

“Padmabhushan Dr. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil’s Contribution in Indian Freedom Movement and His Relation with Mahatma Gandhi”

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• **Abstract :**

Padmabhushan Dr. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil is mainly known as founder of the ‘RayatShikshanSantha’, which is one of the largest educational institutes of Asia. He has been established primary, secondary, higher secondary schools, colleges and boarding houses in rural part of Maharashtra and some part of Karnataka state. His work is mainly related to education field. He has been spending his whole life for poor, backward and untouchable student’s education. But he also contributed in Indian freedom movement. Main objective of this paper is to focus on KarmaveerBhauraoPatil’s contribution in Indian freedom movement, basically his relation with Mahatma Gandhi.

Padmabhushan Dr. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil was not taken directly participation in Indian freedom movement, but helps freedom fighters and revolutionaries. BhauraoPatil was impressed from Mahatma Gandhi’s ideology and simple lifestyle. He first saw Gandhiji in Mumbai, where he had gone to see the ‘Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII)’. His visit of Mumbai was to see glory of the visit of ‘Prince of Wales’, but he saw the Gandhiji’s Satyagraha and ‘Holi of foreign clothes’. After that he threw his clothes in to the flames. From then on, he has never put on anything other than cloths of hand spun and hand woven. It was more than a matter of cloths with him, from that day Mahatma Gandhi became hero of his life.

Keywords: Karmaveera is degree given by people for great work

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- **Introduction :**

Padmabhushan Dr. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil is mainly known as founder of the ‘RayatShikshanSantha’, which is one of the largest educational institutes of Asia. He has been established primary, secondary, higher secondary schools, colleges and hostels in rural part of Maharashtra and some part of Karnataka state. His work is mainly related to educational field. He has been spending his whole life for poor, backward and untouchable student’s education. But he also contributed in Indian freedom movement. Main objective of this paper is to focus on KarmaveerBhauraoPatil’s contribution in Indian freedom movement, basically his relation with Mahatma Gandhi.

- **Early Life of Dr. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil :**

Padmabhushan Dr. BhauraoPaigoundaPatil is usually called KarmaveerBahuraoPatil. He was born on 22nd September, 1887 at Kumbhoj, in the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra state. His forefather’s land is AitawadeBudruk, in Sangli district of Maharashtra. He came from the tenacious Jain family, but he rejected its rigorous religious rites and fought all his life against the social ills that impede the secularist growth of society¹.

Bhaurao got his primary education in the schools in those villages or towns in which his father used to live as a humble government servant. He finished his fifth standard education in Marathi school at Vita, a small village of Sangli district of Maharashtra. After that he sent to the Rajaram High School, Kolhapur, in 1902 for higher secondary education. Bhaurao attended the Rajaram High School for about seven years. Most of this time, he was staying in the Jain Boarding House. But he was not taken interest in education. Because of his progressive thoughts and revolutionary behavior, he was expelled from the Jain Hostel. But this incidence became one of the turning points in his life. After that he came under the direct influence of the Rajarshi Shahu Maharaja, the social revolutionary king of Kolhapur state. Balasaheb Khanvilkar, who was the son of Maharaja’s brother-in-law, took Bhaurao into the Maharaja’s palace².

KarmaveerBahuraoPatil has not taken more education. Bhaurao failed in sixth standard (Pre-Matriculation). After leaving school he lived in the Kolhapur Palace for about a year. After that one of the famous Jain jewelry merchant and philanthropist of Bombay ‘Manikchand Hirachand Javeri’ was taken Bhaurao with him and admitted to Bhaurao in ‘Devar’s College of Commerce’, for course of ‘book-keeping and type-

writing'. But he didn't complete this course because he didn't understand lectures which had been delivered in English³. In 1912, he was married to 'Aadakka' (later known as Laxmibai), daughter of Adagonda Patil of Kumbhoj. Bhaurao did various types of job in his life. He started his career as a teacher in Satara. After coming from Mumbai, he started to take private tuitions. In a short time he became famous as 'Patil Master' in Satara. But he didn't earn sufficient money in this sector, so he left this job after some time. In 1914, he started working as a salesman at Ogle Glass Works, but next year he left from this industry and joined Kirloskar industry. He worked same job for Kirloskar industry from 1915 to 1921. As a sharing partner he also helped to establishment of 'Coopers Engineering Works', Satara. In 1924 he left from 'Coopers Engineering Works' and fully concentrate on educational work for the masses⁴.

