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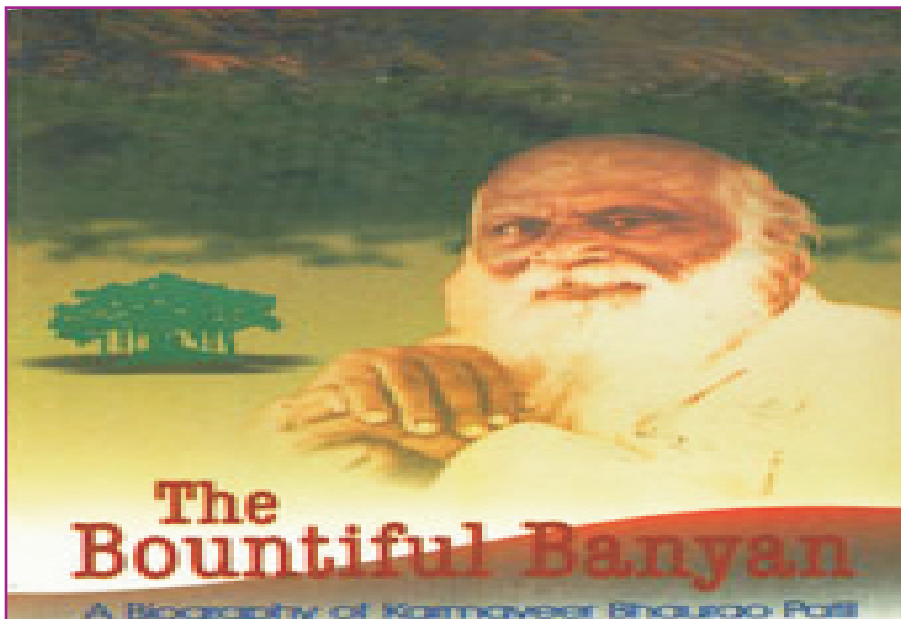
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## THE BOUNTIFUL BANYAN: A NOTE ON INDIAN MODERNITY

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### ABSTRACT

**M**odernity is a culture specific phase of history; hence, must be shaped according to the past traditions and present circumstances. The real strength of Br. P. G. Patil's biography, *The Bountiful Banyan*, has been tried on our indomitable desi (native) modernity. *The Bountiful Banyan*, the four volume biography, chronicles Karmveer Bhauroo Patil's life, struggles, achievements, and activities based on a foundation free from considerations of caste, creed, sex or religion. Bhauroo Patil challenged the religion, the laws of Manu, in particular, championed the cause of the common masses and laid

down the foundation of a revolutionary system of education. *The Bountiful Banyan* creates our modernity that suits our ancient heritage and has Indian growth by cultural restructuring through de-intellectualization.

**KEYWORDS:** Indian modernity, *Bountiful Banyan*, nativism.

### INTRODUCTION

Modernity is a culture specific phase of history but still we perceive it as a universal commodity. It is not an exportable commodity; each nation has its unique culture and civilization, which is called its soul. In India it came to be recognized as synonymous to

Westernization, hence it is not only a great insult to India but also it betrays gross ignorance of sociological science. Modernity cannot and should not be transplanted. Modernity must be shaped according to past traditions and present circumstances. We should create our own modernity that suits our ancient heritage and of Indian growth. The Western model of modernity in which all the other cultures and languages are ruthlessly eliminated is antagonistic to our perception of modernity. The real strength of Indian modernity will be tried on our indomitable desi values. Bhalchandra Nemade gave a blow to the tradition of borrowing / importing the foreign concepts of literature and put forth the most modern concept of nativism in literature and native modernity is one of the canons of Nativism.

### **The Bountiful Banyan**

The real strength of *The Bountiful Banyan* has been tried on our indomitable Indian desi modernity. The

Bountiful Banyan involves deliberate and radical break with the tradition. *The Bountiful Banyan*, the four-volume biography, chronicles Anna's life, struggles, achievements, and activities based on a foundation free from considerations of caste, creed, sex or religion. Anna challenged the religion; the laws of Manu in particular, championed the cause of the common masses with deep and abiding concerns for the education of rural children and laid the foundation of a revolutionary system of education. *The Bountiful Banyan* creates our own modernity that suits our ancient heritage and has Indian growth by cultural restructuring through de-intellectualization.

