

SALT SATYAGRAHA OF SHIRODA

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Abstract:

The cultural concept of Maharashtra is ancient one. The people of Maharashtra have proved their bravery in the most adverse and odd circumstances and played significant role in freedom struggle of the India. Mahatma Gandhi father of the nation, who conceived this movement, made sevagram a small village in Wardha district of Maharashtra. Maharashtra was the scene of many pioneer episodes. It was virtually the home of the freedom struggle.

KEYWORDS:

Salt Satyagraha, freedom struggle, socioAre victory, circumstances.

INTRODUCTION:

Mahatma Gandhi embarked upon the civil disobedient with sense of spiritual exelctation, guided not by reason but by inner inspiration. He proclaimed the struggle as a holy war, a fight to the finish from which there could be no retreat and possibly his own last chance. It was this movement which was a convening point in terms, both of the establishment of his obsolete leadership and of the universal acceptance of the preaching of truth, non violence, fearless defiance of evil and Swadeshism. Even the wider world also watched the Satyagraha experiment acquisitiveness as to weather the Mahatma could also socioAre victory through truth and non-violence.

How did Maharashtra state fare in this great movement of Bombay was in the vanguard of movement from the very beginning. The movement was destined to be wide spread in the Bombay Presidency.

With prior consultation with Gandhiji the Maharashtrian leaders established the Maharashtra civil disobedient committee for directing the movement in Maharashtra. Shankarrao Dev and S.D Javadekar were the souls of this organization. They inducted hundreds of local leaders and volunteer in practically every district. The first war council for western Maharashtra was appointed in consultation of Gandhiji, on 13 March 1930 at Pune.

The coastal districts gave an excellent account during the salt Satyagraha. The hitherto politically backward district of Ratnagiri was throuly galvanized. Satyagraha camps were opened at Shiroda, Vengurla, Ratnagiri, Malvan Mithbhav, Arvalli and Redi in the district. From the beginning Gangadharrao Deshande and Appasheb Patwardhan was stired the mass mind. They were shortly joined by the Deogirikar, Dastane, S.G. Ranade, Appasheb Apate, and Mir Shukula. Consequently the camps in the district received excellent local support. The war council of Bombay, Pune and Maharashtra sent sizable reinforcements, in men and money, to these camps.

The battle from in Raygad district was activated by R.N. Mandalik, Ketkar and Haribhau Joshi. The movement in Panvel tahsil began from April and ultimately culminated into the famous Churner forest Satyagraha. Pen was the centre of Civil Disobedient in the district. Demonstrations and large public meeting were held almost daily. Thane district was placed under general command of Jamanadas Mehata, Bhopatkar, Gokhale and Govindarao Vartak. But the most successful salt Satyagraha, next only to that in Bombay, took place at Shiroda. It is therefore time to know more about it.

SHIRODA SATYAGRAHA

The Shiroda Satyagraha is a glorious page in the history of freedom struggle in Maharashtra. As a matter of fact of the Shiroda raid was the first of its type in the whole of India. The salt Satyagraha up to this stage in this history was confined mainly to preparation of salt and selling it in violent of the salt laws. But

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the Shiroda Satyagraha adopted a more radical programme. Salt pans were plundered, the national flag was hoisted and booty was sold either in local market or sent to other markets. Hundreds of bags of salt were plundered. Apasheb Deorikar and Ranade frequently entered the Portuguese territory of Goa and brought considerable quantities of salt to Shiroda to sell in violation of the salt laws. There were several ramifications of the Satyagraha which Gandhi was highly pleased to know while in prison.

The Satyagraha trooped at Shiroda were fortified by 583 volunteer from Bombay, Jalgaon, Pune, Satara, Ratnagiri, Ahmednagar, Nashik, Solapur, Dhule Raigad, and Thane districts. But the largest contingents came from Bombay (116) and Jalgaon (103) districts. The inspiring soul behind the Jalgaon contingent was Vasudev Vital allies Annasaheb Dastane of Bhushawal and Shitaram Bhauji Chiudhari of Jalgaon. The non-violent crusade began in the early hours of 12 May 1930, under active supervision of S.D. Jawadekar, Dr. Athaley, and Vinayakarao Bhushkute. The private owners of salt pans in a spirit of self denial allowed the salt to be plundered. And it was with their cooperation that the Shiroda Satyagraha turned out to be a spectacular success. Some of the owners not merely cooperated with Satyagraha but suffered imprisonment.

Persons like Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi Dr. Bhagawat and others canalized the enthusiasm of the volunteer into the Gandhian way of peaceful resistance even against violence from the opposite party. The collector and district superintendent of the police themselves direct the police action on the spot. But the fourth and last day of the Satyagraha proved to be an occasion of desperate police action. The police mercilessly beat the volunteers, thrashed many till they became unconscious and committed the worst type of atrocity. Platoon after platoon of Satyagraha were rendered physically invalid. The last platoon kept in reserve, comprised the hardy men from Jalgaon They gave the excellent guerrilla fight to the police till the last man of them was rendered unable to stand on his legs. Even the Red Cross men did not escape police beating.

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