- **Educational Work of Dr. Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil:**

Bhaurao Patil begins educational work in 1910, from the establishment of 'Dudhgaon Shikshan Prasarak Mandal and Dudhgaon Boarding House'. In this Boarding House students from nearby villages have been coming and studying. In fact 'Dudhgaon Boarding House' was a Study-Centre which was known as '*Dudhgaon Vidyarthi Ashram*'. The origin of '*Chhatrapati Shahu Boarding House*' and '*Rayat Shikshan Sanstha*' is found in this '*Vidyarthi Ashram*'. The primitive boarding house of Dudhgaon enabled a number of young folk to get the benefit of education which would otherwise have been beyond their reach⁵. However, from 1915 Bhaurao could not spend as many days at Dudhgaon Education Institution. Bhaurao Patil's zeal for education came to the fore in the Satara District Conference of the 'Sathya Shodhak Samaj' that was held in 1919 at Kale, a village near Karad district Satara. In that conference he announced establishment of 'Rayat Shikshan Sanstha' on 4th October, 1919⁶.

In the initiative stage, Bhaurao Patil tried to promote education through business or industry. In fact he worked in Kirloskar industry; Coopers Engineering Works in the hope of that industrialist will be spending some share on mass education. But Bhaurao's noble purpose failed because of non-cooperation of industrialist. After that he realized that any effort he should make to promote education must be truly a self-effort. Thus Bhaurao has not taken money from capitalists; he helped peasants for his educational work. That's why he says, "The *rayat* (peasants) are my capital". The Rayat Shikshan Sanstha had already been formed in a village called 'Kale' in the Satara district in 1919. In 1924 he shifted Rayat Shikshan Sanstha from Kale to Satara. After that Satara became headquarter of Rayat Shikshan Sanstha⁷.

In 1924 BhauraoPatil established hostel at Satara named 'ChhatrapatiShahu Boarding House', where children from various communities lived together, those were deprived from education. 'Earn and learn' was one of the basic feature of Bhaurao's educational system. That's way RayatShikshanSanstha's motto is '**Education through self-help is our motto**'. Bhaurao had established a hostel with inspiration from great social revolutionary king of Kolhapur 'RajarshiChhatrapatiShahu Maharaja'. RajarshiShahu Maharaja knows as 'King of Boarding'. He established about 20 separate boarding for various castes and communities in Kolhapur city. But BhauraoPatil established one boarding where lived children of various castes and communities. In 1939 there were 188 children lived together, from that 57 were Marathas, 21 allied castes, 2 Brahmins, 6 Jains, 13 Muslims, 39 Mahars, 16 Mangs, 15 Chambhars(Shoe Maker), 5 Ramoshis, 2 Dhorsand 1 Nat. All these boys had been bred up as children of one family, staying, dining, working and living together a common disciplinary life⁸.

From 1924 to 1934 the RayatShikshanSanstha functioned as a private institution of which Bhaurao was the proprietor; he was, however, a strange proprietor who cared not for any profit for himself. On the other hand he spent his own money on this costly enterprise. The first secondary school founded by Bhaurao was called the Maharaja Sayajirao High School, which was started on 20th June, 1940. After that he looks forward to start higher educational institution. In June 1947, ChhatrapatiShivaji College was established at Satarain honour of great king ChhatrapatiShivaji Maharaja⁹. BhauraoPatil established primary and secondary school basically in rural part of Maharashtra. Some schools established in very remote area. In his last days the RayatShikshanSanstha had 162 primary schools, (In 1949-50 there were the Sanstha had 578 primary schools, but state government taken over that schools) 66 secondary schools, 3 colleges, 7 primary teacher's training colleges and some boarding houses¹⁰. In present days the Sanstha have 42 senior colleges, 159 junior colleges, 441 secondary schools, 17 agriculture schools, 21 technical schools, 8 teacher's training schools, 52 primary schools, 42 pre-primary schools, 91 hostels, 2 Industrial Training Institutes. Over four million students are getting education in the Sanshta¹¹.

- **Indian Freedom Movement and Dr. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil:**

When BhauraoPatil was born, there was British rule in India. When he was young Indian freedom movement had taken speed. So like other young Indians he was wanted to take part in this holy work. But that was not happened. BhauraoPatil had not taken part in Indian freedom movement but he had given support and helps to freedom fighters.

