



## CONTRIBUTION OF PT. RAJENDRA PRASAD SHUKLA IN BHOODAN MOVEMENT AT BILASPUR DISTRICT OF CHHATTISGARH REGION

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### Abstract

*From ancient time onwards the people of Bharat varsh had sufficient things during Indus Valley Civilization, Vedic Civilization and afterwards during the various monarchical and republican kings at various parts of the nation for their survival of lives. But as the days passed, many rulers till the independence of the nation in 1947 one after another came and ruled over here. The lives of the majority people of Bharat varsh become difficult, miserable and slowly they were losing from their Jal, Jangal and Jamin birth rights. In order to keep secure their birth rights people from various parts of the nation even the tribal revolts also occurred at different times against the ruling systems. After the assassination of 'Father of Nation' Mahatma Gandhiji, the Sarvodaya – dream of Gandhiji was continued by spiritual successor Acharya Vinoba Bhave by launching Bhoodan Movement (Land Gift) from Pochampally in 1951. In order to collect lands from landlords, Vinobaji visited around 13 years of his life in order to make the Bhoodan Movement successful. So that, the huge population of the nation who were starving because of lack of food, they could get a piece of land for their cultivation and survival. Therefore, in order to fulfill the dream of Vinobaji, at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region one of the great congress leaders Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shuklaji took initiative for the Bhoodan Movement. In the year 1951, Pt. Shuklaji joined the Bhoodan Movement of Vinobaji and from 1952-57, Pt. Shuklaji visited more than one thousand of villages in order to collect lands for the needy ones. Not only that, Pt. Shuklaji is considered as the First Bhoodani at Bilaspur district. After the arrival of Vinobaji at Bilaspur district for Bhoodan purpose in 1964, Pt. Shuklaji continued the Bhoodan Movement in this region along with the various famous congress leaders. Thus, the Bhoodan Movement was successfully conducted in the Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region.*

*This research paper highlighting the contribution of Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla in Bhoodan Movement at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region as well its impact of Bhoodan Movement on landlords and distribution of lands for the needy ones.*

**Key Word:** Bhoodan Yagya/Land Gift, Prajasuyee Yagya, Gramda, Jivandan, Charaiveti,

### Introduction:

In the undivided Chhattisgarh region from Madhya Pradesh a great leader, thinker, poet, social activist, none of the other than Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla; who joined into the Bhoodan Movement of Vinobaji in 1951, after participating in the 'All India Youth Conference' in Ranchi (Former Bihar). Till 1956 around 05 years Pt. Shuklaji and other members actively participated in the movement and from Bilaspur to Mungeli, Lormi, Ratanpur, Katghora, Korba, Raigarh, Sakti and Champa places visited to get lands for the needy; as well regarding the Bhoodan Movement he wrote a famous poem in the book 'Gamak'. The movement became more popular with the arrival of Acharya Vinoba in 1964

in Chhattisgarh region. Thus, in this region the movement got great success. The movement helped to fill the gulf in between land lords and landless people. In the following poem, Pt. Shuklaji invited landlords to donate their lands for the needy ones:

BhoodanKarChalo, JahaanJiUthe  
 Pran-PranMein DharaKaNaamJiUthe.  
 ChhaRahaJagat Mein AajGhorAndhkarDekh  
 Koi Bhukh Mar Raha, Na BharRahaHai Hay Pet.  
 Aur Koi Ban Amir Saikado Luta Raha  
 ChhusKarGaribKoDhhanya-DhanJutaRaha.  
 Bhent Lo Garib Se ImaanJiUthe.  
 BhoodanKarChaloJahaanJiUthe.  
 BhartiyeDharmkaGumaanjiUthe.  
 ...BhoodanKarChaloJahanji Uthe.<sup>1</sup>

After the independent of the Nation in 1947, in the Chhattisgarh region many poor people had no land for cultivation in order to survive. In this connection for the spread of Bhoodan Movement Acharya Vinobaji visited to Chhattisgarh for the fulfillment of the require of land to the landless poor people. With the inspiration of Acharya Vinoba, Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla continued the movement in Chhattisgarh region. Not only then, but even at present many poor and needy Chhattisgarhi people have no land for cultivation; 'no land, no food' because of this pathetic reason they are going under displacement, joining in Naxal groups, migrating and forcefully working to metro cities for surviving. Even the land law policies of the government are not healthy for them. They are fighting for their by birth rights 'Jal, Jangal and Jamin'.

