CHAPTER 4

MAHATMA JOTIBA PHULE - THE FATHER

OF THE NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT
Jotirao Govindrao Phule (Jotiba Phule) (1827-1890) is the father of the Non-Brahmin Movement. In Maharashtra his name is a household word even today. To understand and appreciate his philosophy, an attempt is made in this chapter to evaluate his contribution. The study is based largely on his following works:

1) 'Brāhimanāmoc Kasaba', Bombay, 1869
2) 'Ṣivājicā Povādā', Bombay, 1869
3) 'Gulāmagiri', Poona, 1873
4) 'Ṣetakaryāmoc Asuda', Bombay, 1883 Part 1-4
5) 'Satsāra', Poona, 1885 Nos 1-3
6) 'Sārvajanika Satyadharma Pustak', Poona, 1891

These books are in Marathi and the references quoted here are their translated versions. Besides this, Dananjay Keer's "Father of Our Social Revolution" is also a very important contribution to an understanding of Joti Phule's thoughts and life.

Incidentally, there has been a considerable contribution to the study of Jotiba Phule in Maharashtra. There is lot of literature in 'Marathi' on Jotiba Phule. In this direction Miss Gail O'mdvet deserves to be mentioned and some of her articles have already been published in
Jotiba Phule was born in 1827, only to lose his mother on his birth. Right since his younger days, he marked himself with certain talents which were notable. As he belonged to Kshatriya (Mali) caste, his father could not think of giving education to him, because in those days education was not meant for children of backward classes. But his father was persuaded by his neighbours to send Jotiba to a missionary school. There is very little information available regarding his early school career, but he was fully equipped to play a historical role right since his childhood. In his book 'Gulamagiri', he refers to the Negro problem and the book has been dedicated to the American people in honour of their achievement of the abolition of slavery. This shows that Jotiba Phule had followed and learnt about the Negro problem in the U.S.A., and he compared the prevailing 'Gulamagiri' (slavery) in the Indian society under the Brahminical influence to the Negro problem. Though Jotiba Phule was not highly educated, his thoughts were influenced by his wide reading.

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The fact that he did not possess higher education did not come in his way of acquiring knowledge through his self study and reading and he was very much interested in understanding the true meaning of liberty, equality and fraternity. He had to go into the details to understand the real meaning of the caste system, and thereby he could understand Brahminism in the real sense. He also mentions about Thomas Paine in his book. Poona was described as the hot-bed of Brahminism. Private institutions were established in Poona which were mainly devoted to the study of Vedas, Shastras and Science. When at school, Jotiba was very much shocked by the treatment meted out by the Brahmins to the so-called backward classes, and on the other hand he was much attracted by the sympathetic approach of the missionaries. "The missionaries started schools and colleges, and used English as medium of instruction at school and college level. The teaching was so good that even Hindus who were opposed to missionary activity and had no intention of becoming Christians sent their children." While the Brahmins kept the backward classes at

2 Ibid., p.110.
a distance, the missionaries welcomed them.

Under the British rule, missionaries played a great role in the development of the social thought, especially in Maharashtra and Madras. The advent of the missionaries, following the establishment of the British rule in India, was no doubt for the spread of Christianity. Even then the lower classes, for the first time, came to be treated with sympathy by the missionaries. Jotiba himself was a great admirer of the missionaries. But the impact of the west was uneven. "The vast majority living in the countryside or in the princely states were untouched by it. The western influence was confined largely to the few cities which the British used as the centers of their rule, and it was especially felt by the small minority who had higher education." 4

These influences touched Jotiba to the very core. He felt that the condition of the untouchables was horrible. The untouchable could not walk on the streets in the morning or in the evening (at the time of sunrise and sunset) lest his long shadow should pollute the house of