Anna wanted to remove the darkness of ignorance of the masses. In the course of a personal chat with P.G. Patil Anna told him that many statues will be erected in his memory throughout Maharashtra. But he added, 'I do not want my statues of the usual type, myself sitting or standing tamely, with my hands resting on my walking stick. Let the sculptor design my statue showing me brandishing a lighted torch (Torch of knowledge) which will dispel the darkness of ignorance of the masses' (*Bountiful Banyan*, Vol-I, X). This casual remark explains Anna's life mission which was to educate the rural masses. This stand is in keeping with the early 19th century modern thinkers like Mahatma Phule and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar who looked upon education as the tool of the betterment of society. Bhaurao was a practical visionary. His vision was founded on the practical reality of life. National integration, cultural development, an all round development of the human personality and its ultimate goal, the enrichment of the personal and national ethos were ever present in his consciousness.

Right from his student days Bhaurao opposed man made distinctions. P.G. narrates an incident from his school days. Shau Maharaj asked Bhaurao, 'why did Latthe drive you out of the Jain boarding house? Bhaurao replied, 'I broke the boarding regulations.' What were those regulations?' Latthe forbade us to shave after bathing. I disobeyed him because I found him shaving at any time of the day. My second offence was even graver. I attended the inauguration of the Miss Clarke hostel in 1908, went to the boarding house and took my food without taking a bath. Latthe was very particular that I should take a purificatory bath and then have my food. I could not follow his logic. I do not regard mixing with Harijan boys as pollution or a contamination which should be washed away by taking a bath. I do not believe in these manmade distinctions at all. 'The Maharaja was greatly impressed by this brave reply and patted the young rebel on his back' (*The Bountiful Banyan*, I, 19). This incident shows Bhaurao's mental makeup which symbolizes native Indian modernity even during his early shaping years.

Karmveer Bhaurao called himself a pupil of Mahatma Phule, Rajashri Shahu Maharaj and Mahatma Gandhi. He had been deeply impressed by the tenets of the Satyashodhak movement in which he actively participated for about ten years. The Satyashodhak movement started by Mahatma Phule in 1873 was a revolt against the social inequality and social slavery, the invidious and cramping caste system, by the masses who were groaning under this tyranny for ages. This was the first social movement in modern Maharashtra which advocated the basic and fundamental equality of man. It has honoured place in the new Renaissance in India. Bhaurao Patil supported and actively participated in this movement. The involvement of the common man in an institution was a marked feature of Bhaurao's method of work and approach. P.G. cites an example of his earlier experiment in participation of the common masses. P.G. writes, 'An interesting feature of the boarding house at Nerle is worth mentioning here.' Anna and his friends used to collect grains from the farmers. But now they went one step further and persuaded the housewives in the village to set aside a handful of grains from their usual morning quota to be ground at the girding stones. This was readily agreed to by them as it was a mere handful which caused even the poorest of them no inconvenience. Cloths bags were supplied to the households in which the lady of the house was expected to deposit her handful of grains for the public boarding house. Later on in the morning, volunteers of the boarding house went round the houses collecting these bags and deposited the collections in store room of the boarding house' (*Bountiful Banyan*, I, 86). Bhaurao often used to say that he would rather have a rupee each from one Lakh donors than 1 Lakh rupees from one rich person. Anna wanted to start the weekly, *Axe* which was not started. But he wanted to champion the due and proper rights of the Rayats freely and frankly. He declared, the God of the *Axe* would be Maharashtra. The presiding deity will be the masses in Maharashtra. The mission will be the overall progress of the masses. The literary aim will be naked and unalloyed truth. The *Axe* will mercilessly come down on any one who comes in the way of the all round progress of the Rayat. This stand shows that Anna worked and stood for Indian native modernity.

**P.G. Patil sums up the basic tenets behind Bhaurao's boarding house at Satara:**

1. A boarder should be an aspirant for knowledge.
2. He must be self-reliant.
3. He must cultivate fraternal feelings for others.
4. He must eschew all considerations of caste, creed, color, sect, religion and narrow domestic walls.
5. He must not harbor feelings of rich or poor.
6. He must imbibe simple living and high thinking.
7. He must cultivate character, decency, nobility, self-help etc.
8. He must not observe untouchability.
9. He must not harbor any orthodoxy.
10. He should cultivate dignity of labor, self-help, self-reliance, self-study and national freedom. (B.B.I, 101).