On 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 2000, Chhattisgarh became a newly 26<sup>th</sup> State of the Indian Union. Before 1956, Chhattisgarh region was a part of Central Province and Berar. 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 1956 to till 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 2000 Chhattisgarh region was part of Madhya Pradesh State.<sup>2</sup> It is a state of tribal dominated (major 42 tribes along with the 161 sub-tribes) residing in the state. People of this region are still depended on paddy fields for their cultivation. The State Chhattisgarh is considered as the "Bowl of Rice" because of the lot of production of rice from ancient time onwards.

#### **Need of the Study:**

Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla ("Rajauva" – Childhood name) a prestigious political leader, thinker, social worker was born on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1930 at Junapara (Takhatpur Assembly) in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region. His father's name was Pt. Siddhnath Shukla and mother's name was Smt. Mantudevi Shukla.<sup>3</sup> He was only a single child at family of Pt. Siddhnath Shukla. But his childhood period was spent in a remote village at Singhanpuri (Junapara – at present Lormi district), 65 km far away from Bilaspur district. He achieved primary school education at Ranidera from 1935-36 to 1938-39 and middle school education (5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>) at Bilaspur from 1940 onwards.

Later on Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla admitted for high school at Municipal Boys High School, at Bilaspur. Thus, in between 1940 to 1946 he completed his school education from 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> standards. Afterwards, he proceeded for the college education at S.B.R. College (Shiv Bhagwan Rameshwarlal Arts College) in Bilaspur in the year 1946 and finally successfully qualified the M.A. in Political Science degree in 1952. At the same time he qualified the exam of Law from 1951 to 1952.

Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla was whole heartedly as a great politician from the undivided state of Madhya Pradesh and in Chhattisgarh. He was a Member of Legislative Assembly to Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly for many times. And then, he was elected as a Speaker (mid 1980s) and Minister (early 1990s) in Madhya Pradesh. After the

formation of a new state Chhattisgarh in 2000, Pt. Shukla was elected M.L.A. from Kota to Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly and became the First Speaker of Chhattisgarh. On 20<sup>th</sup> August 2006, Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla was passed away in Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh.<sup>4</sup>

In the previous period, various researchers have been conducted on the life philosophy, social activities, political life, literary contribution etc. on Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla. But there are very few researchers, who have conducted their research on the contribution of Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla in Bhoodan Movement, Gramdan Movement and also the impact of Bhoodan Movement in Chhattisgarh.

#### **Statement of the Problem:**

Contribution of Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla in Bhoodan Movement at Bilaspur District of Chhattisgarh Region.

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

The following are the objectives of the study such as:

1. To study the contribution of Pt. Shuklaji in Bhoodan Movement.
2. To study the success or failure of Bhoodan Movement in Bilaspur District.
3. To study the influence of Bhoodan Journey of Pt. Shuklaji on landlords.
4. To find out the impact of Bhoodan Movement on Land Lords and Villagers.
5. To find out the output came from Bhoodan Movement in Bilaspur District.

#### **Review of the Related Literature:**

**Shukla, Pt. Rajendra Prasad (1998)** had written in the book 'Maatiki Mahak' that Acharya Vinoba followed one of the main teachings of Gandhiji that is Sarvodaya, and it was made the aim of Vinobaji. Very often he used to say that human should be treated as human. Thus, he emphasized on humanity, why not a person should be any caste, creed, race and religion; tears will be whipped away from the face of every man.

**Pathak, Shilkan (2000)** had written in 'Manushyaki Behtariki Chinta' that Bhoodan Movement was successfully conducted in Chhattisgarh region by Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla along with Shri Devchandbhai and Virranabhai from 1951-54. They visited village to village by spreading the message of Acharya Vinoba to rich Jamindars and farmers for donating the land for needless people of these areas. Every day they used to walk around 15-20 miles.

**Dixit, Dr. Shiv Prasad (2002)** had studied in an article 'Sangh Saktike Nirdeshta' that in the month of April 1954, Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla went to participate in the Sarvodaya Conference, Bodhgaya, where all the former great Indian leaders have arrived. In the conference, from Bilaspur region 04-05 social activists along with Pt. Shukla, Devchandbahi, Ramnik Tripathi etc. participated. With the inspiration of Vinoba after coming back from the conference they started the Bhoodan movement in these areas. In this connection in 1964, Acharya Vinoba visited to Bilaspur, Durg and Raipur districts too.

