1930 a meeting of Bombay provincial non-Brahman party was convinced at 'Shivtirth' bungalow in Bombay belonging to Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaja of Kolhapur to discuss the party policy regarding the proposed round table conference. In it Mr. Surve proposed a resolution stating that the non-Brahman party should participated in the Round Table Conference. Here too Keshavrao Jedhe and his followers opposed and left the meeting. He declared that he disapproved the party decision of participating in the proposed round table conference.
Another meeting of the same kind was held under the Chairmanship of Bhaskarrao Jadhav in Jedhe Mansion on 19th July 1930. About 35 to 40 members attended it. In it a resolution asking the non-Brahman party to extend co-operation to the Round Table Conference was proposed. Keshavrao Jedhe opposed the resolution. He suggested that Mahatma Gandhi should be released from Jail and invited to participate in the round table conference and only if Gandhi participates, the non-Brahman should take part in it. But his suggestion was turned down. Keshavrao protested the party policy in this regard.

A meeting of Bombay provincial non-Brahman party was again held in Jedhe Mansion on 29th July 1930. Seventeen members including Bhaskarrao Jadhav, the party president attended the meeting. Navale proposed a resolution approving the speech made by Viceroy Lord Irwin. Keshavrao Jedhe alone opposed it and criticized the pro-government policy of the non-Brahman party. In this meeting some non-Brahman leaders stated that the Civil Disobedience movement was not good and the peasants should abstain from it and it was also suggested that a statement that effect should be issued. Keshavrao opposed this too and warned that to do so would be suicidal. Hence the idea of refraining from the government was given up.
Congress too had boycotted the first round table conference. Keshavrao Jedhe had to play the role of an opponent in the non-Brahman party quite often because many pro-british loyalist, had entered the party after 1925. He could not stand the new pro-government policy of the non-Brahman party. A review of the policy followed by the non-Brahman party reveals that except Jedhe group other party leaders chose to work in co-operation with the government.

During 1929-30, there was an open split in the non-Brahman party and differences between the Jedhe group and Jadhav group increased day by day. Both the groups made allegation and counter allegations against each another in a number of meetings and conferences convene for the purpose. They criticized one another through newspapers also. Keshavrao was of the view that the non-Brahman party should the openly oppose the British government and participate in the national freedom movement. On the other hand Jadhav, Navale etc. felt that the non-Brahman party, by maintaining good relations with the government should make political gains. However, Keshavrao instead of involving himself too much in this controversy for long, joined the national freedom movement.

Javalkar had been in England from November 1929 to 1930. When he returned from England it seemed that he had undergone a change in his outlook. He started realizing the
fact that Keshavrao Jedhe was right. His delusion about the British government disappeared. He felt that his opposition to Jedhe was a mistake. He tried to develop intimacy with Jedhe again but Keshavrao didn't respond to him. Javalkar in defiance of prohibitory orders made a speech at Azad Maidan on the Solapur day on 16th January, 1931. He and his followers were sentenced to an imprisonment of one and half years but they were released within one and half months as a result of Gandhi-Irwin pact. Javalkar was so sorry to have lost a friend like Jedhe and was thrown aside by the non-Brahman party. Javalkar died of consumption on 3rd May, 1932.

Keshavrao always had conflicts with the pro-government loyalist leaders in the non-Brahman party. He did not think it proper to get involved in the internal strife of the party. He disliked the non-Brahman party supporting the government when a powerful freedom movement under Gandhi's leadership was going on in the country. The freedom movement was gaining popularity and Keshavrao Jedhe was drawn towards it. The idealistic non-Brahman youths were disillusioned by the performance of the non-Brahman ministers in the dyarchical set up. They realized it well that the government was pretending to protect the backward class interests in order to give check to the Congress. They also knew that government would not give any such rights to the public that would jeopardize its own interests. The very nature of Congress had changed under Gandhiji's leadership. Common people were
attracted to it because it had undertaken the tasks like the village reorganization and uplift of the untouchables. Mahatma Gandhi started the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930. The non-Brahman community under Keshavrao Jedhe joined the nationalist movement led by Gandhi.

**Other Social Movements**

Keshavrao Jedhe participated in some other social movements also. Mahad Satyagraha and Parvati Satyagraha were the significant agitations in which he had prominently figured. Those satyagrahas were the attempts to eradicate untouchability and casteism.

