

KAKASAHEB CHAMANKAR: MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERSONALITY

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Kakasaheb Chamankar's life span covers almost ninety one years during pre-independence and post-independence period of Indian history. The early years were full of difficulties and problems, that every man had to struggle hard to overcome the difficulties. Almost all people were struggling to survive. Everyone was trying his best to make his livelihood, following the customs and traditions laid down by the society. During pre-independence period political leaders were protesting against British rule for freedom. They thought freedom as the right. But the common men and women of the time were facing many questions with awe; what is the freedom? What would be freedom? What would be the place of common man in freedom? Where as the political leaders of the time were engaged in the controversy: social reform or political freedom? What should be the priority? The common man was delighted as monarchy was about to an end and democracy will be there shortly. He was in search of new ways to live.

During the time of independence Kakasaheb was in his prime of youth. As he was influenced by nationalistic ideas during the freedom struggle, he was inspired to do something for the welfare of the masses. Accordingly he worked hard for the upliftment of the masses. He was active in social worker, he showed deep interest to tackle the problems of common man. In this perspective Kakasaheb was a social reformer, who was keen to change the society.

Keywords: Social reformer

Introduction

Kakasaheb Chamankar contested Assembly election of 1957. He was candidate of Praja Samajwadi Party and won the election from Vengurla Constituency. It was tough fight for him, he worked hard to win it. He represented costal area and their issues in Maharashtra Assembly. He believed that the Legislative Assembly is meant for the welfare of masses and to protect public interest. He actively participated in the working of State Assembly, raised many issues, participated in various discussions during question hour. Yashwantrao Chavan was the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra. He was keen to raise the issues of Kokan people in Assembly. He pleaded for the implementation of various development schemes launched by government especially about Vengurla, Kudal and Sawantwadi area. During the period of MLA he contributed largely for the development of his constituency. He was the leader of first generation after independence. Who worked hard under the esteem guidance of the Chief Minister Hon. Yashwantrao Chavan. Kakasaheb often raised issues about Ratnagiri in Assembly. Kathya Project and other problems were skillfully tackled by Kakasaheb. He emphasized that the basic facilities should be provide to masses such as hospitals, medicines and medical aid. He strongly advocated the need of industrial development and

communication such as road infrastructure in Kokan area. It should be noted that MIDC and Kokan Railway Projects were raised in Assembly discussion during his times.

Contribution of Kakasaheb

Kakasaheb is known as a politician who constantly followed the issues like poverty in Kokan, unemployment, scanty land and scarcity of production units in Maharashtra Assembly. The constant occurrences of pestilences in the district and preventive measures to be taken by the department of health were scrupulously followed by him and raised the question in the assembly to spray pesticides like DDT in the affected area, and often followed the issue of eradication of T.B. Kakasaheb was very particular about the government servants, especially about their daily work, recruitment, facilities given by government and their proper implementation in the society. The long standing issues like industrial development, irrigation projects for land and communication (especially on road) are yet to be tackled skillfully. Kakasaheb was deeply interested in the development of Kokan and believed that along with the basic needs of the masses, industrial development, agricultural production and export-import should be considered with priority. Kakasaheb knew that climate and land of Kokan is not only suitable for rice paddy, but the farmers should be encouraged to cultivate it for fruit production, plantation of herbs for medicines and other suitable crops. He took initiative and inspired many farmers for the cultivation of land as mentioned above. He started plantation of mangoes and cashew; and advocated the importance of such crops and started research Centre in Kokan. Where as he emphasized supplementary occupations to agriculture sectors in Kokan. Kakasaheb was a farmer and he had keen interest in agriculture. Mango production in Kokan is noticeable in Konkan, where as variety of mangoes are produced. The best variety alphonso mango is famous. As mango fruit is called as a king of fruits. Kakasaheb stated for the first time the importance the export of mango fruit in international market, as it will be profitable to the farmers. Where as the government should encourage the farmers to export mangoes. He expected that the farmers in Kokan will be happy and prosperous with this practice.

Agriculture requires human resource, where as capital in form of money for cultivation. Kakasaheb well aware of this reality, and to overcome the difficulties of small farmers, who were in debt either of bank or the money lenders, he established new-co-operative seva societies, co-operative credit societies and small-sale industry to support agriculture. During those days Kakasaheb started with his initiative Vividh Karyakari Sahakari Societies, mango production organizations, cashew production organization and different types of processing units on mango and cashew, as well as in transport (road ways). He pointed out that the farmers will be prosperous, if we encourage them for farming and agricultural products. In Kokan majority of farmers are small landholders and they are content with what they have. Most of these farmers depend on farming of rice, fruit like bananas, cashew, coconut and betelnut fortunately the large sea shore offers them ample sea-food like fishes, crabs and prawns etc. Thus people live there happily with whatever they have. Kakasaheb made them aware about their resources and these resources will make them happy and prosperous and accordingly he tried to help them in various ways.