**Khelanram, Dadhsena (2002)** had studied in an article 'Chhattisgarh ke Pratham Jivandani' that from the Akhil Bhartiye Sarvodaya Sammelan, Bodhgaya announced to all the Bhoodan activists for Jivandan. Thus, in the Bilaspur districts the Bhoodan work was assigned to Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla. He took keen interest from college time onwards for the success of various other social activities and the movements too.

**Naik, Late Dadabhai (2002)** had mentioned in an article 'Kasauti se Khare: Rajendraprasad' that the Bhoodan Movement affected the undivided district Bilaspur too. In this region Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla was the first Bhoodani and spread the message of Vinobaji in these areas. For the propagation of Bhoodan Movement, he started journey from Bilaspur, Lormi, Pandariya, Ratanpur, Katghora, Korba, Champa, Raigarh places for motivating landlords to donate some land for the needy poor people.

### Methodology of the Study:

The present study is a qualitative research. The nature of the study is historical and descriptive. The method of the present study will mainly be historical analysis. The process involves analysis and interpretation of the works on Bhoodan Movement of Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla. In the present study the focus is on identification of pertinent sources in the form of books, gazetteer, research articles, Ph.D. Thesis etc.

### Findings:

The main findings of the study are on the basis of objectives taken. They mainly give the contribution of Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla on Bhoodan Movement.

### Origin of Bhoodan Movement by Acharya VinobaBhave:

Acharya VinobaBhave was born in a Chitpawan Brahman family on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1895 at Gagode, Pen, Raigad district (Maharashtra), was the eldest son of ShriNarahariShambhuRao and Smt. Rukmini Devi.<sup>5</sup> On 7<sup>th</sup> June 1916 at Kochrab Ashram in Ahmadabad (Gujrat) Acharya Vinoba met to Gandhiji, after that he took keen interest in the activities of Gandhiji's ashram like studying, teaching, improving the life of community, constructive programme related to khadi, village industries and NaiTalim and so on. On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1921 Acharya Vinoba went to Wardha to take charge of the Ashram as desired by Gandhiji.

The Bhoodan Movement was started at Pochampally of Nalgonda district (Telengana) on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1951 by Acharya Vinoba, after interacting with the 80 landless Harijan families. The total population of the village was around thirty thousand.<sup>6,7</sup> Till 1964, around 13 years Acharya Vinoba walked all across India asking people to give one sixth of their land which will be distributed to landless poor as well opening six Ashramas all over the nation. Acharya Vinoba had said his own journey as "Prajasuye Yagya".<sup>8</sup> He took donated land from land owners and gave it to poor and needy for cultivation. Acharya Bhave called Bhoodan-Yagya as Prajasuye-Yagya. It means to say that the yagya is for the people, by the people and of the people.<sup>9</sup>

In 1954, he asked donation to whole villages called 'Gramdan', he received more than 1000 villages by way of donation. Later part of his life, Acharya Vinoba spent at his Brahma Mandir Ashram in Paunar (founded 1959). He died at the age of 87 by accepting "Samadhi Maran" (Refusing of food and Medicine in Jainism) on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1982 at Paunar, Wardha district (Maharashtra). Acharya Vinoba was the first recipient of the International Ramon Magsaysay Award for community leadership in 1958 and also was honored with the Award of BharatRatna posthumously in 1983.<sup>10</sup>

### Arrival of Acharya VinobaBhave at Bilaspur District:

Acharya VinobaBhave the spiritual successor of the 'Father of Nation' Mahatma Gandhi, was started the BhoodanAandolan (Land Gift Movement) from Pochampally, Telangana (Andhra Pradesh) in 1951. Rapidly, the movement started to spread across the nation. Acharya Bhave himself started the BhoodanYatra from one state to another, asking for lands for the landless people. In this connection, Acharya Bhave arrived at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region in the year 1964. During the arrival of Vinobaji at Bilaspur district, Pt. Shuklaji wrote a famous poem entitled 'SantVinobaPunyaYagyaBhoodanKaraneaayenhain' which is as follows:

SantVinobaPunyaYagyaBhoodanKaraneaayenhain  
Gaon-Gaonmein Amar PremkiAlakhJaganeAayenhain.  
Gram NiwasiBhai-BhaiDhan wale aur Din Kisan  
DononDharti par hi JiteMarteDononEkSamaan.  
...Amar PremkiAlakhJaganeAayenhain.<sup>11</sup>

## **Contribution of Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla in Bhoodan Movement at Bilaspur District:**

After the independence of the nation in 1947, one of the major issues was food crisis. Many poor and needy landless people were starving by hunger across the nation. Following year in 1948, 'Father of the Nation' Mahatma Gandhiji was assassinated. There was no any role model leader like Gandhiji who could lead the whole people of the nation. Thus, in order to fill the absence of Gandhiji and fulfill his dream, Acharya Vinoba Bhaveji took initiative for the various constructive works. In this connection, Acharya Vinobaji started the Bhoodan and Gramdan Movements across the nation. The movements of Acharya Vinoba were influenced a lot to Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region.