4 Ibid., p.33.
a Brahmin. He had to carry an earthen pot hanging around his neck for his sputum. He had to tie a branch of leaves to the back of his hip so that his foot-prints might be erased. The untouchables thus were treated as a species much lower than even a dog or a cat. The Brahmins, as the custodians of religion and religious practices, were the natural targets for those who aimed at creating a new society by fighting these evils root and branch. The western impact was not confined to a particular field, and especially the social institution of caste came under attack as being incompatible. The earliest exponent of this school of thought was Jotiba Phule. He welcomed the western secular education. He traced the causes for the backwardness of the Hindu society. The caste system had proved a great hindrance to individual progress. The very philosophy of caste hierarchy was detrimental to social advancement. Jotiba Phule was "extremely irritated with the Brahmins and the caste structure of the Hindus as propounded by them, he felt an attraction for Christian religion," and had also spoken highly of the "Mohammedans because of the principle of equality in their religion."

5 Sarvajanika Satyadharma Pustaka, Poona, 1891, p.353.
He felt that the caste system was a steel frame, and the so-called lower classes were denied education and social status.

Jotiba Phule, as he belonged to the lower class, believed that the Brahmin ascendancy in the social and religious matters kept away the vast multitude of the Indian masses. He was not interested in merely bringing about a change in the religious practices, he wanted to eradicate the evil effects of Brahminism which perpetuated social inequality. He could find that the backward classes are deliberately kept as such in order to ensure the front ranks in all walks of life for the Brahmins. Centuries of subjugation had reduced the Indian masses almost to the position of a dumb-driven cattle. He goaded them to revolt against the Hindu deities, the religious practices, the scriptures and the priests. In short, he raised the standard of revolt against the age-old tradition which enslaved the masses. Western knowledge was an eye-opener to the existing evils in the social conditions of the society. He could precisely visualise that the social structure of India was tottering and hence was in need of maximum revolutionary changes. He felt that superstitions, false beliefs and baseless customs required to be completely overhauled. The
Brahmins, on their part, played a different role when they saw that the lower castes were getting associated in the form of caste sabhas or associations. They tried to turn their attention away from the then existing Hindu religious practices. "There were some who sought to defend caste on the ground that the substitution of the western class system for the Indian caste system would not usher in an egalitarian society." 

The Brahmo-Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj were started to reform the religious practices but without giving up their Brahminical interpretations. As to the social thought in Maharashtra:

"From the early days of the British rule to the beginning of the twentieth century we find an unbroken chain of thinkers in Maharashtra. Some of them forcibly advocated emulation of Britishers in social matters, while some championed the revival of traditional culture of the Hindus. An interesting interplay of action and interaction is thus witnessed in the thought current of Maharashtrian thinkers of nineteenth century. Lokhitwadi alias Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar (1856-62), Jotirao Phule (1827-1890), Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-1895) and Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) were some of the persons who took

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active part in the development of social thought in Maharashtra during this period."8

Jotiba Phule's rise had taken the Brahmins to their toes, and the Brahmins, to counteract the moves of Jotiba Phule and his attacks through his various writings, called upon their compatriots to play an unique role. For example during the 1890's Maharashtrian nationalists started an annual Shivaji festival in honour of the great Seventeenth century warrior who led a major revolt against the Mughal Empire and the Sultan of Bijapur, a Muslim ruler in the Deccan. The festival was one of the ingenious methods used by Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) to spread the nationalist movement among the people who had remained aloof from politics. With its use of traditional priests, images, prayers, and historical and religious discussions the festival appealed to persons who felt ill at ease at gatherings with a more anglicised character. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who was probably the most popular Indian nationalist, did play the role of Brahmanism.