1. Tar Episode :

In 1914, there was rebellious incident happened at Kolhapur. On 14th February, 1914 someone was besmeared the statue of King Edward with tar and this incident known as 'Tar Episode'. BhauraoPatil was convicted in this case. In Kolhapur, there were two groups in the palace of Kolhapur State, AnnasahebLatthe, BhaskarraoJadhav and others were represents of group of progressive thinkers and Khanderao Gaikwad, Kallappa Anna Nitaveshatri and others were represents of orthodox thinker group. Both the groups were plotting against each other. There was 'Town Hall Garden' in Kolhapur and in that garden there were statues of Queen Victoria, King Edward - VII, King Jorge - V and Queen Merry of England. At the night of 14th February, 1914 someone was besmeared the statue of King Edward with tar. Orthodox group convicted that AnnasahebLatthe had been tossed the statue into tar by BhauraoPatil. So that Kolhapur Police arrested to BhauraoPatil and pressurized and harassed him for testify against AnnasahebLatthe. But BhauraoPatil has not ready to give false evidence¹². Fortunately he safely came out from that incident.

2. Refuge to Revolutionaries :

BhauraoPatil had been always empathy for revolutionaries of Indian Freedom Movement. Sometimes he helped and refuged to revolutionaries. In Satara district, there was revolutionary movement emerged under the leadership of 'Krantisimha Nana Patil (1900-1976)'. It was known as '*Prati –Sarkar*' (Parallel Government') Movement. The Satara Parallel government in Maharashtra from August 1943 to May 1946 against British rule was a legendary chapter in the glorious freedom struggle of India. It was an armed offshoot of the 1942 Quit India movement, like the parallel governments in Midnapore in Bengal, Bhagalpur in Bihar, Ballia in Uttar Pradesh and Basudevpur in Odisha¹³.

The leader of the Satara Parallel government was 'Kratismha Nana Patil' and some of Nana Patil's closest comrades-in-arms in the SataraPrati Sarkar were NagnathNaikwadi (Anna), G D Lad (Bapu), Nathaji Lad and KisanAhir. NagnathNaikwadi (1922–2012), popularly known as KrantiveerNagnathAnna, was an Indian independence activist, social worker, politician and educationist, known for his revolutionary activism during the Indian independence struggle. KrantiveerNagnathAnna had been running underground revolutionary activities against British Government. But unfortunately he was arrested on 29th July, 1944 by British Police of *Ashta* and he was brought in to Islampurjail. After some days he was sifted at Satarajail on 6th September, 1944¹⁴. Although Satara jail was not strong, the jail had well police protection. However, Nagnath Anna decided to escape from jail. On very early morning of September 8, 1944, Nagnath Anna jumped from compound

wall of jail and escaped himself. He could be caught because they had prisoner clothes on him, so he had to take shelter in someone's house to hide from the police. Nagnath Anna was given shelter by Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil at his home. Later the next night he was safely escorted out of Satara¹⁵.

- **Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil:**

Like Mahatma Phule, Rajarshichhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi had been a great influence on Bhaurao Patil. It is a significant coincidence that Mahatma Gandhi's Freedom Movement and Bhaurao Patil's Mass-Education Movement started functioning at about the same time in the year 1920. He first saw Mahatma Gandhi in Mumbai, where he had gone to see the 'Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII)'. His visit of Mumbai was to see glory of the visit of 'Prince of Wales', but he saw the Gandhiji's Satyagraha and 'Holi of foreign clothes'. After that he threw his clothes in to the flames. From then on, he has never put on anything other than cloths of hand spun and hand woven. It was more than a matter of cloths with him, from that day Mahatma Gandhi became hero of his life¹⁶.

1. **Kameri Jungle Satyagraha :**

Bhaurao Patil had been influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of 'Satyagraha'. The Non-cooperation movement against British rule started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 had been called off after a couple of years. In 1930 it was restarted in more active form as Civil Disobedience movement. From 1927 Mahatma Gandhi's influence on Bhaurao Patil began to grow. The result is the Kamari jungle Satyagraha that he did. The Kamari Jungle Satyagraha became the first and last Satyagraha against British rule in the life of the Bhaurao Patil. The Kameri incident was characteristic of Bhaurao Patil. The former Satya Shodhak leader was stirred by Mahatma Gandhi's return to active politics. He wanted to participate in the Satyagraha Movement re-started by the nation's leader. But he had no love for many of the other national leaders of the Congress, much less for the local Congress leaders of Satara. Bhaurao Patil's proposed Kameri Satyagraha was therefore a free-lance affair, the local Congress leadership being neither interested in it nor even informed¹⁷.