In the year 1946, at the age of 16, Pt. Shuklaji dedicated his whole life in front of famous Sarvodaya activists Late Dadabhai Naik and Late Dharendra Majumdar for the public service.<sup>12</sup>

Before launching the Bhoodan Movement by Vinobaji, in the year 1949-50 a planning had been done by Dadabhai Naik to open an Ashrama at Bilaspur district. In order to start it, Pt. Shukla decided to give a piece of his own village land and made plan for the various constructive works through the Ashrama. But later on the plan was given up. The reason behind was, in the year 1951, on 18<sup>th</sup> April, when the Bhoodan Movement was launched by Acharya Vinoba Bhave from Pochampally Village (Telengana), it influenced one of the famous Gandhian Congress leaders Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region. Acharya Vinobaji's dream was that at least five acres of land should be transferred from landlords to landless people before 1957.

In the year 1952, the 'Akhil Bhartiya Sarvodaya Sammelan' was held at Bodhgaya; Pt. Shuklaji decided for the Jivandan. Jivandan doesn't mean to destroy one's life, but in the one's normal life only one has to think, meditate and give more time for the public service. After the conference the Bhoodan Movement got its speed and in Bilaspur district, Pt. Shuklaji was assigned to make successful the Bhoodan Movement.

The dream was affected too much to Pt. Shuklaji. Thus, at Bilaspur district, the 'Bhoodan-Yagya' was begun by Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla donating his own twenty five acres of land.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, Pt. Shukla was considered as the First Bhoodani of Chhattisgarh.

For the wide spread of the Bhoodan Movement at Bilaspur district, Pt. Shuklaji was given responsibility. From 1952-1957 Bhoodan Padyatra was conducted under the guidance of Pt. Shuklaji and various active groups were formed under Dadabhai Naik, Late Ramnik Tripathi, Devchand Bhai, Viranna Bhai, Dayashankar Dubey, Kashi Prasad Dixit, Bhagwat Prasad Srivastava, Rohini Prasad Bajpai and so on; starting from Bilaspur and visiting nearly one thousand villages. From 1952-1957, under the guidance and leadership of Pt. Shuklaji, the Bhoodan Padyatra was conducted. By singing the songs and poems written by Pt. Shuklaji, Village to village wherever they went, they gave villagers' the message of Vinobaji and told the importance of Bhoodan Yagya. The Bhoodan Padyatra's result was clearly visible that many landlords of Bilaspur district donated approximately Six-Seven thousand acres of land was received and according to need of the poor family members, they distributed the thousand acres of land to the landless people.<sup>14</sup>

In the month of January 1964, the national conference of 'Akhil Bhartiya Sarvasevasangh' was held in Raipur. Acharya Vinobaji arrived to participate in the conference at Raipur. At that time only Acharya Vinobaji visited to Bilaspur district for the spread of Bhoodan Movement. In the Bilaspur city, Acharya Vinobaji spent his valuable two days at the house of Vinobaji's friend Late Shree Mukund Keshav Chitleji.<sup>15</sup> In words of Smt. Laxmi Chitleji that on 2-3 Feb. 1964, Acharya

Vinobajivisited to Bilaspur city and had stayed in our house at KududandBilaspur. She said that because of the motivation of her father-in-law, Smt. LaxmiChitleji also joined the Bhoodanpadyatra at Bilaspur district. She said that at Bilaspur Smt. LaxmiChitleji was given responsibility to serve 'EstriJagranShakti' for seven years.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the Bhoodan journey, a padyatra committee was constituted under the presidentship of Late Shree MukundkeshavChitleji, secretary Pt. Rajandra Prasad Shulkaji and many members of the committee such as Dr. Devras, Shree JamunaPrasad Verma, Shree Mathura Prasad Dubey, Shree RamgopalTiwari, Shree ChitrakantJaiswal etc. During those two days, per day eight to ten miles they walked by foot from Bilaspur city to Sakri, Kathakoni, Jaraondha, Takhatpur, Jarhagaon, Dharampura, Limha, Mungeli then returned back to Bilaspur city. On the journey, people of the those places welcomed Acharya Vinobaji and others congress leaders with whole heartedly. At each stoppage, Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla, Thakur Chhedilal, Shree RamgopalTiwari, Shree MukundKeshavChitle and Dr. Devras gave speeches on the importance of Bhoodan and Gramdan Movements and motivated rich landlords to contribute some piece of land for the poor and needy ones.