The following article in his Marathi newspaper the

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Kesari, was judged by a jury as seditious under the provisions of Indian Penal Code and Tilak was sentenced to 18 months in jail. Speakers at Shivaji Festival were concerned about one important event of historical importance, viz., Shivaji’s treacherous act of killing Afzalkhan. When Afzalkhan and Shivaji met alone below the walls of the fort, Shivaji killed Afzalkhan with his metal tiger claws. When the circumstances and ethics of killing were debated, Tilak found a moral justification for the killing of Afzalkhan in the Bhagavadgita (The Song Divine). In the Gita, Krishna tells the warrior Arjuna that killing in war is permissible as long as it is not done for selfish reasons. Extremist politicians used the same argument to justify terrorism against the British.9 Bal Gangadhar Tilak was undoubtedly the first and the greatest nationalist of India, but when Brahminism was challenged by Jotiba Phule and his caste sabhas, even nationalists like B.G.Tilak and his thoughts were not free from Brahminical influences. In the Shivaji festival two orthodox Chitpawan Brahmins, Damodar and Balkrishna Chaphekar asked the people to risk their lives "on the battle field in a national war" and to shed upon

9 Kesari; June 15th 1897, Translated in India Home Proceedings. (London - India Office records).
the earth the life - blood of the enemies who destroy our religion. In the Ganapati Festival they asked "this is called Hindustan, how is it that the English rule here."  

In the then existing conditions of India "Both those who agitated for reforms and those who collaborated with the British were drawn from groups which traditionally enjoyed high status." This cultural revival and the growth of political extremism which often went together, especially in Maharashtra, had its greatest impact during the nineteenth century and it was felt everywhere. But the Brahmin reformers had their own limitations. They belonged to the white collared gentry and could address themselves to that class only because the other classes had fully understood the Brahmins. They tried to revise only these customs which were incompatible with the industrial city life. This was all due to the swinging of the pendulum to the other side because of the activities of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj', started by Jotiba Phule. Jotiba Phule was not just a social reformer but was a revolutionary and


naturally he is known as the Father of the revolutionary social reform movement of Maharashtra. He influenced the society through his various publications, and the fact that he himself belonged to the lower caste group was an additional advantage. His publications threw open the reality on the various aspects of Brahminism. Through his writings Jotiba Phule made an impact which threw a challenge to the position of the Brahmins in the Deccan and especially the centre of Brahminism, viz., Poona. "Although Brahmin dominance was still unshaken, there were signs that its Poona leadership was not so solid as it had been."12 While Jotiba's activities were becoming stronger, and he was gaining position of importance as a leader of the Non-Brahmins, "Brahmins created disagreements among its leaders over tactics. Ranade's programme had shrewdly coupled moderate politics and social reform, so as to give the Maharashtrian leadership an image of enlightenment."13 "Obviously this would please the Government House, but it would also establish a connection with the non-sectarian politicians

13 Ibid., p.243.
in Bombay city. This opening into a wider field was vital to the politicians of the Deccan, and to win it they had to avoid suspicion that they were merely the Peshwai in Victorian guise."  

The rise of Jotiba Phule and his attack on the Brahmins, was a great set-back to the Brahminical leadership in the Deccan, so much so the Brahmins were divided among themselves on the ways and means to face this new social thought that was rising against Brahminical influence. Without this movement of 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' and a revolutionary leader like Jotiba Phule, history of Brahminism would have been quite different. The Brahmins, throughout southern India, were pressed in every way to change their process of politics, and were compelled to take note of the movement of Jotiba Phule, and the problem was that, they (Brahmins) were divided on the issue. "The orthodox were against it; and it was unacceptable to those whose interest in social reform was languid, and who thought in any case that it was not the way to add to their support in Maharashtra. Chiplonkar's uncompromising attitudes and the appeal to the past glories of the empire in the columns of the 'Maratha'

suggested an alternative way of mobilising support. Ostensibly the battles opened over the issue of social reform, but the clash of personalities, the rivalry for the control of the Deccan Education Society, of the newspapers, and eventually of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha itself were really a struggle for leadership between the attitudes,∗15 within Brahmins themselves.