These tenets explicitly comment on Bhaurao's democratic spirit and his cherished dream of casteless and classless society.

Karmveer Bhaurao Patil's educational philosophy is reflected even in small experiments. Rayat was approved institution for the upbringing and education of the Remand home boys and girls. The delinquents lived in harmony with other boarders from private homes. This was unique experiment in social mingling. The remand home boys and girls were admitted in the boarding houses at Satara, Rukdi, Devapur, Wadala Mahadev. This experiment improved the lot of the Remand home and court-Convicted children. Care and solicitude for the down trodden under privileged, uncared for sections of the society was the first concern of Bhaurao Patil. Towards the end of his life, Anna interested himself more and more in the upbringing and education of the children from the Remand Homes. Anna told P.G.Patil, 'When everyone else will have forgotten or neglected me or thrown me overboard, these tiny ones (Remand Home boys) will rally around me and cheer my flagging spirits. I get a special spiritual satisfaction by serving them. How like angels they are! They were thrown on the scrapheap by their unwilling parents. It is sheer providential dispensation that has thrown them in my lap. I shall serve them most faithfully and lovingly till my last breath! (B.B.I,165).

M.B.Katkar describes a public meeting at Ninam Padali – 14 miles from Satara – against child marriage. This incident took place in 1926. Child marriages were very common at that time. Rich persons used to purchase young brides from their poor parents on payment of anything between 500-700 rupees. The bride would be 8-10 years old, where as the bridegroom was sometimes 55 or 60 years old. As an ardent satya samajist, Anna undertook a whirlwind campaign against this heinous practice. He organized Kirtan of Gadge Maharaj at Ninam Padali – Anna addressed the gathering. He poured the liquid fire of his indignation on people who purchased young girls of 8-10 years old as brides on payment of 500 to 700 rupees to the bride's poor parents. Anna ridiculed such people and their nefarious activities in strong words. B. M. Katarar registers the reaction of the people, 'About a dozen people came to the stage and declared voluntarily and publicly that not only would they not be party to such evil transactions, but would also oppose them with all the power at their command. They took oaths not to do anymore. They further declared that if any unsocial elements still persisted in such evil actions, they would be socially excommunicated. Others declared that they would give their daughters in marriage to young bridegrooms and not old fogeys. If need be, they would be prepared to drown their daughters in wells, rather than sell them like lambs to these old rapacious butchers. It was observed later that not a single child marriage took place in this area later on' (B.B.I,218).

The death anniversary of Mahatma Phule was celebrated by the organizers of the Shri. Shahu satyashodhak samaj, Kolhapur from 29 November to 4 December 1931 in the premises of the samaj at Ganga vesh. Bhaurao Patil spoke about Mahatma Phule and his mission. Bhaurao was disciple of Shahu Maharaj and Phule. He said, 'Mahatma Phule was a pioneer in the work of eradicating untouchability in Maharashtra, Mahatma Gandhi came on the scene a little later, and the herculean efforts of both these leaders of social thought – one a social worker and the other a royal revolutionary – have blazed a glorious trail in India. As faithful satya samajists, we should do everything in our power to eradicate this curse of untouchability from our minds and from our beloved India too! (B.B.I, 219). During 1954-55, the Bombay Government had initiated an intensive drive against the evil of untouchability. Government enlisted Bhaurao as the propagandist of this noble cause

and offered a monthly honorarium. Anna wrote to government, 'Eradication of untouchability and taking education to the remotest nooks and corners of our villages have been the twin ideals of my life. I resigned from a lucrative job under the Kirloskars fifty years ago, for this work. I have sacrificed my all and have abjured the joys and comforts. Of settled family life for this, all these years, I have been a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and have continued to serve this sacred cause through fair weather and foul, through good report and evil report. I hope to continue it till my dying day. It has been the solace of my life. May it be the solace of my death. I have never expected any monetary benefit from it and do not do so at this stage in my life. I am extremely gratified to find that this work of mine is striking deep and enduring roots in the minds and hearts of the people at large, and this spiritual satisfaction alone is my just reward. I expect no other reward or recognition – neither from the people nor from the government. I am sorry; I shall not be able to accept your well meant and kind offer.' (B.B.I, 226) Bhaurao's answer to the Bombay Government authorities shows that eradication of untouchability was Anna's mission and not a profession. Jaiprakash Narayan visited Rayat shikshan sanstha in 1946. Addressing the young students, he said, 'The philosophic basis of this sanstha is basic, fundamental and truly national. It is socialistic in the truest sense of the term. I am delighted to see socialism in actual practice in this institution. In fact, I have gained a new insight in the fundamentals of the new education of tomorrow. Shri. Bhaurao Patil has blazed a glorious trail in the field of national education. Had I not joined politics, I would surely have opted for the constructive, national, self – reliant movement in education set in motion by Bhaurao Patil as a sure panacea for all our ills' (B.B.I, 324). Bhaurao did not restrict himself to his own community (The Jains). P.G.Patil calls him a mukhatma, truly emancipated soul.

