

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj A Democratic King

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Introduction :

Rajashri Shahu Maharaj was one of the greatest social reformer in India. He is known for his great policies that has brought radical changes in society. He ruled for 28 years from 1894 to 1922 in Kolhapur princely state. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj started new era of social, cultural, Educational and economic reforms. In childhood Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj's original name was Yashwantrao Ghatage and he was adopted by Anandibai the widow of Chhatrapati Shivaji IV of Kolhapur in the year 1884. In 1891 Chhatrapati Shahu was married with lakshmibai. After his coronation programme. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was worked day and night for the welfare of non Brahmin and untouchable peoples in Kolhapur princely state. Shahu Maharaj was an ideal ruler and they had pity in the general public. Therefore Shahu Maharaj is given special honour even today.

Objectives of the study :

Objectives of the study are to recognize the life of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj with different angles.

- 1) As a social reformer to study about Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj.
- 2) To study allround impact of Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj's work on Indian society and education.
- 3) To study the allround improvements made by Shahu Maharaj in Kolhapur princely state.
- 4) To study the life of Shahu Maharaj as democratic king and liberal Chhatrapati.

Hypothesis :

This research article is dependent on the following hypothesis.

- 1) Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj created a democratic life in his Kolhapur princely state.
- 2) Raharshi Shahu Maharaj's reforms had an impact on the goal Indian society and culture.
- 3) Though Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was a king but had sacrificed his entire life for the salvation of the poor people.

Research Methodology :

Primary and secondary sources of data collection have been used for this research article. In secondary data sources newspaper, published articles in journals, books, internet etc. has been used.

Democratic Policies adopted by Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj in Kolhapur Princely State :

Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was a great king and took many important decisions. Though were king democracy was considerable thinking and he was bahunjan revolutionary king, a true democrat, a visionary, a patron of theatre, music and sports.

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj occupied the throne of Kolhapur princely state for 28 years from 1894 to 1922 and during this period Shahu Maharaj initiated numerous social reforms in his empire. His aim was make educaton available to masses. He opened hostels separately for different ethnicities and religions. He initiated compulsory free primary education for all in his princely state. He started vedic schools for all castes and classes to learn the Sanskrit education.

Shahu Maharaj was a great reformer of his time. He known for the upliftment of poor and the down trodden in the society. H tried to educate and provide jobs to all of those leaving in his domain. This shows his nature of politician king and clear vision to the future.

The vedokta conflict was an important incident not only in the life of Maharaja Shahu but it effected social life of the whole of Maharashtra State. Vedokta conflict is the milestone in the Indian history for the revolt against inequity. Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was the first king in India who implemented reservation policy and provided fifty percent reservation in Kolhapur princely state on 26 July 1902. He derecognized brahmmnical supremacy and religious bureaucracy of Brahmins. He was greatest supporter of Dr. Ambedkar movement and he was pillar of social democracy. Chhatrapati Shahu's other imitative was restricting child marriage in his state and he had given too much encouragement of intercaste marriage and widow remarriage. Also to protect women against violence and crimes, on 2nd August 1919 Kolhapur Gazetteer published a law to prohibit the violence against women and divorce rules. He long patronized the satyashodhak Samaj. Shahu Maharaj arranged for several non-brahmin youth to be trained to function as priests. However Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj faced opposition from Brahmin peoples.

Conclusions :

- 1) Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj's policies were important for bringing all type changes in the society.
- 2) Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj's contribution in the social, educational, economic, political field is absolutely remarkable.
- 3) His policies had challenged bad human norms, orthodoxy and hypocrisy of the upper castes in India.
- 4) He emphasized and promoted education and employment for non-brahmins basically who were backward and illiterate.
- 5) Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj was only one king of India who promoted modern ethics for development of the society.
- 6) Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj is popularly known as democratic king because of his welfare activities for common man.

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