Pt. Shuklaji writes on the Bhoodan Journey of Vinobaji's at Bilaspur that every day Vinobaji was got up early in the morning at 03.30 am and then half an hour of prayer he used to collect all the members of the group. Before starting the journey, they had a small prayer and then they were proceeding from one place to another. In praise of Pt. Shuklaji, Vinobaji said while addressing huge assembly at Bilaspur that like the big Ahmadabad city, I stayed there only for one day, but at Bilaspur Pt. Shuklaji by his own arrangement stayed me for two more days.<sup>17</sup> During that time, in front of Acharya VinobaBhaveji one by one respectively those who donated their lands at Bilaspur district were firstly Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shukla, secondly DevchandbhaiJobnaputra and thirdly Shree Virannabhai.

After moving ahead from Bilaspur city by Vinobaji in 1964, in order to make Bhoodan Movement successful at Bilaspur district under the guidance of Pt. Shuklaji, Bhoodanpadyatra was almost successfully operated and completed approximately three months the major areas of the Bilaspur district i.e. starting from Bilaspur to Takhatpur, Pandariya, Mungeli, Lormi, Kota, Ratanpur, Katghora, Korba, Raigarh, Sakti and Champaand then ended up in Bilaspur. The principle of 'Charaiveti' (*means always move forward rather than backward at all seasons*) of Vinobaji deeply touched the life of Pt. Shuklaji. In that BhoodanPadyatra thousand acres of land were received from the landlords and lands were distributed to the needy one's for cultivation.

In the following Table-1, on the basis of few major tahsils of Bilaspur district, the details of land information's of BhoodanYagya have analyzed. The total grand acres of land 2277.63 were received from landlords and the total grand acres of land 1785.67 were distributed among the landless poor people in those tahsils, which showed that the distribution of land was more in acres. According to Freedom fighter Late ShriKeyurBhushan, Pt. Shuklaji travelled more than one thousand villages for the BhoodanPadyatra. One of the remarkable things is that at the Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region (at that time Madhya Pradesh state) mostly One Lakh acres of land was received and mostly land was distributed also. Beside this, two more villages were donated in Gramdaan.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, it is truly to say that at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region also, there were very poor people surviving after and before the independent of the nation. But it was the impact of Bhoodan movement of Vinobaji on Bilaspur district and the great effort of Pt. Shuklaji that people got a piece of land/jamin for their cultivation, as they have birth rights on jal and jangal too.

**Table – 1**  
**Land Information of Bhoodan Yagya at Bilaspur District<sup>19</sup>**

S.No.	Tahsil	Land Received (acres)	Land Distributed (acres)
1	Bilaspur	793.11	573.42
2	Mungeli	558.25	437.56
3	Janjgir	473.67	322.09
4	Katghora	151.06	151.06
5	Sakti	301.54	301.54
<b>Grand Total (acres of land)</b>		<b>2277.63</b>	<b>1785.67</b>

There were various freedom fighters/revolutionaries/great congress leaders those who contributed a lot in order to make successful to the Bhoodan as well Gramdan Movements such as Thakur Chedilal Barrister, E. Raghvendrarao, Murlidhar Mishra, Shiv Dulare Mishra, Dr. Ramacharan Roy, Kunjbihari Agnihotri, Krantikumar Bharti, Late Shree Kashiram Tiwari, Dr. Jwala Prasad Mishra, Late Amarnath Sao and so on.

### **Conclusion:**

Eventually, it could be said that the first Bhoodani of Chhattisgarh region, Lateshree Rajendra Prasad Shukla was motivated by the sarvodaya/constructive works of Acharya Vinoba Bhave and contributed a lot in order to make successful the Bhoodan Movement at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region. By seeing the great efforts done by Pt. Shuklaji and various other congress leaders of these places the Bhoodan Padyatra was successfully achieved its aim by receiving thousand acres of lands from the landlords and distributing the thousands acres of lands to the needy ones for their cultivation. In my opinion the Bhoodan Movement affected deeply the hearts of landlords and we could see its results too. Hence, by the great effort and contribution of Pt. Rajendra Prasad Shuklaji, the Bhoodan Movement was successful at Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh region.

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