Bhaurao introduced number of novel experiments in the field of education. The pravara sahkari sakhar karkhana was the first co-operative sugar factory in India – It came into existence through the efforts of stalwarts like Shri. Vikhe Patil, Dr. D.R.Gadgil. Bhaurao would pay frequent visits to the Pravara factory. He suggested Vikhe patil that a contribution of four annas (25 Paise) per ton produced and supplied to the factory by the cultivators, should be deducted from their bills and the same amount should be handed over to the school for its maintenance. Other sugar factories in the Ahmednagar district also adopted this novel scheme in their areas for their educational advancement. Anna was very particular about manual labour right from the beginning of his educational activities. Anna wanted his students to earn their meals as also their education the hard way-by the sweat of their brows. He enjoined upon all boarders a strict code of hard manual labour everyday. This practice imbibed the virtues of self-respect, self-reliance and dignity of labour.

Bhaurao Patil gave evidence before the Depressed classes and Aboriginal Tribes committee under the chairmanship of Mr. O.H. Starte, Isc on 11 Desember 1931. The Times of India published his statement in these words, 'The witness (Bhaurao Patil) stated that he had been working for depressed classes for the last fifteen years. During that time, he had preached against the eating of flesh and done his utmost to get the untouchables to educate them. He conducted a boarding house at Satara in which there were touchables and untouchables who sat together, messed together and mixed with each other freely. He said that there should be special schools for the depressed classes only up to the IV standard. He advocated legislation for the abolition of the restrictions imposed on untouchables in respect of wells (Drinking water). Regarding the question of the dedication of girls of the depressed classes to the gods or goddesses (Devadasis), the witness thought that the cases of immortality in such a system should be tried by Hon. Lady Magistrates who should not be members of the depressed classes. He was in favour of removing all liquor shops from the vicinity of the houses of the depressed classes. He emphatically denied that the boys of the untouchable classes were inferior to the boys of the other classes and said that the former were quite at par with the Brahmins. The witness was aware of the fact that when the untouchables in the villages attempted to improve themselves, they were socially boycotted. He thought that there should be special co-operative societies for the untouchables (The Times of India, 11 December 1931) (B.B.II, 29, 30). This evidence and Bhaurao's response show his strong concern and affinity about the problems of untouchables and aborigines.

As a fiery propagandist of satyashodhak samaj, Bhaurao's main emphasis was on eradicating the evils of caste - ridden society and spread of enlightenment and education among the people. He valued the pragmatic or national approach to the problems of life. He advocated 'iron plough' in place of the wooden one. Anna ridiculed

superstitions. He used to criticize the Satyanaryan ritual strongly. He spoke strongly against it in his interview with the representative of a Marathi monthly in 1956-57. P.G. writes, 'We did not have collective Ganesh festivals in any of our schools or colleges (Run by the sanstha) we were free to practice our own religion in personal lives. He (Anna) used to attend the receptions accorded to the Digambar Jain Sages (Muni) by the local jains whenever they happened to pass through Satara during the four holy months (Chaturmas). But I do not remember to have seen him prostrating himself before any muni at any time. He would salute them reverently - that's all' (B.B.II,130). In a speech delivered at Ahilyashram, Nana peth, Poona on the occasion of the fourth death anniversary of Maharshi Annasaheb Shinde (January 1980) Anna said, ' Never ask for charity. Never beg, never cringe, never genuflect, work hard. Do not idle away precious time. You must try to spread education among all the harijans. Education is the talisman of their progress and prosperity. The harijans should voluntarily give up their Mahar – watans forthwith. They are the shackles of slavery. If the Marathas and the mahars join hands together and become partners in the total progress of society, it will augur well for the future of Maharashtra. Love and not hate, should be your religion.' (B.B.II, 140)

