Chapter Four

DR. V.T. PATIL AND HIS SOCIAL WORK
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Kaka was fortunate enough to witness the great Social & educational work that was carried on by Shri Chh. Shahu of Kolhapur in his princely state in particular & in other parts of the country in general. Chh Shahu's was a movement of Social liberation of the educationally backward & socially handicapped people particularly the non-Brahmanis and the untouchables who suffered under the influence of Brahmanism. The Brahmanism was imposed on the people through the institution of the Brahmin priest hood Shahu abolished in his state the institution of Rajopadhyaya by attaching his Vatan to the state & he was replaced by the Maratha Rajopadhyaya called Ksatra Jagadguru. The Ksatra Jagadguru came from Benadi a Village near Kagal in its southern side which was the birth place of Kaka's wife Kamaladevi. Therefore, Kaka had close relation with Kshatra Jagadguru. Chh Shahu introduced free & compulsory primary education with a view that the education will make the masses aware of their backwardness.

In his state there were separate schools for boys & girls of untouchable community. Shahu closed those schools after he came to power & gave admission to those untouchable boys & girls to the general schools. The high caste people complained against this but Shri Shahu told then that if they don't want to keep their children in these schools they are free to withdraw them. Shahu also made a legislation that in the govt. hospital if the doctors & nurses do not wish to touch the
patients coming from untouchable community they should quite the job. Shahu
Participated in a number of Social & educational conferences even outside his state
and advocated for casterless Society declaring that he firmly stood for the abolition
of whole caste system.\textsuperscript{6}

His successor Rajaram also understood the spirit of Shahu's work &
tried to promote it in his own humble way.\textsuperscript{7}

The Kshtra jagadguru also took up social work particularly during
Rajaram's period. He reconverted many people that had gone to other religions. For
example 400 people at Karadaga were reconverted from Islam to Hinduism & he
gave them the status of Kshatriyas.\textsuperscript{8} At Jayashinpur some members belonging to
Mang community had embraced chrishianity & Kshatra Jagadaguru brought them
back to Hinduism.\textsuperscript{9} It is good fortune that Dr. V.T.Patil was the witness to these
events when he was a student in schools and colleges. Therefore, it is quite natural
that being an highly educated man coming from rural & non-Brahminical
background he must have been influence by the social fermentation that had occurred
in Southern part of the Country, Kolhapur being the main centre and head quarter of
these activities.

**Dr. V.T. Patil's Social Work**: - He started his legal practice in Kolhapur in 1930,
because of his studious habit he soon earned his name & became popular at the bar.
While he was the Chairman of Kolhapur Municipality he paid attention towards the
construction of the roads & repair of the roads in the Municipality. He added many
gardens to the Kolhapur city. He founded Prince Shivaji Club to promote games.
He was equally interested in the cultural programs like dramas & therefore he patronized Kumar Mandals which staged dramas. Gargoti, Bhudargad was the area where he took deep interest and established a separate colony called Vishwanath Nagar.  

In 1932 there was an annual conference of Marathi literary association held at Kolhapur. Kakaji was the Chairman of local committee of this conference. Under his guidance organizational work of the conference was done efficiently. As soon as the conference was over he gave the account of the income & expenditure incurred for the conference to office barers of the conference and became free from it.  

Chairman of the district school board. 1932-38: - He was the chairman of the district school board at 1932-38. During his period many existing school buildings were repaired & some new were built-up. It is in fact his future idea of founding education institution and his future plan of founding the Mouni Vidyapeeth & Tararani Vidyapeeth were born in his mind. An incident took place here that the School board education officer complained about the chairman's interference in the transfer of the teachers. The school board appointed a committee. The committee report was not favorable to the chairman's stand. When the report came to the school board for discussion chairman categorically stated that he has not interfered in any case for transfer of the teacher. All his was based on misunderstanding of the educational officer. The committee accepted the version of the chairman. Thus the educational officer was taught a lesson. In his tenure as chairman of school board he
neither punished anybody nor harmed the interest of anybody.