Jotiba Phule had set this struggle and conflicts between the upper castes, between themselves, and at such junctures, Jotiba felt the need for an institution. "A revolutionary leader like Jotiba Phooley required an institution, an authoritative credo, and a platform for the propagation of his ideals."∗16 Accordingly Jotiba convened on September 24, 1873, a meeting of all his admirers and disciples at Poona. About sixty men from many important centres of Maharashtra assembled. Jotiba named his organisation 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' (Society for seeking Truth)∗17 Its aim was to challenge Brahminical supremacy, ------------

15 Ibid., p.244.
17 Ibid., p.126.
the first of its kind ever organised with the sole
objective "to redeem the Shudras and Atishudras from the
influence of Brahminical scriptures under the Brahmin
priest who fleeced them, to teach them their human rights;
liberate them from mental and religious slavery." Jotiba
Phule with a great depth in the studies of the origins of
Hinduism, had come to the conclusion that Brahminism had
always controlled and prevented education from reaching
the lowest classes. All sufferings of Non-Brahmins were
due to the monopoly of Brahmins in education. In Southern
India, and especially wherever Brahmin domination was felt
in the nineteenth century, the bitterest disputes were over
the Brahmin grip over education which seemed to be the main
avenue to domination. The most influential critic of this
social order was a Shudra, Jotirao Govindrao Phule, who had
himself been educated at a mission school, and was deeply
influenced by Christian teachings on equality. Belonging
to the Malis (Gardner's caste), Jotirao was well placed
to voice a general protest against the Brahmins, because his
own caste, while standing below the Maratha-Kunbis, could
eat and drink with them, and it would also speak for the
untouchable Mahars and Mangas.

18 Ibid., p. 127.
19 Anil Seal, op. cit., p.
His was a united platform, and he could command the ignorant masses, because for the first time these masses could find a leader who belonged to their community. With this advantage on his side Jotiba could successfully unite various sub-castes (Jatis) under the banner of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. Jotiba realising that the sole cause of all the difficulties of the masses was lack of education he started various types of educational institutions. Home being the earliest school for every child, he thought of making the ignorant mother, who was the first teacher, learned one. So in 1848, Jotirao Phooley founded a school for Girls.¹⁰ This school was thrown open to all classes, but the practical difficulty he faced was the non-availability of female teachers, and as a solution to this, he first taught his wife at home and appointed her as a teacher in the school. This act was rewarded when the then President of Education Board, Sir Erskine Peery was much impressed by Jotiba's attempts. At his instance the Daksina Prize Committee sanctioned a monthly grant of rupees fifty only towards the maintenance of this school. Jotiba was a pioneer of the female education in India. He was the first to establish a school for girls, and conduct

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it with much personal hardship. There were girls' schools run by the Missionaries which were more interested in religious conversion, but Jotiba felt that the only effective way to fight the dominance of Brahmins, and break their monopoly was to educate the masses by employing Non-Brahmin teachers, who could understand the mind of the lower classes.

Jotiba, no doubt, earned the sympathies of the British "because the natural antagonism of Indian races was a considerable element of British strength, so a dissociating spirit was kept alive, because if all India were to unite against us (British) how long could they maintain themselves." The British had always played the role of "Divide and rule" and such movements were naturally encouraged. Perhaps the limits, if any, for 'Satya Shodhak Movement' to spread to the Madras Presidency might have been due to such politics of the British. The British might have carried this tactics of playing Brahmins against Non-Brahmins from Bombay to Madras Presidency, but one thing is clear. Jotiba Phule did influence the