**The Mahad Satyagraha (1927)**

The famous 'Chavadar Tale Satyagraha' of Mahad took place in 1927. The non-Brahman leader Keshavrao Bole's resolution, seeking to throw open to the so called untouchables the public places like water-places, caravan saris and schools etc. for free use, introduced in Bombay provincial legislature on 4th August 1923 was passed. Bole further in 1927, proposed another resolution asking to stop the grant-in-aid of such municipalities, local boards and other local governing institutions that would not implement the earlier resolution passed by the legislature. This resolution was also carried. But when the untouchables attempted to exercise their legal rights by tasting the water of the 'Chavadar Tale' many caste Hindus attacked them and battered them.
The Brahmans got the lake purified by reciting Vedas and mantras. At the same time i.e. in 1927, the Mahad Municipality passed a new resolution which again forbade the untouchables to use the lake water. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar had to pay attention to this incident and he decided to offer a satyagraha. Keshavrao Jedhe wrote a letter in 'Brahmanetar' (the newspaper) in which he appealed to perform a satyagraha for obtaining justice for the untouchables. In that letter he wrote, "some caste Hindus beat the dalits (backward caste people) as they were returning after tasting the lake water at Mahad. Still the untouchables should without retreating, continue their fight against the conservatives and exercise their right of taking water from the lake. We are ready to accompany them. Not only this but we also desire that all the public wells, temples, tanks and water places should be thrown open to the untouchables. We also appeal to our non-Brahman brethren to accompany the untouchables in order to safeguard their rights." In another letter Jedhe and Javalkar passed instructions as to how the satyagraha should be performed. They wrote, "we request to establish the rights of the untouchables by performing a satyagraha at Mahad. We hereby declare the plan of satyagraha."

1) The satyagraha should be completely non-violent.
2) In order to make the Satyagraha successful not a single 'Brahman' should be included in it.
3) The Satyagraha should be offered not by a few individuals but by the masses by taking water from the lake.

4) The untouchables should exercise their rights by stepping into the wells, temples and water places. A conference should be convened for deciding all this. The untouchable leaders should declare their policy without delay and the non-Brahmans should help wash out the stigma of untouchability.  

Dr. Ambedkar had already put forth the plan of Satyagraha in 'Bahiskrut Bharat' and Jedhe and Javalkar upheld it. Dr. Ambedkar approved of the views of Jedhe and Javalkar, but he opposed to the point of not including any 'Brahman' in the Satyagraha. He made it clear that their struggle was not against the Brahmans as such but against Brahmanism.

The 'Bahishkrut Hitkarini Sabha' declared that a Satyagraha would start at Mahad on 25th December, 1927. Jedhe and Javalkar set out from Bombay on 25th December to attend the Satyagraha. But as their motor-car broke down on way, they reached Mahad one day late. They attended the Satyagraha conference on 26th December. By that time a rumour was spread there that the Marathas were against the untouchables. Jedhe and Javalkar called on the Maratha leaders there and found that they all were in favour of the untouchables. They issued a statement to that effect. Jedhe and Javalkar reached the
pavilion of conference shortly before the public meeting came to an end on 26th December. Both of them made speeches at the instance of Dr. Ambedkar. In his speech Jedhe said, "We have to hit back those who have tormented us. Our aim is to establish humanity. It is ignominious that human beings should be forbidden to take water from the lake where dogs and donkeys can drink water. It is right that you have burnt 'Bhala' 'Manusmriti' and 'Sangram'. It is right to go to jail by offering Satyagraha". When Dr. Ambedkar asked who were ready to participate in the Satyagraha, 3894 names were enrolled within an hour. When the conference was still going on the district collector reached the venue of the conference. He requested to postpone the Satyagraha till the suit pending in court was decided. Dr. Ambedkar taking into consideration the policy of the government postponed the Satyagraha though thousands of volunteers were ready to participate in it.

The Parvati Satyagraha (1929)

Even though Keshavrao Jedhe was involved in the internal politics of the non-Brahman party he fully concentrated on the Parvati Satyagraha campaign in Poona. In a meeting held on 22nd September 1929 under the chairmanship of Vinayakrao Bhuskute in the Local Self Government Institute Hall it was decided that the untouchables should enter the temple on the Parvati Hill and if necessary should offer Satyagraha. A Satyagraha Committee was also formed in the same
meeting. Shivram Janaba Kamble was its President and P.N. Rajbhoj was Secretary of the Committee. The advisory council consisted of members like N.V. Gadgil, Keshavrao Jedhe, V.M. Bhuskute, V.V. Sathe, G.H. Kanitkar etc. The opponents raised a point that as the temple on the Parvati Hill was privately owned, the untouchables can't enter it. Sardar Mujumdar, Sardar Raste, Gopalrao Patwardhan and trustees of the temple- Vishwasrao Daware, Narayanrao Gunjal, Baburao Phule, Ganpatrao Nalawade, Shrimant Appasaheb Gadre etc. were opposed to the impending Satyagraha. The Parvati Satyagraha was organized on Sunday the 13th October, 1929. In the morning P.N. Rajbhoj, Shivram Janaba Kamble, Mrs. Tanubai Kamble, J.S. Ranbhise etc. about two hundred fifty untouchables-men and women- Satyagrahis gathered at the foot of Parvati hill. Besides them N.V. Gadgil, Keshavrao Jedhe, Madhavrao Shinde, R.N. Lad (Editor of 'Majoor'), S.M. Joshi, N.G. Gore etc. totally 300 people were ready to support the Satyagraha. At about 9 O'clock the Satyagrahis started climbing the hill with hearty acclamation. Rajbhoj, Bhuskute and Gadgil were in the forefront. Keshavrao Jedhe, Gadgil and three Harijans started going upstairs. The satyagrahis went up the stairs. Instantly resistance of the orthodox people (Narayanrao Gunjal, Baburao Phule, Ganpatrao Deodhar, G.M. Nalawade, Vishwas Daware, Degaonkar etc.) increased. The initial scuffle turned into a fighting. The orthodox people started abusing, beating and
throwing stones. Gadgil and Bhuskute were battered and kicked severely. They tried to push the satyagrahis from the footsteps into the bushes of prickly pear. They managed to control themselves somehow and the satyagrahis patiently tolerated all this. Deodas Ranade was seriously beaten and Rajbhoj became unconscious as he was hit hard with a stone. The caste Hindu satyagrahis were the target of the orthodox people. The policeman arrived when the fighting was still going on and rescued the satyagrahis. The District Collector declared that as the stairs and road upto the temple were public none should forbid the satyagrahis climbing up. Thereafter, the crowd dispersed. The satyagrahis went up but to their surprise they found the main-gate of the temple closed. They touched the step in namaskar and came down. Next day in a public meeting held in the market, Maharshi Shinde and Keshavrao Jedhe made speeches and protested against the orthodox Hindus who had beaten the satyagrahis.