**His work as the chairman of Ilakha Panchayat 1938-48:** Kaka right from his school days had respect for the Chh of Kolhapur as the Chh was the scion of Shivaji the great. But he actually came in contact with the Chh while he was practicing law in Kolhapur. Kaka was introduced by Kshatra Jagadguru to Chhatrapati as he soon came to know that Shri V. T. Patil had the unflinching faith in Chhatrapati. Therefore, he began trusting him. At least twice in a week Kaka used to visit Chhatrapati. Chhatrapati appointed him as a public prosecutor of his Court. Chhatrapati used to encamp at Raibag & Dagipur and Kaka used to be with him many times. As a result Chh. started consulting him on many issues. In 1931 Kaka was nominated as the member of the Ilakha Panchayat & soon he became the chairman of Ilakha Panchayat; the position in which he remained almost for eight years that is up to 1948.¹⁶

Kaka has an opportunity to see the entire Kolhapur district very closely. The roads the village schools, village wells, offices called chawadi, village temple etc were seen & studied by him minutely by moving about the district taking the state engineer with him. What he saw that by & large the road connecting to Kokan hills were complete but the roads between Kolhapur & Gargoti were incomplete. Kaka at once decided to complete the road extending it up to Patgaon.¹⁷ The road between Gargoti & Patgaon was very difficulty because of two big hills & thick forests. But some how he & his engineer Mr. A.B. Hawel have made determined efforts & constructed the road. There were bridges to be completed. The
work was started earnestly and the bridges were completed before the rain started.  

Kaka also paid attention in digging many wells & constructing the school building in village areas while he was the chairman of the Ilakha Panchayat. For example: the well dug in the village Tambyachiwadi & Hanmante are still rendering the services to those villages. Similarly 21 miles Pucca Mortar road called Vijaymarge from Gargoti to Patgaon is still in the use & the state, Transport buses regularly ply on the road. This area therefore, remains well connected to Gargoti & Kolhapur. People of that area used to call Kaka as Vithoba for his Services to them.

In those days the roads that were under the administration of Ilkha Panchayat were rough. Out of the total road the roads of 30 miles were of mortar roads & these were pucca roads maintained nicely. Their quality was such that even the members of the local boards of the British territory used to visit Kolhapur for studying those roads.

While he was the chairman of Ilkha Panchyat (1939-48) Hitler had declared war in Europe, Hitler was an imperialist & a dectetor. To condemn his dictatorial acts a public meeting was called at Mangaon, Gadhinglag Taluka. While specking as a chief guest of the meeting Kaka had told that Hitler is an impalerist & a dectetor. He told further that there lived a philosopher called Nitse in Germany who had advocated that German Aryan race is superior & this race is born to rule the world. Hitler took clue from this theory & massacred Jews in Germany attacked slavs in Russia due to his conviction of Aryan superirity. Kaka added that no imperialist
dictator have ever succeeded, Therefore, the fall of Hitler is imminent.\textsuperscript{21}

This shows Kaka’s depth of understanding the contemporary happening in the world.

\textbf{Kakaji’s Work As a Chairman of Temple Committee:} Kolhapur state was merged in Bombay presidency in 1949. Kakaji served as the Chairman of temple committee of southern Mahatashtra from 1954 to 1958. Even after merger his image as a public figure remained as highly honoured among the people of Kolhapur. Therefore, Kakaji continued to accury high positions in Social & Political life in Kolhapur after merger.\textsuperscript{22}

Under the princely rulers the state control over temples which were the matter of great controversy as most of them were under the priests who practised tradition & caste usages. Their functioning were therefore, attacked by the reformers. Therefore, the Government of India was trying to control them to democratize them.\textsuperscript{23}

It is really a matter of great rejoicing to know that Shri Chh. Shahu who died in 1922 had already taken a stage to establish state control over temples to use temple estate for social welfare purpose. The following letter reads the state order with regard to state control over the temples & their estate.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{Imposition of State Control On Temples and Their Estates:} Along with the introduction of the scheme of Free and Compulsory Primary Education in the State, His Highness Shahu Chhatrapati adopted in July, 1917 only another scheme of far-reaching social significance viz. Imposition of State Control on Temples and their