Bhaurao supported inter caste marriages. He attended the marriage of shri. Maruti Raut (Gardner) and a Brahmin Girl. Anna blessed the wedded couple in these words, 'Inter caste marriages should be the order of the day and should be encouraged by us. I am a staunch supporter of inter caste marriages. Inter caste marriages should be welcomed by all progressive people in society. Caste is manmade and must be eradicated at all costs' (B.B.III, 34). Bhaurao's nephew, Bapusaheb Patil married N.S.Phadke's daughter. Anna supported other inter caste marriages like 'Vichare - Kapale' (Maratha – Jain) Atmaram Patil and Shanta pingle (Maratha – Brahmin)

Bhaurao's educational philosophy was modern. Bhaurao was fiery satyashodhak propagandist (1910-24). To his last breath, he remained a staunch Gandhian, fully believing in and implementing the constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi. Bhaurao was an indifferent student in his high school days. He was a keen sports man but did not shine academically. But this insufficiently educated man became the most modern educationist of 20th century. Bhaurao was an educationist, practical philosopher. His educational philosophy was an applied philosophy. Bhaurao never wrote down his ideas on education but went on preaching them orally to his disciples and tried to work them out systematically through his schools and colleges. His was the pragmatic approach. Socrates' ideas on education, statecraft etc. were committed to writing by Plato in his Republic and Dialogues. Swami vivekanand has preserved the wise words of his master in his books. Akbar, the Mughal Emperor made a significant contribution to the field of education, though he himself was not educated. In the same fashion, Anna had an educational philosophy of his own having positive practical utility. A famous Marathi writer professor, S.M. Mate, wrote to Anna on 27 April 1953, 'When your noble efforts will fructify in the future, the future historians of Maharashtra will record, ungrudgingly, that you espoused a noble and worthwhile cause and took active steps to translate it into actuality in Maharashtra. You will go down in history as a doer of deeds' (A Karmveer) in the twin fields of educational and social regeneration' (B.B.III, 115). Bhaurao had experienced the miseries of the ignorant masses from close quarters and, hence, his heart bled for them.

The Radhakrishnan commission's Report on university education (1948) says, 'Some great scientific and practical developments of modern times have been the work of men who had neither a university degree nor scientific equipment. The Wright brothers built their first Aeroplane in a bicycle repair shop, while some world famous scientists were declaring that such flight was impossible. George Mendel, whose discoveries of the 'Laws of Inheritance' place him among the foremost of biological scientists, was a village priest with no laboratory but a garden patch and some pigeon coops. James watt, Robert Owen and George Stephenson, pioneers 'of the Industrial Age, were men of little or no schooling and without scientific laboratories.' (B.B.III, 126). These views are applicable to Karmveer Bhaurao Patil as an educationist. He had no university degree but he was a self – educated man of common sense worthy of giving an educational philosophy of first – rate value for the people of India. It was a pragmatic philosophy He was a non – matriculate but like great geniuses of the world, he had acquired wisdom in the University of the Extensive World of experience. He attended the school of life and sat at the feet of the teacher of Experience. He belonged to the category of common sense philosophers. He formulated from time to time the working principles around which his hostels, voluntary schools, secondary schools and colleges should develop. He contributed to the rural-oriented educational system of Maharashtra.

He used to say, Give me waste land which my boys will eventually convert into best land.

P.G.Patil sums up the salient features of Bhaurao's educational philosophy, 'Emphasis on hostel life – communal harmony (eradication on untouchability), self – reliance, self – respect, manual labour (dignity of labour), living contact with the mother earth, broad humanitarianism, universal 'brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God, ceaseless thinking about national independence and keeping oneself in a state of preparedness for its attainment. The students and teachers of Bhaurao's Institution have to be ideal citizens and ideal servants of the downtrodden. A life ennobled by self – sacrifice, ceaseless service of the common man. 'Service of man is service of God.' 'Simple living and high thinking' Total identification with the common man (The masses), shunning the glare of publicity. To beacons of hope to the peasants wallowing in the mire of squalor and ignorance. 'I shall break but will never bend', No compromise with the eternal principles. A deep commitment to justice and a war on injustice in all forms, Never to beg of the rich but to stand on one's own, howsoever meager one's resources may be. A deep and abiding faith that God will never suffer good work to fail or languish for want of support, means no money. An irrepressible optimism that looks beyond the murky clouds to the break of dawn on the distant horizon' (B.B.III, 147, 148). These features show that Bhaurao's educational philosophy consisted of self – reliance, self – respect, self – study, National freedom and equality (Lokyacu] LokfHkeku] Lok;/k;] Lokra«;] lerk). Bhaurao applied this philosophy in his educational experiment. Anna used to think of his Sanstha by day and dream of it by night. P.G.Patil writes, 'Public speaking was the breath of his life, and he would undertake arduous journeys to address huge gatherings of rural as also urban folk and urge them to help his mission, 'Unite, Educate, Agitate' 'Each one, teach one', 'Education through self – help' or 'Self – reliant education is the elixir of life' etc. were all life's tenets to Bhaurao' (B.B.IV, 22).