Before Mahatma Gandhi's famous Dandi March Bhaurao Patil had been undertaken Kameri Jungle Satyagraha in August 1929. Kameri and nearing area in South Satara district had been made 'Reserved Forest' by British Government. Bhaurao was deeply moved when he heard that people in two villages in South Satara, Kameri and Retharedharan, were crying on an unequal fight with Government in regard to right to cutting the grass

that grew on the hillocks near their homes. Bhaurao's native place, Aitawade, was in the same neighborhood; and he too wanted to go and court arrest with his people. He thought he would go one step further than cutting grass, he would cut down trees in the area of the 'Reserved Forest'. Bhaurao came to Kamri with a student from his hostel on the Satyagraha day. A large number of Villagers had gathered to hear Bhaurao speak and then to join him in cutting down trees in the reserved area of the jungle. The boys from Kolhapur, sent for by his wife Laxmibai, were also there. He stood up to speak. Immediately a down-pour of rain came. People ran away lest they should be drenched. Bhaurao was left practically left alone. In the end he too came away without making a speech and without breaking any rule or law of the British Government¹⁸.

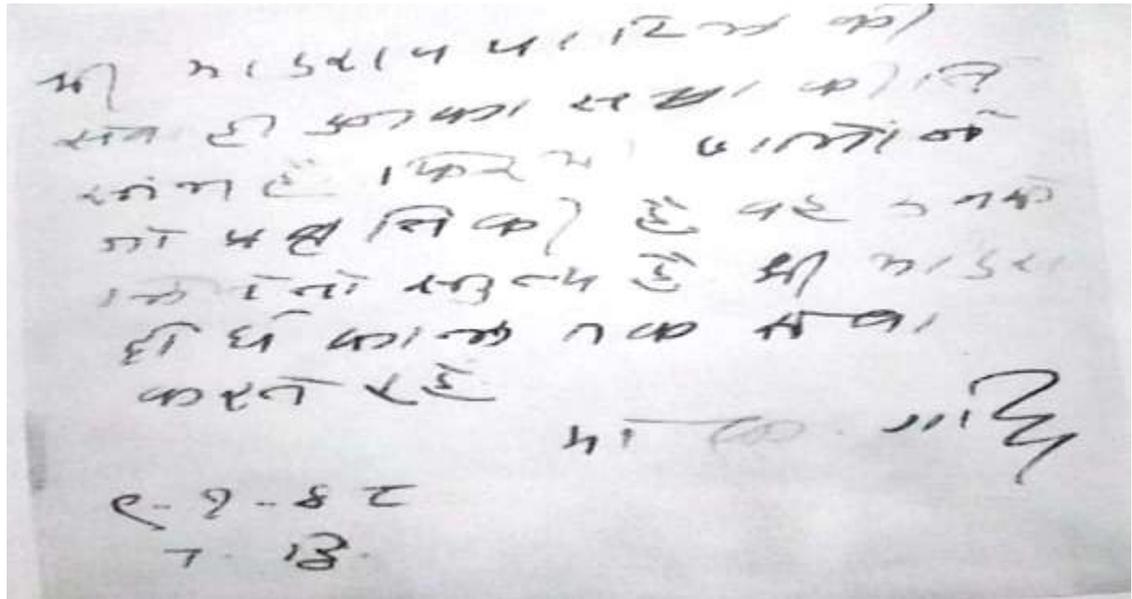
2. Mahatma Gandhi's Visit to Dr. Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil's Boarding House :

Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Bhaurao Patil's boarding house is greatest episode in his life. Bhaurao had not claiming himself Mahatma Gandhi's follower but he was one of the few among public workers in our country who honor Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of simplicity, non-possession and service to the poor in his day to day life. Bhaurao Patil had been invited Mahatma Gandhi to perform the naming ceremony of his boarding house as Chhatrapati Shahu Boarding house and Gandhiji accepted the invitation in spite of his very busy schedule, even Bhaurao Patil was not member or worker of Indian National Congress. But the Congress leaders of Satara could not forgot the fact that Bhaurao was not a Congressman. They thought that Gandhiji's visit to Bhaurao's boarding house was an unnecessary deviation from the crowded program marked out for him by Satara Congress Committee; and so they dropped it from his day's engagements¹⁹.

First thing that, there was a complete absence of caste-distinctions in Bhaurao Patil's boarding house. There were caste-Hindus and untouchables among them. Also there were Jains and Muslims. They all lived together as members of one household as much as living accommodation would permit. Secondly the boys did all work for themselves without the help of servants. Thus Bhaurao Patil's boarding house was cosmopolitan boarding house where Mahatma Gandhi had been invited to perform the naming ceremony of his boarding house. Mahatma Gandhi's visit would been fixed on 25th February, 1927, before that Bhaurao got a telegram from Mahadeo Desai, Gandhiji's secretary, that nation's leader could not visit his place. But Bhaurao had not disappointed, he went with his boys and stood across the path of Gandhiji's car. When the Mahatma found out who it was that obstructed his way, then he graciously promised Bhaurao that he would visit his work²⁰.