\textsuperscript{111}
Estates. This revolutionary measure confirmed his fame as a progressive Ruler because it embodied his desire to utilize temples and their estates for social purposes.25

As per established practice all temples in Kolhapur State had their regular income either from lands donated to them or from annuities or cash allowances or grants or from both. Of course the main source of revenue was income derived from the endowed lands, i.e. lands donated or attached to the temples. But the village officers or the persons in charge of these temple estates began not only to utilise the temple property and income as their private properties but also to appropriate them and even to mortgage them. Similarly, the income received from other sources was also squandered by the managers of Devasthanas, i.e. Temples, for personal and other objectionable purposes. Hence, with a view to utilize the temples and the estates attached to them for social purposes, His Highness Shahu Chhatrapati decided that all temples and temple properties should be taken over by the State Government under its direct management.26

Accordingly a very significant Government Resolution imposing State Control on the Management of Temples and their Estates was passed on the 9th July, 1917 and the detailed Rules and Regulations were framed for implementing this important social legislation. These Rules were applied to all Temples located in the Kolhapur State and they clearly stated that the Government has got the primary right to control the management of a temple and its income. Further, the Rules made it quite clear (i) that a temple of a particular religion will be managed by a person of
that religion only, (ii) that the person so entrusted with the work of the management of a temple is to be considered as a Government servant, and (iii) that such a person will have no right over the income of the temple. At the same time, it was ordained that as usual the Temples can have income from lands or grants or from both.\textsuperscript{27}

Further, it was specifically laid down under the Rules that while constructing a Temple special portions should be built (a) on the right side of the temple as a school for use of students, and (b) on the left side of the temple as a village hall or court for the villagers.

Moreover, as per Rules every temple is required to create a special fund from the income of the temple for giving help to schools and for making provisions of drinking water, rest houses, etc.\textsuperscript{28}

In this way, through the Government Resolution of 9\textsuperscript{th} July, 1917, His Highness Shahu Chhatrapati laid down the fundamental principle that the State Government was the trustee of Devasthanas i.e. temples and sacred places, and that the State Government has the inherent right to regulate their managements and to control their expenditures. Obviously, this social scheme of imposing State Control on Temple Estates was very significant in the sense that it enabled Chhatrapati Shahu to utilize temple money for the enlightenment of the people.\textsuperscript{29}

Kakaji's work as the Chairman of Panhala Hill Station Commitee : (1944 - 47) : Ever since his school days in Kolhapur Kaka used to visit Panhala & from 1930 he often visited Panhala not only because Panhala was a hill station but because of its historical importance. Tararani founded the house of Khapur in 1908 and in early
days Panhala was the capital of Kolhapur branch of Maratha rule. Therefore Panhala was quite dear to the heart of Kaka. As he loved the role of Tarabai in bringing Kolhapur to the fame, naturally he loved Panhala the first capital of Maharashtra. Therefore, he acquired the peace of land on Panhala & constructed a small bungalow in 1941. He planted many trees around the bungalow & developed the garden. Therefore his bungalow became an attraction of the tourists.

Panhala as a hill Station attracted tourists as it is also historically important. For example Sambaji the elder son of Shivaji was kept here in confinement when he came back from Mughal Camp. Then the place known as Pawan Khind from where the passage goes to Vishalgarh is also here from where Shivaji escaped to Vishalgarh & Shivaji's trusted lieutenant Baji Prabhu checked the onward march of Shiddi Johar, a Vijapuri Sardar Who had marched against Shivaji Baji Prabhu arrested his onward march until Shivaji reached Vishalgarh & lost his life in fighting Siddhi Johar. His huge statue stands today at the entrance gate on the Kolhapur-Panhala road. In the western side of Panhala there is one vigilance gate to keep watch on the fort from the western side. In it there is an underground tunnel used as a passage to escape in case of the emergency. Above all the hill station 2300ft high from the sea has a very cool climate even during summer season. It's climate can be compared with the climate of Mahabaleswar the another great center of tourists in the summer season on the top of Panhala hill it is all a plain area measuring two KM in breadth and two Km in length. Panhala is a municipal town.