21 Wood to Elgin ... (Wood Papers), Vol.7, quoted by: S.Gopal, British Policy in India (1858-1905), Cambridge, p.36.
Non-Brahmin Movement immensely during his life-time outside his own province. The British first encouraged Brahminism, but without malice to Non-Brahmins. Jotiba's contribution need not be viewed as the outcome of such a British politics, because his was a movement which had a cause within itself and was not something of an external creation. Besides, he was only a social reformer and not a politician. His cause was that of human dignity, and hence he appreciated the "British rule, as a divine dispensation. Christ raised the British people from a very barbarous state and sent them to India to deliver the crippled Shudras from the cunning Aryan-Brahmins." (Incidentally it may be noted that a similar attitude came to be held by the Dravidian Movement under the leadership of E.V.R. Naicker). But it does not mean that he accepted the British as the only guides and philosophers. Jotiba did not hesitate to criticise the British policy of education, and also with no hesitation he advocated various reforms. "When he met the Indian Education Commission appointed by the Government of India in 1882, he submitted to the Hunter Commission as follows: "I think primary education of the masses should be compulsory upto certain age, say at least twelve years."22 In his memorial dated 19th

October, 1882, Jotiba himself gave a detailed account of the schools he established, the period of his service as a teacher, and his experience in the field of education. Jotiba continued: "Primary schools are almost all of Brahmins, a few trained and most of them are untrained. He called upon the Government to train these Brahmin teachers as far as possible and to select teachers of the cultivating classes who will be able to mix freely with them and understand their wants and wishes much better than Brahmin teachers."²³ Jotiba was also aware of the position of the Brahmins and the education policy of the British in Madras. This can be seen from Jotiba's reference to the situation in Madras Presidency, when he spoke to the Hunter Commission: "The higher education", he said, "be arranged so as to be within easy reach of all, and the books of the subjects for Matriculation should be published in the Government Gazette as is done in Madras."²⁴ This speaks of his knowledge of the then existing social conditions in Madras Presidency and also throws light on the British politics of gaining experience in one, viz., Bombay Presidency and applying the solution

²⁴ D.Keer, op.cit., p.175.
in another Presidency. Jotiba Phule's thoughts had influenced all those areas where Brahmin dominance was felt, and the British diplomacy was one of understanding and assessing their future in India, on the basis of these experiences in Bombay Presidency and applying them to similar types of problems in Madras Presidency in a diplomatic way. The British attitude towards these developments in Bombay certainly influenced the British policy elsewhere. "It was because of these developments, the British, to strengthen the loyal citizens, came forward to help the coming into existence of a bigger class of educated men among the backward or lower classes of the Deccan. They had the suspicion in their minds that they (the backward classes) too will join with the agitators. ... The English people realised the probable danger of this and used their vast resources to create a strong body of educated men from the ranks of the loyal castes."  

The British policy in the educational field to a great extent influenced by the developments in the Bombay

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Residency, because of Jotiba Phule's work. Jotiba Phule's movement had influenced British policy so much that they had to revise their own policy to suit the conditions of the society in southern India. Though Bombay Presidency and Madras Presidency were two separate units, the administration, and administrative policy was one and similar. Besides, both these presidencies were facing similar problems and to deal with them, perhaps the British had to adopt similar policies and assess their effectiveness. "They could feel that the danger which they had to guard against themselves was that the Englishmen had superficial knowledge of India, and their experiences were confined to brief visits and the weak point of their political reforms. was that they were intended to benefit not wholly, but mainly a particular class."26

Hence Jotiba Phule had immensely influenced the British policy and social thought which had wide repercussions. According to M.N. Srinivas: "Jotirao Phule's reforms, and his social thought anticipate the programme of the Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras. The measures which Phoolah advocated in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth

26 Ibid., p.326.
century were to become the main items in the programme of the Non-Brahmin parties of Bombay and Madras in the first half of this century." Professor Ghurye observes that Phooley's demand for special representation for Non-Brahmins in the services and local bodies went unheeded till the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the Maharaja of Kolhapur (Shri Shahu Chhatrapati) took up the Non-Brahmin cause. Thanks mainly to his efforts, special representation through mixed electorals was conceded to the Non-Brahmins in the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms...