Efficient Leadership

Kakasaheb had deep concern for the issues of fishing industry. He tried his level best to raise there issues of Kokan in Maharashtra Assembly and insisted for their development. He strongly believed that for the development of the said industry new techniques and tools should be used by fishermen and government should make available necessary facilities for fishing industry. In addition to that transport and market facilities should be developed along with the different financial resources for those people. Kakasaheb adopted and follow socialistic thought for the development, accordingly the established co-operative credit societies, district-co-operative bank, co-operative societies, and sale and purchase societies for common people. He worked hard on the issues of fishermen, he often consulted his senior leaders in politics and explained these issues of fisherman. Basically he was activist having tremendous capacity to move the masses. He pointed out that socialistic philosophy is useful for the masses. It will certainly transform the society in to the welfare state. In this connection Gunvant Todankar writes about Kakasaheb in his article, "Aamache Samjawadi Kaka", "I have been with his close contact since his childhood, hence I know his nature and I am fortunate enough to observe his work from close quarter. He is good natured, affectionate, his language always remained full of love and courteous. His new acquaintances turn into long lasting friendship with him. He has many friends and followers. All people call him kaka with love. He is a politician and socialist but everyone feels great attachment. In any controversy his verdict is always final and people gladly accept it. Many organizations, co-operative bodies and banks sought his guidance. Being contemporary with Nath Pai, Nansaheb Gore, S.M. Joshi and Prof. Madhu Dandwate he had established good relations with them, all of them love Kaka. This indicated that Kaka also belongs to that galaxy of politicians."

During Samyukt Maharashtra Movement, kaka was one of the prominent leaders. Followed to that he contested Assembly Elections from Vengurla Constituency and won it. It showed the popularity of Kakasaheb. As a Member of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, he undertook many welfare projects for Kokan. However leaders of opposition always gave less priority due to party politics. Kakasaheb knew that hence he undertook constructive work of social welfare. Kakasaheb was a politician with foresight. He rendered his all efforts to make masses happy. This was his constructive work.

There is no alternative to handwork and only handwork makes man happy as he believes. To work hard and struggle for existence is a keynote of socialistic philosophy he tried to put it in practice. He toiled hard in farming he developed it and involved in all agricultural activities, he undertook many development projects and worked hard on them and increased yield of rice and mango fruits. He put an example in front of all farmers during those days. He worked hard to develop mango and cashew agriculture. He was the first farmer to export mangoes from kokan. Thus he inspired farmers to increase agriculture yield, he also developed interest of farmers for fruit plantation. Thus he played a vital role to develop agriculture of Kokan region.

Earlier nobody made any attempt to develop agriculture in Kokan area, and mango and cashew farming was considered very superior. Commenting on this assumption of the contemporary people Gunvant Manjarekar comments, “Mango and Cashew agriculture is no doubt important, however we should not neglect the importance of cashew and coconut farming in Kokan. Water required for Cashew and belelnut farming is not adequate in land of Kokan (i.e. arable land). So we have to follow the path of Chamankar in this respect.” There is heavy rainfall during monsoon in Kokan that is almost six months of the year, however land of Kokan remains barren. Kokan has long sea-shore, salty climate, various trees in creek area and rocky land. Kakasaheb studied these factors carefully and explained that cashew and mango are two important crops those require less water supply, so agriculture of mango and cashew is profitable as they give maximum yield. His experience of farming gave him name and fame. He was felicitated for his experiments in farming, many titles and degrees were conferred. Even agriculture university showed deep concern about his contribution to agriculture Thus he spent his entire life for farming, farmers and their upliftment.

Kakasaheb contributed extensively for the development of society. He believed in socialistic ideas, he sincerely tried to eliminate the gap between rich and poor in the society. He helped people from all sectors of the society: downtrodden, workers, labourers, youth and women also. He extended his help and co-operation to the people lying in poverty who were facing all sort of difficulties. He made conscious efforts for the upliftment of such people in every walk of life such as health, family welfare, marriages and education, problem of unemployment and issues related to agriculture. He devoted entire life for the welfare of masses. He motivated many young men and women for education and helped them. He gave monetary help to many needy persons. His generosity was praise worthy. According to him to live and struggle is the important function of human being.

Prof. Madhu Dandwate says about Kakasaheb Chamankar, “Wherever Kakasaheb worked he tried to join people together and not divide them, when he was the member of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, realized that he is a man of winsome nature. His colleagues in Assembly came to know that he was deeply interested in agriculture and issues of fishermen.” People should help each other in difficulties in every sphere such as-political life, social life and economic life, one should work for the welfare of the masses and make the stamp of one’s personality, it will project one’s imaged. Kakasaheb was a man who worked for masses and for the welfare of masses. Prof. Madhu Dandwate’s comment throw light on his personality as he was leader of masses, he worked for the masses an a political leader, he was MLA to help fishermen and farmer’s issues.

Conclusions

Kakasaheb knew the importance of agriculture. He thought that, it is the livelihood of human being. As a man is an animal, unlike other animals he is connected with the nature Kakasaheb was of the opinion that man should adopt himself with nature and natural phenomenon, as it is the best way to survive. The masses as well as wise people should understand the importance of nature. Where as the nature is the only place to survive for human beings. The science and technology utilized by man at the cost of natural resources will be destructive. Hence this great leader of Kokan developed the land being one with nature. It is the most important step towards the sustainable development of Kokan.

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