It is therefore, quite natural that a vision of man like Kaka must pay
attention towards the place. Kaka became the Chairman of hill station in 1944 for three years. He wanted to improve roads, develop gardens & beautify the places in Panhlaa hill. But it was the question of necessary finances required for it. The commitee used to get the grant of Rs. 30,000 from Kolhapur Darbar annually. The income that Panhala Municipality used to get from house taxes was quite meagre. Kaka thought that the commitee should approach the Bombay Government. Murarji Desai was the chief Minister of Bombay state. He visited Panhala but did not favour the idea of developing hill station, arguing that the hill stations were British Idea & we should not trouble the people to climb the hills from the plane for their education, health care and other perposes.32

After this Kakaji also approached Bhausaheb Hire & Yashvantrao chavan for some financial assistant to develope the Panhala hill Station but nothing came out of it.33

Dadasaheb Mavalankar once visited Panahala & stayed there for 15 days he became the first speaker of Indian Parliament of after Indias independence. Mavalankar had deep interest in the history of the Marathas. Therefore, he loved panhala hill Station as it was the place were much of the Maratna history had happened. Both Kaka & Lohia met him & told him how Morarji opposed the idea of developing the hill Station like Panhala. Mavalankar told them that Moraraji was not alone in opposing the development of hill Stations during British days. We were all opposed to that because Britishers used to call the conferances and administation meeting on hill Stations & spend enormous money which was paid to the
Government by way of taxes by the people of this country. Therefore, we all used to attack the Government on that account. But it does not mean that we are opposed to develop our own hill Stations. Please don’t misunderstand our congress ministers & try to understand them.  

After Kakaji, on the recommendation of Lohia became the Chairman of the committee. Lohia did much for the improvement of conditions in Panhala. He improved the roads, converting them into tar roads. He helped many hotels to come up. He repaired many wells, developed a garden called Sandya garder & installed Pandit Jawharlal Nehrus Statue there. He assisted the forest department to develop and beautify the garden and it is called as Tabak Udyan. The garden now is an important place of attraction for the tourists. The tourists department of Maharashtra has also constructed its own guest house called holley day Home which is available for the tourists. 

Kakaji as the Chairman of Kolhapur Bar Association: When Gandhiji was assassinated their was a big trouble all over the country. Gandhiji was murdered by a Brahmin & Brahmin community was made the target by the Non-Brahmins all over the country their houses were set on fire & their property was looted and even some Brahmins lost their lives. In Maharashtra, particularly in southern part of Maharashtra the uproar against Brahmins was intense. The South Maharashtra was the center of Non-Brahmin movement for about half a century and Kolhapur under Shahu & Rajaram Maharaj was the main center of the movement in Maharashtra. Therefore, arsoning the Brahmins houses & looting their property was much intense in this part.
Therefore, it earned a bad reputation in the eyes of the public thinking why make all Brahmins the target. Gandhi's murder took place in January 1948 & the anti Brahmin trance continued for some days.36

When this was the situation, in 1950 Kaka fought the election of Bar association of Kolhapur & won it. It is at this time the bar association had extended invitation to shri M.C.Chagala, the Chief justice of Bombay high court. Shri M.C.Ghagala was very big name in Indian judiciary. Kaka organised a grand function for his well come in Town Hall. Invited almost all important V.I.Ps. of Kolhapur and the programme was organised in the Town Hall. When Chagala visited Kolhapur, a grand dinner was arranged in the evening. Shri Chagala was very much impressed by the welcome function. Kaka arranged his visit to panhala & Jaysingpur & there also he was accorded a grand welcome. Shri Chagala after returning to Bombay expressed his gratitude by saying that the Kolhapurians were highly cultured people.37

When Shri P.B.Sawant practicing high court lawyer visited Kolhapur and met Kaka, he congratulated him for arranging a good welcome function to Shri Chagala and said further that this has helped in wiping out the blot that was stamped on Kolhapur after Gandhi's murder.38

Shri Balbhim Yuvak Sangh : The Kolhapur state Government employees Shri Tambekar & Nigudkar had established Shri Balbhim Yuvak Sangh in 1925 with a view to build the Character of the youth & make him physically strong. When Kaka became the Chairman of the Kolhapur Municipality he actively supported & rendered his help to this organization sympathetically because the organization had the
following objectives in view.