Gadgil in an interview, declared that they would continue their Satyagraha till their goals was achieved. All insisted on continuing the Satyagraha. Persons like Sheth Jamnalal Bajaj were advising to suspend the Satyagraha. The satyagrahis insisted on Rajbhoj to permit continuation of the Satyagraha. At last it was decided to launch Satyagraha again on 18th November. A statement was issued accordingly. At the same time Anand Swami, Secretary to Sheth Jamnalal Bajaj, approached Rajbhoj started discussing
about the suspension of Satyagraha. Initially the untouchables were not at all ready for such discussion. At last the untouchables showed their readiness for the suspension of Satyagraha when N.C. Kelkar, L.B. Bhopatkar, Mate etc. guaranteed other things. It was decided that

1) The Satyagraha should be called off for fifteen days.

2) The untouchables and the caste Hindus could have the vision of the idol from a thick stick set at the distance of six feet from the sanctuary.

3) If the trustees extend more rights to the caste Hindus Kelkar, Bhopatkar and Mate would seek such rights for the untouchables also. If the trustees do not comply with their requests they themselves will refuse to exercise their extra rights and ask their friends to do the same.

These conditions of compromise were shown to Keshavrao Jedhe, Shivram Janba Kamble, Rajbhoj and Thorat, and after much discussion the proposed Satyagraha was suspended on the following conditions:

1) There should be freedom for the temple entry committee to propagate the views on Satyagraha during the days of suspension.

2) There should not be any objection for the enrolment of volunteers or Satyagrahis. Thus the Satyagraha was postponed.

Keshavrao Jedhe did a lot of social work along with
his participation in social movement. The Late Bapurao Shinde had started Maratha free boarding. Jedhe brothers ran the boarding after Bapurao Shinde's demise. They provided free lodging and boarding to the Maratha students. He started Shri Chhatrapati Shahu Vachanlaya in 1923 for the sake of social awakening, extended financial backing for running non-Brahman newspapers. He toiled hard for bringing about awakening in the peasant masses.

If a movement is to be successful it ought to have honest leaders. It was Keshavrao Jedhe who made the non-Brahman movement a success. Keshavrao Jedhe was supporting pillar of the non-Brahman movement. The non-Brahman movement would not have been crippled had it not got Keshavrao Jedhe's leadership after Shahu Maharaja's demise. Jedhe and some other leaders contributed a lot for the success of the non-Brahman movement.

Keshavrao Jedhe had designed the non-Brahman movement to fight against the social inequality conservative attitude, predominance of caste and financial superiority. He never used the movement for his selfish political ends. Some selfish non-Brahman leaders tried to use the movement for their own potty interests. But Jedhe opposed tooth and nail all such attempts. He had to play a role of an opponent when non-Brahman party adopted the pro-government policy on the issues of Simon Commission and the Round Table Conference. He believed
that the non-Brahmans should join the national freedom movement. When he saw that the selfish non-Brahman leaders continued to support the British government he plunged into the freedom movement under Mahatma Gandhiji's leadership.

Tilak was called 'Kings of Pune'. However, Keshavrao Jedhe courageously opposed him for the sake of promoting the cause of social movement. Initially he was inclined more towards social rather than political activities. Keshavrao Jedhe and other non-Brahmans had supported the Patel bill seeking to legalize inter-caste marriages within the Hindu society. Kesari group and many of the Tilakites opposed it. The government is now encouraging inter-caste marriages but the praiseworthy thing about Keshavrao Jedhe is that he adopted this progressive outlook much earlier.

In 1919 the compulsory education movement commenced in Poona. V.R. Shinde and Keshavrao Jedhe insisted on free and compulsory primary education for both boys and girls. When he was a member of the Poona Municipality he moved a resolution suggesting to throw open all the water taps and tanks maintained by the municipality for use by both the caste Hindus as well as the untouchables. His outlook was in keeping with Mahatma Phule's views in this connection.

Keshavrao Jedhe devoted his life to bring about such reforms which we are now trying to implement in a democratic set up. If we review his social work he appears to be a real heir of Karmaveer V.R. Shinde.
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