In Anna's last interview given to daily Tarun Bharat in the Sasson Hospital he was asked a question. What is your experience of this education through self – help? Here is a gist of Anna's answer, Anna said, 'I am firmly of the opinion that no one should eat food unless he puts in hard work. The Gita says the same thing. 'He who eats without working for it is a thief.' I learnt the great lesson of self – reliance at the feet of my father. My father exchanged quality land to wasteland of a neighbor. He cultivated the waste land into best land. I conceived an ambition to try this novel experiment in my schools spread all over Maharashtra. I am particular that my students should not cringe before or beg from anyone for their education. It is a very degrading thing and kills their self – respect. They should earn their bread as also their education by the sweat of their brows. They must stand on their own legs. The educated and uneducated people in rural area should be prepared to convert wasteland into arable land and set a new and encouraging example to their fellow men. The schools and colleges in the rural areas should be given plenty of land either by government or by the local people, where the students can put in hard manual labour and raise productive (Cash) crops. The children of farmers should not be ashamed of doing hard work as their parents also have to do it all their lives. I always ask the local people where I open my higher secondary schools to donate wasteland to me as I am hoping to convert it into good irrigable land. It enables me to educate my hard – working boys and the school also can become partially self – supporting. I can thus avoid many of the evils of the traditional system of urban based education – hatred of manual labour imbibing costly habits of living, etc (B.B.IV,53,54). After seeing the movie. 'War and peace' Bhaurao said, 'The patriots are the salt of the earth. Chh. Shivaji Maharaj and Mahatma Gandhi created such devoted followers out of dust, and that is why they could work miracles. It is my ambition to create such noble workers in and for my Rayat Shikshan sanstha. They will be the carriers of my mission of sweetness and light to the rural poor (B.B.IV 110). Anna wanted to create a new man, new culture. Anna's new experiment tried to develop the best in the students on a truly cosmopolitan basis, irrespective of considerations of caste, creed, colour, sex or religion. Bhaurao firmly believed that education must become a potent weapon of social transformation, nay, revolution. He wanted to transform and transmute indeed to revolutionize the mental frame work, the mental outlook, the mindset of the pupils. For him the mental revolution is the foundation of all revolutions. The then vice chancellor of pune University, Prof. D.G.Karve called Bhaurao Patil as master of educationists. Anna instructed by percept and example in the purpose and mission of education. Anna never occupied any position of honour in the Sanstha, nor would he perform any monetary transactions himself.

The bronze bust-statue of Anna, erected by the people of Karad in a square near the S.T.Station, Karad



was unveiled at the hands of Shri. V.B.Chavan. Chavan said, 'Anna created a band of devoted workers who are continuing to serve the mother institution even after Anna's demise. This sense of dedication and service is most rare in the post – Independence era. Anna was a constructive worker of the old Gandhian school of thought and hence his past students have imbibed the same sense of mission and dedication in their own careers also... Anna rendered yeoman's service to the common man in the field of mass education. He was a pioneer and champion of the novel experiment of education through self-help. India will have to follow the Karmveer's examples faithfully if she is to survive in the academic field. Gandhiji stressed the dignity of labour and Anna emphasized the sanctity of manual labour. It is time our so called educationists awoke to the true worth of this experiment. They should take a leaf out of Anna's book, because it is the book of life' (B.B.IV, 354). P.G.Patil closes the biography with this remark, 'It is my firm conviction that Karmveer Bhaurao's educational experiment will be a blue – print for the third world' (B.B.IV, 382).

