

THE STUDY OF CONTRIBUTION OF RAJARSHI CHHATRAPATI SHAHUJI MAHARAJ IN WOMEN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, a great king of his own kind is considered to be more of a social reformer than a king. Shahu Maharaj was crowned as a King of Kolhapur State, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was one of the most prominent revolutionary reformers of Maharashtra. He was considered a benevolent king because he was in favor of the cause of social reform. Maharashtrian society is an eco-politicalcultural system based on certain ideologies, which is patriarchal in nature and whose mission is to impose a male hierarchy in almost all spheres of life and women are marginalized, excluded and dominated. He sought the best solution to the question of what education is; it could empower women. For this he established girls' colleges and hostels and gave scholarships to girls. He also tried to implement social changes that would introduce laws. He wanted to bring equality between men and women. It can give women a respected status and enable them to live with dignity, honor and sociality. He did not stop his efforts towards the state of Kolhapur but extended it to the whole of Maharashtra (Niraj Varma and Akhilesh).

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj laid the foundation for women's education by introducing free and compulsory primary education for women. Not stopping at this, Shahu Maharaj sent women to Mumbai and Pune for education in order to get quality education. He was also tried to get education for all women of any religion and castes. Along with women's education, laws related to widows and women oppression were made. His contribution was not only to women education but also in the empowerment of women. Thus, it is important from a historical perspective and social significance.

KEY WORDS: Development Education, Scholarships, social and Women

INTRODUCTION

Women play a very significant role in the progress of a family, society and country. In order to make democracy successful in the country, women education is necessary together with the men. Educated women can play a very important role in the society for socio-economic development. In the Vedic Period women had access to education, but gradually they had lost this right. India Scriptures Rig Veda and Upanishads mention about several women sages and seers. Women enjoyed equivalent position and rights in the early Vedic era. However, after 500 B.C., the position of women started to decline. The position of women in ancient India was vital. One can trace the historical evidence of ancient Indian education to the 3rd century B.C. These universities flourished from about 5th century to 13th century. In the 11th century the Muslim rulers established universities in Delhi, Lucknow and Allahabad. Still education has been found to be restricted to a certain stratum of the society. From that period women were educated to a lesser extent. But in the 19th century, the real foundation of women's education was laid by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule. The beginning of the 20th century great work of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was a turning point in women education. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj's concept of transformational thought had a spontaneous sense of broad social equality. It was from this realization that he undertook the work of women's rescue. Like Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj also realized that if the chain of female slavery is to be broken, women must first be educated, and then women education became a part of his reformist agenda.

In the present paper an attempt has been made to assess the "Contribution of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in women education". Thus, following is the contribution of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in women education.

Compulsory and Free Primary Education:

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj encouraged women to get education and made primary education compulsory for all. On 8 September 1917, he issued an order to establish free and compulsory primary schools for all in the state of Kolhapur. He not only passed the Compulsory and Free Education Act but also enforced it strictly by fining parents one rupee per month for their children's non-attendance. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj said that,

development of any country is impossible without education. An uneducated country can never produce good leaders. That is why it is necessary to introduce free and compulsory education in India. This regulation was established on 30 September 1917.

Education of Miss Krishnabai Kelvakar:

Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj sent Miss Krishnabai Kelvakar, a brilliant student to Bombay and enabled her to have medical education at Grant Medical College. After the completion of her education, he appointed her as an Assistant Doctor in A.E. Hospital, Kolhapur in January, 1902. On securing her professional knowledge and obtain a diploma in midwifery at Dublin. There she was successful and on her return in February, 1903, she resumed her duties after an absence of ten months.² At the instance of Chhatrapati Shahu she had participated in the congress session held at Poona in 1895 as a woman delegate. Miss Kelvakar served the Kolhapur state very faithfully until 1924 in the A.E. Hospital.

Adult Women Education:

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj also paid special attention to the education of adult women and in 1919 issued a special order announcing that all accommodation and food arrangements for adult women from backward castes, who wanted to get education would be provided free of charge by the court.

Scholarships to Girls Students:

The Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj had instituted two scholarships in his state for promote education among women. These were “Shri Radhabai Akkasaheb Maharaj Scholarship” and “Shri Nandkunar Maharani Bhavnagar Scholarship”. The first scholarship was to be awarded to two girls (Rs. 40 each cash) topping the merit list of IV the Marathi standard in the city of Kolhapur and Bawada Infantry. The Second scholarship was to be awarded to three girls (Rs.40 each) coming from outside the city of Kolhapur.³

By the Resolution of 5th April 1913 a scholarship of Rs. 40 /- was kept from the girls for good conduct. He has also given exemption in tuition fees to the girl students of Rajaram College, Kolhapur. The Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj displayed his zeal towards the spread of education amongst women by giving scholarships to Gujarathi girls. For this he had deposited Rs. 2,400 /-in the treasury of Bhavnagar state from the interest of which scholarships were to be awarded to the girls of Bhavnagar state. He had also instituted consolation prizes for those teachers who would work devotedly for the spread of education among women and persuade girls to seek admission in girls schools. In 1914 Rs. 245/- and in 1915 Rs. 320/- were spent on such prizes.

Appointment of salaried teachers:

Recognizing that the scheme of appointing *watandar* teachers was not effective, In 1917 the Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja discontinued this system and introduced the salaried teacher scheme. From June 2018, the Maharaja started examining teachers by taking exam and Minimum age of 25 years was stipulated.

Education of Untouchable Girls :

Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj wanted to educate girls coming from the untouchable classes. To serve this purpose he had appointed a lady servant who was to contact untouchable women and persuade them to send their daughters to schools. Also an appeal was made to the people of backward classes who were desirous of giving education to their daughters. The appeal stated that such people should submit their applications to Shri Appasaheb alias Mamasahaheb Surve in order to enable him to make the necessary arrangements of the lodging, boarding's, tuition fees and books for girl students from the Government funds. (Lokhande N. S.2018)

Quality Education to Girls:

Shahu Maharaj sent Radhabai Suryavanshi, Tarabai Khandolkar and other girls to St. Colombo Girls School, Bombay and gave them quality education there. These girls were in Mumbai for two years. To the aforesaid school he gave Rs. 500/- on 27th March 1920.10 Rs. By giving scholarship. 16/- per month which was competent for two years, He also sent Miss Anrika Daniel Baker, a schoolgirl, for training at the Training College, Pune

Education of H.H. Indumatidevi:

The scope of Shahu Maharaj's women education cannot be complete without mentioning his daughter-in-law Indumati Devi. Indumati became a widow at the age of 11. Then the Maharaja decided to educate her, incurring the wrath of all the royal family. A hard-working reformer and a steel-minded father-in-law like Shahu stood by Indumati. He facilitated the education of Indumati in Sontali. Along with them, girls of four

different castes were also provided education. Interestingly, there was also a Christian girl in it. Maharaja not only imparted book knowledge to Indumati, but taught her many things like charioteering, hunting, horse riding, motor driving so that she could face endless challenges in life. Indumati's life was a perfect laboratory for implementing Shahu Maharaj's ideals of women education. Maharaja wanted to make Indumati a doctor

CONCLUSION:

From the above observation we can conclude that, it was not easy to give education for women in starting of 20th century. Shahu Maharaj laid the foundation for women's education by introducing free and compulsory primary education for women. Apart from that, Shahu Maharaj sent women to Mumbai and Pune for education in order to get quality education. He also tried to give education for all women of any religion and cast. Along with women's education, laws related to widows and women oppression were made. His contribution was not only in women education but also in the empowerment of women. Thus, it is important from a historical perspective and social significance.

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