Mahatma Gandhi went to the BhaouraoPatil's Boarding –house on the evening of 25th February, 1927 and named it as 'ChhatrapatiShahu Boarding-house'. At the fuction, Mahatma Gandhi was garland, but he took the garland off and put it on one of the Harijian boys in the hostel, Mr. L. B. Bhingardev, who stand first in his Sanskrit examinations, beating all his caste Hindu classmates. After that Mr. DnyandevGholap was read welcome speech for Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji was pleased with the work that BhauraoPatil was doing for masses. He was particularly happy that in his Boarding-house boys of all religions and castes and even the untouchables lived a common life without invidious distinctions, and that they all underwent the same discipline of manual labor²¹.

When Mahatma Gandhi was taken by BhauraoPatil for the *Namakaran*(Naming) ceremony of Boarding-house as ChhatrapatiShahu Boarding house, Gandhiji asked him ; “why do you give this name to your Boarding-house? Did the Maharaja give you lots of money?” Then Bhaurao replayed gently, “Mahatmaji, the Maharaja has not given me any money. But all my enthusiasm for the uplift of the masses, I owe to him”²².Doubtfully Mahatma Gandhi had not heard much of ChhatrapatiShahu Maharaja of Kolhapur as a constructive social worker.After some years of Gandhiji's visit to BhauraoPatil's Boarding-house,Gandhiji gave an annual grant of Rs.500for four years to his Boarding-house. The last time the Mahatma Gandhi wrote of BhauraoPatil when the members of the Satara District Students' Congress wanted to give Bhaurao a purse of Rs.100000. The sponsors of this gift-campaign requested Gandhiji to preside over the presentation ceremony. As he could not do it he sent message to organizers. This was a few week before the Mahatma's assassination. Original message was in Hindi language and its translation is: “Shri BhauraoPatil'sservices is are themselves a monument of his reputation. Nevertheless what his students have done in his honor is creditable on their part. May Bhaurao continue his services for many more years”²³.



* Scanned copy of Mahatma Gandhi's letter about BahauraoPatil, taken from hisbiographical book – KarmaveerBhauraoPatil – An Amazing Story of Leadershipand Organization in Rural Education- Written by Dr. Anjilvel Matthew.

3. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil:

BhauraoPatil met to Mahatma Gandhi on June, 1945. It had been Bhaurao's last meet with Mahatma Gandhi. But he had been touch with Gandhiji through his student P. G. Patil. In 1947 India got freedom, but on 30th January, 1948 Mahatma Gandhi assassinated by NathuramGodse. NathuramGodse was from *Brahmin*' community, so that after the assassination of Gandhiji riots broke out against *Brahmin* community in Maharashtra. Angered people started to attack on *Brahmin* community and their houses started burning. At such a time BhauraoPatil stepped forward to protect the Brahmin community. He calmed down the angered people and told them not to hold the whole community responsible for the misdeeds of one person. By reminding people of Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence, he proved to be a true follower of Gandhiji²⁴.

On the 13th day of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, a mourning meeting was held at Gandhi Maidan in Satara. Addressing the gathering, BhauraoPatil said that he had accepted Gandhiji's leadership since 1919. From then on, I started wearing khadi clothes. He also stopped wearing *Chappals*. At this time, he announced to set up 101 high schools in memory of Gandhiji and to provide self-reliant education to the children. He also expressed his desire to establish '*Mahatma Gandhi Rural University*'. BhauraoPatil completed his promise of 101 high schools within 7 years²⁵.

- **Conclusion :**

BhauraoPatil was a true follower of Mahatma Phule, RajarshiChhatrapatiShahuMaharaj and also a true follower of Mahatma Gandhi. Bhaurao was not only imitating Gandhiji physically but also ideologically. Like Gandhi, he lived simply. He did not practice any kind of caste discrimination. Also he made active efforts to eradicate caste discrimination and untouchability. Mahatma Gandhi contributed to the Indian independence movement. Similarly, BhauraoPatil contributed for the educational progress of the common man and to make them self-reliant. For this work BhauraoPatil got many awards and felicitations. On 26th January, 1959 Government of India felicitated to BhauraoPatil with 'Padmabhushan' award. University of Poona also has given him 'Doctor of Letters' on 5th May, 1959. KarmaveerBhauraoPatil breathed his last on 9th May, 1959. He was fortunate enough to see his vow of opening 101 High Schools in the name of Mahatma Gandhi and imparting education to more children than were hair in his beard, duly fulfilled. During his life time, Sanstha was conducting 38 cosmopolitan boarding houses, 578 Voluntary schools, 6 training colleges, 108 secondary schools and three colleges²⁶.

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