Natives consider woman superior and strong. Like Jotirao Phule and Mahatma Gandhi Bhaurao was fully aware of the strength of women. Tarabai Shinde's text '*Stri-Purus Tulna*' ( A Comparison between Men and Women written in 1882 is striking for its understanding of patriarchy as a system. Tarabai does not need any authentication by men. It is as if she is talking back to them and challenging them to open their eyes to reality. Prachi Gurjarpadhye mentions Pandita Ramabai (1852-1922) in her book '*Bringing modernity home.*' Prachi Gurjarpadhye comments, 'Ramabai methodically examines the sacred and profane literature in Sanskrit from a woman's point of view. Her book '*The high – caste Hindu woman*' is comparable to Phule's polemics against Hindu texts. Both these thinkers seem to have made a common cause against the enemy of Hindu nationalism and Brahminical patriarchy' (2014, 172). Bhaurao was not a feminist in the strict sense of the term but he respected women and worked hard for the education of women.

At the annual social of the Shivaji Vidyalaya at Amravati on 30 December 1950, Bhaurao charmed his audience. He said, 'The cooperation of our women folk in our mission is important. The cooperation of a wife to her husband in his social mission is sure guarantee of its success' (B.B.I, 106). We have already mentioned a public meeting at Ninam-Padli in which Bhaurao was against child-marriage and fought for the rights of women. Bhaurao's unsophisticated wife, Laxmibai supported the noble cause of her husband. Shri Dnyandav Dhruvanak Gholap, the first (Mahar) pupil of Bhaurao states, 'Bhaurao's wife Smt. Laximibai Patil, came of a strict orthodox Jain family from Kumbhoj. She was not an educated lady, and hence in the initial stages, she looked with disfavor at her husband's unorthodox experiment of harbouring Harijan boys in their own home. But after sometime, she came to understand the revolutionary and humanitarian nature of Bhaurao's work and began to take a personal interest in the welfare of these Harijain and Hindu boys in the boarding house. Later on Bhaurao shifted to the Dhanini's Garden, and since then Laximibai became the unofficial superintendent of the Shahu boarding house. Bhaurao would be away for days together on his tours and Laximibai looked after the boys in the boarding house with the help of senior boys' (B.B.I, 267). Laximibai gave away all trinkets including her last ornament, Mangalsutra worth five tolas (50 to 55 gm.) to feed the boys in the boarding house. P.G.Patil comments, 'Where else in the history of mass education in India shall we come across such a shining and radiant example of self-sacrifice, nobility, self-abnegation and identification with the chosen mission of one's partner in life? Blessed be the name of Smt. Laximibai. Blessed be the name of Bhaurao Patil' (B.B.I, 268). His highness Sayajiro Maharaj of Baroda visited Shahu boarding and addressed the students and teachers. He said, 'It is the duty of the mother to nurture her child carefully. The Indian mother is often ignorant of the basic knowledge in this behalf and hence the rate of infant mortality here is very high, which is a national calamity. If you will think carefully about this fundamental problem, you will appreciate the value of knowledge on this score. As mothers are the guardians and custodians of the younger generation, we must take prompt and urgent steps to educate our women folk. Time was when our society was opposed to female education, for which we have paid a heavy price. But luckily this grim picture is changing slowly but surely and we see the dawn of a new consciousness in our society which is a very heartening and auspicious thing. I am gratified to have witnessed this noble experiment of self-help, self-reliance and national integration in a small town like Satara, and hence I am persuaded that it augers well for the future glory and resurgence of our great nation (B.B.I, 312).

Laximibai Patil lending library for the teachers was opened at the hands of sir R.P.Masani the then V.C. of

university of Bombay, at Satara on 11 October 1940. In this function Bhaurao said, 'I gratefully remember the great help accorded to my work by my late beloved wife. She was sacrifice incarnate. She not only sacrificed her golden trinkets to the tune of 80 tolas for this boarding house, but on one occasion when there were no foodgrains in the store, she sacrificed her 'Mangalsutra' also for my students' meals. We are all extremely indebted to her patronage and sacrifice' (B.B.II, 98). Anna respected his mother. In 1950-51 Anna addressed the girl students of the Jijamata training college for women at Satara. He described the noble role that the lady teachers had to play in their lives. Not only as teachers but as prospective mothers who would have to shape the careers of their children. Girls should remember Jijamata's example and try to emulate it. He also referred to the great pains his own mother had taken to bring him up Anna never left his home without bowing down before his mother. Anna said, 'Dear girls you have drunk the milk of cows and she-buffaloes but believe me, I have drunk more milk from my mother's breast than what you have been able to imbibe so far. It is this which has stood me in good stead. She has shaped my strong physique. I want all of you to be healthy mothers and rear up a strong race of able boys and girls who would play their roles in the national history. (B.B.II, 178). Anna's remarks about his wife and mother show his loyalty and devotion to his mother and wife. Both of them helped him in his noble cause of mass-education. Bhaurao attended and supported Inter-caste, marriages of his students.