Further, Prof. G.S. Ghurye quotes a resolution of the Finance Department of the Government of Bombay, dated September 17, 1923, prohibiting the recruitment of Brahmins and allied castes to the lower services... This policy of reserving a certain percentage of the posts for the Non-Brahmin castes was followed by other provincial governments. The logical consequence of this policy was seen in Madras as early as 1924. Hence the impact of Jotiba Phule's ideas and actions was deep and continuous on the society and the British policy. The 'Satya Shodhak' had influenced the


British policy, and the movement was mainly one of social reform, having its own economic, social and political implications and having an ideology of its own. All these thoughts were given expression to in the writings of Jotiba Phule.

**Economic and Political Thought of Jotiba Phule**

His economic thoughts were laid down in a pamphlet entitled *Isara* (Warning) published in 1885, in which he discusses the economic conditions of the Indian masses at length. He advocated that the Government should help the people by developing irrigation facilities, because Indian agriculture was completely depending upon the monsoon rains. Even in this regard he blamed the Brahmins for not developing irrigation facilities when they were in power. His economic thoughts are few but they are meaningful. But in the then existing conditions of sheer ignorance, his thoughts did not contribute to the development of the down-trodden section of the society. He appealed to the Government to construct small bunds for water to collect, which would be helpful for the people in needy times. What is worth considering here is his bent of mind towards the concept of a welfare state, when he pleads that the army and police should be pressed into service for constructing
such bunds. His thoughts were less doctrinaire but more a reflection of the effects of the caste system and the then existing social conditions.

Social and Political Thought:

In his book Setakaryamoa Asuda (Whip-Cord of the cultivator) he elaborates the social life under Maratha rule, and shows how the Brahmin influence kept the people uneducated, and how later under the British rule the people were over-burdened with the revenue policy, which again was completely controlled by the Brahmins. "Jotirao entreated Queen Victoria in his ballads to take pity on the poverty-stricken peasants, rescue them from the inhuman Brahmin tyranny and save her rule from corruption and malpractices. He suggested that teachers, magistrates and clerks should be appointed from other castes also so that the chain of these tyrants might be broken." 29 Jotirao Phule in April, 1877, announced an essay competition on a fictitious topic, "Imaginary Tour of India by Queen Victoria". She comes to a certain village where a Mahar and Mang kept down their bundles of baggot, met her

and narrated to her their miserable conditions under Peshwa rule and their disabilities under the British rule. A few days later, Jotirao himself wrote a booklet on this topic and published it under the caption 'Kaifiyat'.

Jotiba Phule was a man of both theory and action, and because of the various techniques employed by him as the one mentioned above, his movement was a great success. He could consolidate all the Non-Brahmin castes in Maharashtra and even to this day the Bahujan Samaj – the 'society of all castes except Brahmins' is quite a popular term. Through the idea of Bahujan Samaj, he created a social revolution which was not limited to Maharashtra in its territorial sense, because Bombay and Madras Presidencies were wide enough, and also so close to each other that everything about Jotiba Phule could be known. His struggle was not limited to any caste among the Non-Brahmins, but it was a protest of all the castes, against one single caste viz., Brahmins.

An assessment of his thoughts on Brahminism would also give an idea as to his contribution to the thoughts

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30 Ibid., p.149.
of the Justice Party in Madras since 1916.

Jotiba Phule's thoughts were wide ranging and were expressed in a number of ways i.e., in politics, public speaking, and in writing. There were two main causes to which he was devoted throughout his life-time. They were:

A) Social Reform - which meant elimination of the caste system; and

B) Democratic Justice.

These causes led him into many conflicts, and he allowed himself to be a controversial figure. Concern for the poor, the down-trodden and the weak was the key-note to his life. His personality, his thoughts and actions were very much influenced by his birth in a lower caste. As a child he showed great intellectual capacity, but he was not correctly understood by his father. His pungent criticism and straightforward qualities had brought Brahmins to their toes. Jotiba raised the level of his movement by his own contribution, and he was an ardent social reformer. Without education, political and economic power, the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' achieved a good deal as a social reform movement. In fact, the real impetus to the Non-Brahmin Movement was not forthcoming until the formation of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. He wanted revolutionary social reforms, because his very
faith in Hinduism was rudely shaken.