1) Non observance of Caste Practices & untouchability.

2) Not to take tea & Coffee.

3) Its members must protrast 25 times after every day & also do compulsorily the necessary exercises.

4) Always speak only the truth.

5) Every member must wake-up at 5.30 a.m. in the summer & 6.00 a.m. in the rainy season & winter.

   If any member wakes-up prior to that, that is no objection but under no circumstances he should sleep beyond that.

6) Wear always the clean cloths whatever may be the qualities of the cloth, health & eradication of Caste system were the aims of this organization. It is for these reasons Kaka actively supported this organisation.39

   He was the Chairmen of Maratha Mandal established in July 1933.40 The aim of Mandal was to be loyal to the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur to promote education, to encourage the writers on the problems of backwardness of the Marathas, to extend scholarships to the diserving Candidates from the poor Maratha families & to liberate Maratha community from the tradition of fatalism.41

Karveer Ilakha Harijan Parishad : Chh Shahu Maharaj had worked for the upliftment of the Dalit through out his life. Shahu's son Rajaram also supported the cause of the Dalits. Therefore, the Dalits themselves came forward and organised their conference on 3rd May 1936.42 This was presided over by Shri B.I. Powar. He
was in state Government service. Shri Balasaheb Patil the editor of Satyawadi was the chairman of the reception committee. Kaka rendered all his help to the conference as the Chairman of Kolhapur municipality. Chh. Rajaram had sent massage to this conference in which he had said, "My revered father Shri Shahu Maharaj had made all efforts to bring about the progress of Dalits in his life time. Following his foot steps I have also continued my efforts towards that direction. It is my earnest desire that in Kolhapur state even the word un-touchable should not find place anywhere & we have made a law to that effect. The Dalit should take it up & get benefited from it. That it is our wish. The touchable Hindu also should recognize the rights of the Dalits." In the end he wished the conference all success. In this conference under the chairmanship of Acharya Atre the program of interdining called Zunka Bhakar was arranged on the palace theatre. Almost 700 people participated in this program & almost 400 people stood around as spectators and as viewers. Shri D. M. Shirke, Shri D. S. Powar, Dagadu Kamble. Balasaheb Patil, Diwan Bahaddur Sabnis, Mamasheb Mahagaonkar Shri S. S. Bhosale, had rendered there services to organize the conference. This conference worked for some years & recieved help from the satyashodhak Samaj.

Karveer Mahila Sabha: It is wellknown that shahu Maharaja had made the primary education free and compulsory in his state and in this the female education was also involved. It is also important that shahu Maharaja had encouraged inter caste marriages. Therefore, in this social atmosphere created by Shahu in kolhapur, some women organizations were established. After 1933 Kaka also openly supported these
women organisations as he was the champion of women's education & their liberation.45

A women's conference was held in shahupuri of Jain Temple in Kolhapur under the chairmanship of Sou. Sarojani Bhosale the wife of Kolhapur High Court Judge Shri S. S. Bhosale. Almost 500 women attended the conference. In this conference it was resolved that there should be compulsory education for women & discouragement to the marriages between elderly man & young women. State should enact the law to bring about these reforms.46

There was also an organization in Kolhapur which was assisting widows for their remarages. This organisation was helping financially such couples keeping their names in secrecy.

Tararani Sewa Sangh 1931: Both he & Shri. Balasaheb Patil the editor of newspaper Satyawadi coming together formed an association called Tararani Seva Sangh in 1931. Tararani was remembered for three things she founded the house of Kolhapur but more important than this was that it was she under whose leadership the mughal emperor Aurangzeb was finally defeated here in Maharashtra. Her leadership should stands as an inspiring example before the youth and it us with this view the Tararani Sewa Sangh was established to arrange lectures & lectures series on the life of Tatarani & her times on various occassions to reveal her life & times to the people, particularly the young men & women.47
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