

5. Shivaji's Education

Beginning of Shivaji's Education :

Shahaji Raje himself was a scholar of Sanskrit. In the Bangalore court, he had under his patronage, artists and scholars of various languages. He appointed intelligent teachers for Shivaji. Shivaji's education began when he became seven years old. Soon, Shivaji became skilled in the art of reading and writing. He began to read the stories from 'Ramayan', 'Mahabharat' and 'Bhagwat', on his own. To teach him warfare, Shahaji Raje had appointed some teachers. They began to teach Shivaji to ride a horse, to wrestle, to use swords and Dandpatta. Thus, at the age of twelve, Shivaji became acquainted with different branches of learning and arts.

Soon, Adilshah sent Shahaji Raje on an expedition to conquer the States of the Nayakas (local chiefs) in Karnatak. Before setting out upon the expedition, Shahaji Raje sent Shivaji and Jijabai to Pune. With them, he sent elephants, horses, an infantry, a treasury, a flag, as also trusted ministers, brave generals and renowned teachers.

Rejuvenation of Pune : Jijabai and Shivaji returned to Pune. Shivaji remembered his childhood days which he had spent on Shivneri. He could see the lofty peaks of the Sahyadri again and he became very happy. Pune at that time was not such a big city. It was totally devastated by Shahaji Raje's enemies.



Shivaji's Education under the Supervision of Shahaji Raje

Properties were damaged. Houses were demolished. Temples had collapsed. The frightened people had fled from their villages. Fields had become barren. Thick forests had grown. Wolves roamed in the countryside. Pune, thus, was totally in shambles and ruins.

When the people living around came to know that Jijabai has returned to Pune with Shivaji, they took heart. Jijabai called all of them and reassured them that they would be safe in Pune. People started settling in Pune, cultivating their lands. Jijabai had the dilapidated temples repaired. In the temples, worship began morning and evening. The town was again throbbing with people. Thus, Pune was totally transformed.

The Achievements of Dadaji Konddev : When Jijabai and Shivaji were in Karnatak, Dadaji Konddev looked after the Pune Jagir. He was the 'Subhedar' of Kondana also. He was very faithful. He was strict, efficient and honest in his work. He was also just, and a strict disciplinarian. He served with devotion. At about this time, a big wada or residence was built in Pune by the orders of Shahaji Raje. It came to be known as 'Lal Mahal'. To encourage the peasants to till their lands, Dadaji gave them concessions in the land tax for a few years. He offered prizes for destroying the wolves which infested the countryside and harassed the peasants. Many wolves were killed. He raised peasant patrols to protect life and property from gangs of thieves who roamed the countryside. He fixed land revenue according to the quality of the soil. He thus made the people

happy. In the fields of agricultural reform and revenue collection, the work done by Dadaji Konddev and the Nizamshahi Vazir Malik Amber is considered to be very important.

Shivaji's Education : When Shivaji returned to Pune, his education continued under the supervision of Jijabai. While returning from Bangalore, Jijabai and Shivaji were accompanied by eminent teachers sent by Shahaji Raje. They taught him many sciences, branches of learning and languages.

Shivaji acquired the knowledge of excellent administration, war tactics, fort architecture, selection of horses and elephants, ways of escaping from difficult enemy territories and many other things. Shivaji's progress in education pleased Jijabai very much.

What Veermata Jijabai Taught Shivaji : Jijabai was no ordinary woman. She was the daughter of the mighty Sardar Lakhuji Rao Jadhav and the wife of the brave and valiant Shahaji Raje. She had inherited the knowledge of politics and warfare from her infancy. In her was witnessed the confluence of the martial traditions of the famous Houses of the Jadhavs and Bhonsales. She was a freedom loving person with a great sense of pride. She had learnt through bitter experience that however much a Maratha Sardar displayed valour, it was not appreciated in the courts of the Sultans. She had valiantly faced the shock of her father's murder in the open court at the instigation of Nizamshah. She had

resolved that her son Shivaji would never be engaged in the services of others. He would establish the rule of his own people - Swaraj. She was bringing up Shivaji with that ideal.

The people living in the Maval region were called Mavlas. They were loyal, hardworking and quick-footed. No one could surpass them in hardiness. But they were harassed by the Sultans' rule. The armies of the Sultans used to plunder their villages, forcing the people to abandon their places. Nobody cared for them. Shivaji yearned to do something for these poor, miserable people.

On returning home, Shivaji would talk about this to his mother. Jijabai would say, "Shivba, Shri Ramchandra is the ancestor of the Bhonsales. Rama killed Ravan and made his people happy. The ancestor of the Jadhavs is Shri Krishna. He killed Kans and brought relief to his people. You are a descendant of both Shri Rama and Shri Krishna. You can also destroy the wicked and make your subjects happy."

These words of Jijabai were a source of inspiration to young Shivaji. He would remember the brave deeds of heroes of the past like Rama, Krishna, Bhim, Arjun. He thought of them all the time, whether asleep or awake. He felt that he, too, must fight against injustice as they did, and like them, destroy the wicked and bring happiness to his subjects. He thought that he should become courageous and brave like these heroes of old.



Veermata Jijabai

The New Regime of Shivaji : In Pune Jagir, the new regime of Shivaji began under the guidance of Jijabai. Shahaji Raje had already made the preparations for this. When Shahaji Raje sent Shivaji from Bangalore to Pune, he sent some very powerful and prestigious people with him. They were Samraj Neelkanth Peshwe, Balkrishna Hanamante Muzumdar, Mankoji Dahatonde Sarnobat, Raghunath Ballal Sabnis, Sonopant Dabir. These were all able men fit to administer an independent kingdom. Shahaji Raje had specially deputed them to Pune to help

Shivaji govern his Jagir efficiently. With their help, Shivaji began to administer his Jagir, to attend the people's grievances. Those who inflicted injustice upon the ryot were punished. In a way, Shahaji Raje's Jagir was undergoing a transformation. The Mavlas got a glimpse of the future 'Swaraj'. It was, as it were, the dawn of Swaraj.

Shivaji's Marriage : In those days, people married at a very early age. So, Jijamata said, "We should now get Shivba married." Then a search for a suitable bride for Shivba began. Soon she found the girl she wanted. Her name was Saibai. Saibai came from the Nimbalkar family of Phaltan. The marriage was celebrated with great splendour.

EXERCISES

1. Fill in the blanks choosing the correct option.

- (a) Shahaji Raje was a scholar of
(Sanskrit, Kannad, Tamil)
- (b) People living in the Maval region were called
(peasants, soldiers, Mavlas)

2. Write the answer in one sentence.

- (a) Who appointed teachers for Shivaji and where ?
- (b) What did the teachers begin to teach Shivaji ?

- (c) Why did Dadaji Konddev give concession in land tax to peasants ?

3. Give the answer in two or three sentences.

- (a) How was Pune rejuvenated ?
- (b) What knowledge did Shivaji acquire ?
- (c) What had Jijabai resolved ?

Activity

- (a) Write and enact a dialogue between Shivaji and Jijabai.
- (b) Read the biography of Veermata Jijabai.

