

Contribution of Shahu Maharaj An Advocate of social Justice in Social work



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ABSTRACT

In the them social-setup there was no social equality and justice. In such situation eradication of casticism was essential. There was only Rajarshi shahu Maharaj who revolded against unjust done by upper class and rich people on dalits, untouchables and downtroden. Shahu Maharaj pondered over the social-inequality, brought the back ward people in the main stream of society and gave them right to live with honour and respect.

Introduction -

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was known as the epoch-making and had lion's share in changing pre-independent Indian social scenario. He spread the social-revolutionary thoughts in the society. He was undoubtedly a political leader and religion reformer. He was also famous as a king of social-justice. In his political tenure he inspired the people in the society and caused changes in the ethics of equality. He shaped the mentality of Indian people. He created a change not only in Maharashtra but also in the whole India. In his age there was a wide-spread social in equality. People used to hold god as responsible for social inequality. According to them inequality was god made and there was a wide-spread blind faith. Shahu Maharaj convinced the people that the untouchability was not god-made but man-made. All the backward people were stirred by his thoughts. Then there emerged a society having rational and scientific attitude.

All the backward class was stirred by his thoughts. He tried his utmost to create a good society. He also started a revolutionary movement in Indian history.

Methodology-

Methodology play important role in research. Researcher collected data by secondary method as a magazine, books, newspapers etc.

Objective-

- 1) To know social situation of Shahu's kingdom.
- 2) To know the social equality.
- 3) To know the contribution of Shahu Maharaj in social work.

One can say that there started a revolutionary epoch in the guise of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj. The wheel of this movement got speed by his thoughts. Casticism and untouchability these are the things that brings society backward. He also tried his level best to expel such mean things from society. He was known as

the true king of his people. He was popular in his people because he had a heart like a king. He not only eradicated untouchability but also put some steps in the direction of social development. As a good king he also mingled in the people. For the eradication of untouchability he worked hard.

Conclusion -

His contribution to social work is as follows-

- 1) He paid a keen attention on society so that the people should not follow discrimination.
- 2) The untouchables had no right to education. In such problematic situation he opened schools for the children of untouchables. Thus he started an educational revolution. Only upper-class people had right to education. So he formed some laws for the generalization of primary education. Dalits were not allowed in the class-rooms but they were kept out side the class room to take education. He banned this custom.
- 3) The dalits got right to go to water tank and fetch water at public water tank only because of him.
- 4) He also passed some laws for dalits to fetch water at public wells.
- 5) He protested all the ill-customs in the society.
- 6) He made the primary education free and compulsory for poor and uneducated people. He started the expedition of compulsory education. He had to face the protest of rich-people. But not paying attention on the protest he continued his education work.
- 7) He gave reservation to backward people in 1902. This time also he had to face the severe protest of upper-class people.
- 8) In 1906 he founded the educational institution to spread education.
- 9) He also gave dalits the education related to religion.
- 10) He passed the law of divorce.
- 11) To reduce the distance among different castes and to bring equality and coherence among people he

- brought the law of inter-caste marriage. He married his own cousin sister to a man of low caste and put an example of inter caste marriage before society.
- 12) To stop unjust with prisoners he made some improvements in rules regarding prison.
 - 13) He also banned the bad customs such as bonded labour and devdasi.
 - 14) He opened hostels for the students of every religion.
 - 15) He passed domestic violence act. Due to this act many bad customs were automatically stopped such as mental torture to women, starvation, beating wife etc. Before him there was wide spread unjust with women. No one dared to voice against it. But due to the domestic violence act women got freedom from unjust.
 - 16) He also inspired for the remarriage of widows. The widows were not allowed to remarry on the other hand widowers were allowed to remarry. Even men would practice polygamy. The Widowers would demand unmarried girl to marry and the fact was that they would get it.
- But the widows had to be unmarried throughout the life. They had to live only with the name their dead husband would leave behind. Widows were not al-

lowed to attend only religious or social programme. People used to look down upon widows. But even in such hostile circumstances he brought the laws for the marriages of widows. This shows that shahu Maharaj was an inborn social reformer. So we should not forget his lion's share in social work.

Suggestion -

His thoughts had a power to show the right direction to society. Because of his valuable social work the people in the society got inspired and it helped for the eradication of casteism. He established equality and freedom in the society. The ill customs were banned and rigid customs were loosened and there came a true harmony in the society.

But his thoughts were not spread as wide as he had expected. A nation can't make progress with the society based on casteism and discrimination on religion. If we really want the progress of our nation and if we want to build a nation of equality it is the responsibility of every citizen to keep alive the social work and thoughts of Rajrshi Shahu Maharaj. Then there will be a society which he had dreamed. If we want to respect his social work then it is the need of time to follow his thoughts in our life. Following his thoughts in social life will only be the homage to him.

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