Jotiba Phule began to attack the various rituals and ceremonies and priests. He was against idol worship and superstitions and he was much interested in reviving the real Indian culture. His mind was much attuned to all modern influences. It is no wonder that he was greatly disturbed by the position that the down-trodden poor masses occupied in Indian society. The high esteem and respect in which Jotiba Phule himself held the poor is evident in all his writings. He wanted definite action to counteract the growing unrest, resulting from the economic sufferings of the masses and the alienation of the intellectuals. "Jotirao Phooley one year before his death in 1889, called upon the Non-Brahmins to condemn Congress as an engine of Brahminical despotism... If the Aryans hold not one but a hundred congresses," Phule wrote, "no sensible Sudra or Ati-Sudra would become its member. I can confidently state that if Sudras do join, our beneficent rulers will be disgusted with them." "In 1890, Jotirao died, the only pioneer, a solitary beacon light in the darkness of the age, for the guidance of the Non-Brahmin reformers who had yet to come."\(^{31}\)

This movement was further carried by His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur, who spread the movement far and wide in India. The Dravidian movement is actually based on the same line of thought in social, economic and political field, as advocated by Jotiba Phule and His Highness Shri Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur.

"The Dravidian movement is a socio-religious revolt against Hinduism and the way of social life it represents, it is an aggressive and violent manifestation of the inferiority complex of the Sudras who under the influence of Western oriented education have become self-conscious. Similar were the conditions in Maharashtra, under the impact of Western education; but there was no violence or revolt. Social reform was the main plank. The Non-Brahmin Movement of Madras starts from 1916, which came from the efforts of a group of people who formed a political party; but before this, thoughts of Jotirao Phule, took also the form of British diplomacy in Madras Presidency. The social and political thought of Justice Party as contained in the Non-Brahmin Manifesto includes all the thoughts of Satya Shodhak Samaj Movement of Jotiba Phule. Jotiba Phule

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called Brahmins as Aryans long before Mr. E.V.R. Naicker. He disbelieved in idol worship before Naicker did. All this points to the fact that the Non-Brahmin Movement of Madras has its origins in the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' of Maharashtra. "The Dravidian movement projects a theory of racial origin of the Tamil speaking Non-Brahmins. The conflict that arose on account of competition for limited Government jobs has been transformed into a ground for perpetual tension between Aryans and Dravidians." 33

The study of Jotiba Phule and 'Satya Shodhak Samaj' reveals that the Non-Brahmin Movement was ushered in with the efforts of Jotiba Phule. Philip Spratt has aptly pointed out that Jotiba Phule is the original source. Similarly, Gail Omvedt has also provided greater insight into Jotiba Phule and his activities. When the fact is established that he had influenced the Non-Brahmin risings, it is now necessary and worthwhile to examine the Non-Brahmin Movement in greater detail as it has been a neglected chapter in the realm of Non-Brahmin studies. It may be stated that Gail Omvedt's study limits itself to Maharashtra and Jotiba Phule; and on the other side

33 Ibid., p. 171.
Eugene F. Irschick's study is limited to Tamil separatism. Philip Spratt in his book "D.M.K. in Power" tries to locate and establish inter-connections between these movements and the mutual influences. Hence an attempt is made here to find out the exact connections between the two movements i.e. Satya Shodhak of Maharashtra and the Justice Party of Madras. A chronological study of the Non-Brahmin Movement becomes necessary as Shri Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur follows Jotiba Phule and gives continuity to the movement. So an assessment of Shri Shahu and his contribution to the Non-Brahmin Movement is attempted in the next chapter.