Bhaurao wrote a letter to Mahatma Gandhi on 17 July 1944 and requested him to visit Jijamata Adhyapika Vidyalaya and Laximibai Patil Vastigrih which were located in the same building in Satara. Bhaurao wrote, 'The Sanstha firmly believes that the well educated women alone will teach lessons of humanity to men and bring about real progress in society. The Sanstha has started Jijamata Adhyapika Vidyalaya for producing model primary lady teachers, good wives, mothers and good lady guides' (B.B.III, 196). This letter shows Bhaurao's deep concern for the education of women. Bhaurao knew that the loyal Co-operation of the wife of a social worker in her husband's noble mission was a great asset to him and acted as healthy spur to him in his onward march.

Smt. Usha Chandrkant Shinde, a primary school teacher Satara writes, 'My maternal uncle got me admitted to the Girls' Remand Home at Bhiwandi, from where I was transferred to the Laximibai Patil Girls' Hostel at Satara. B.C. and non B.C. and court committed girls were the inmates here. We used to do the cooking and other manual labour ourselves. There were no servants in the hostel. Anna used to visit us almost every morning. He was very particular about cleanliness and discipline' (B.B.IV, 152). Later on Shinde joined teachers training college at the Sanstha's expense. She married Chandrkant shinde a court-committed student who was working as trained teacher in Rayat Shikshan Sanstha. Smt. Shinde and Shri. Shinde were appointed as superintendents of the children's home and of the Shahu boarding house respectively. Smt. Shinde says, 'My husband and I worship Anna's photograph in our puja room as he was the incarnation of god in human fore to me and to hundreds of poor girls like me. May he bless us from heaven' (B.B.IV, 153). Smt. Usha Shinde's remarks show the role of Bhaurao Patil in women's education in Maharashtra.

Anna's new experiment in the field of education tried to develop the best in the students on a truly cosmopolitan basis irrespective of considerations of caste, creed, colour, sex or religion. Bhaurao shaped his educational philosophy based on tradition and present circum – stances. For him, education was a weapon of social revolution. His life story is a perfect symbol of Indian modernity which consists of education of the poor, downtrodden masses and women's education. Anna's band of devoted workers served the mother institution even after Anna's death. Anna's life mission is a perfect example of Indian modernity.

## CONCLUSION

*The Bountiful Banyan* is suffused with the spirit of rebellion, which was the essence of Satyashodhak movement. The main objective of the *Satyashodhak* organization is to liberate the *Shudras* and *Ati Shudras*, the underprivileged and to prevent their exploitation by the *shetaji* and *bhataji* (moneylenders and Brahmins). The Bountiful Banyan is an exposition of the beliefs propounded by what might be called Brahminic theology. It is intended for the common mass of Hindus who need to be awakened to know in what quagmire the Brahmins have placed them and to lead them on to the road of rational thinking. His purpose is neither hedonistic nor didactic but to make the mass of people to realize the importance of education and to draw attention of the

Hindu masses to the devices of the Brahmins and to make them think for themselves how they have been deceived and misguided by the Brahmins. PG's interest in writing *The Bountiful Banyan* is to cater to the growing demand for a clear and consistent statement of the life and teachings of Karmveer Bhaurao Patil. What Karmveer Anna meant by knowledge was not mere literacy but the power to see through hegemonic ideology which Jotiao Phule termed *Tritiya Ratna*, the third eye, in his eponymous play. The spread of education, he never failed to emphasize, is absolutely necessary for the emergence of critical consciousness.

*The Bountiful Banyan* is an indigenous academic agricultural metaphor, which defines the concept of totalizing India. As a biographer PG plays the part of an iconoclast wherever necessary to make the biography *avant garde* spiritual treatise of *Satyashodhak* movement and Gandhian way of life representing vernacular cosmopolitanism in all respects by appealing universalism, not merely narrow nationalism.

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