



Pt. Sundarlal Sharma: Pioneer of National Movement and Social Reforms in Chhattisgarh

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ABSTRACT: Pt. Sundarlal Sharma was a social thinker par excellence. He played a Progressive Role as a Social Reformer and a freedom fighter. He emphasized on education for public awareness and formed many institutions for this. Pandit Sundar Lal Sharma grew up in a rural environment but his life was spent in great works like social reform, public awareness, literature creation and freedom movement. He was associated with the 'National Peasant Movement', 'Alcohol Prohibition', 'Adivasi Movement', 'Swadeshi Movement'. In 1920, 'Kandel Canal Satyagraha' was successfully conducted near Dhamtari, under his leadership. It was because of his efforts that Mahatma Gandhi came to Raipur for the first time on 20th December 1920.

KEYWORDS: Social Reforms, National Movement, Social Justice, Satnam Sect, Rasik Mitra, Kavi Samaj, Narayan Rao Medhawale, Rudri Navagaon Forest Satyagraha, Chhattisgarhi Danlila, Krishna Janmasthan - Jail Patrika', Dularwa etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sundarlal Sharma is considered the forerunner of Rashtriya Jagran in Chhattisgarh. He initiated the social and national movement in this region. [1] Countless legends have appeared in Chhattisgarh. Mainly three legends contributed the most in making this region cultured. The first Guru Ghasidas ji awakened spiritual and social consciousness in the eighteenth century through Satnam sect. Second, the great personality is the above mentioned Vir Narayan Singh ji. The third era comes from Pt. Sundarlal Sharma, who awakened national consciousness in the sleepy Chhattisgarh, for which he devoted his everything using all methods of awakening. [2]

II. LIFE INTRODUCTION

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma was born in 1881 AD in Chamsur village near Rajim. His father Pt. Jailal Tiwari was the legal advisor of Kanker Princely state. Kanker King had given 18 villages to Pt. Jailal Tiwari. He was a very good poet and had a keen interest in music. Pt. Sundarlal Sharma was brought up in this progressive family. After studying till middle school in Chamsur village, his further studies were done at home. Sundarlal Sharma studied English, Bangla, Oriya, Marathi language at home.

Magazines like "Kesari" "Maratha" were read in his house, through these Sundarlal Sharma's ability to think increased. He started writing poems. In 1898, his poems were published in a magazine named Rasik Mitra. He also used to write plays. He always said that drama is an important medium of social change. Apart from this, he was also a painter and sculptor. In 1899, he established 'Kavi Samaj' in Rajim. This institution worked not only for poets but also for the promotion of education. [3]

III. PROMOTION OF EDUCATION

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma laid special emphasis on the propagation of education to eradicate ignorance, superstition and evil practices prevailing in the society. For this, a Sanskrit school was started in Rajim in 1907. He said that the habit of reading books should be inculcated from childhood. That is why in 1914 he established a library in Rajim. [4]

IV. SOCIAL REFORMS

In the beginning of the 20th century, the consciousness of political, cultural and social reform was spreading in the country. Social reformers, thinkers and patriots gave new thinking and direction to the society. A social change also started in Chhattisgarh. Pt. Sundarlal Sharma has played an important role in this. On the one hand, he was giving mantras for national awakening, and on the other hand, he was also engaged in the reform work in the Dalit society, which was considered untouchable. [5]

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma always used to say that we should try to remove the evils of the society as soon as possible. Rammohun Roy worked for social consciousness through Brahmo Samaj in Bengal, similarly Pt. Sundarlal Sharma did social reform movement in Chhattisgarh. That is why he is called 'Ram Mohan Roy of Chhattisgarh'. [6]

In the 19th century, casteism and untouchability were at their peak. Dalit society was neglected and unable. His life was like walking on thorns. The traditionalist Hindus considered the Dalit society to be different from themselves. Literature was also being written on caste system and social evils and some social workers were also trying to improve it from their level. In Chhattisgarh, Pt. Sundarlal Sharma became the messiah of Dalits. When Mahatma Gandhi was thinking about Dalit emancipation, he was distributing sacred thread (Janeu) from house to house. [7]

The social caste system used to pain his mind a lot. In the year 1918, he made the Satnamis wear Janeu and gave them equal status with the upper castes in the society. [8] After this, Pt. Sundarlal Sharma became more intensely engaged in the work of opposing untouchability. He started many movements against untouchability. In the year 1918, the movement to get Kahars to enter Rajim's Rajiv Lochan temple was started. On 23 November 1925, he entered the Ramchandra temple in Rajim along with the people of the Satnam sect. In the same year, he established Satnami Ashram in Amin Para, Raipur and spread social harmony and unity. The upper castes of Chhattisgarh considered the people of the Satnam sect as untouchables. By the time 1925 came, he became completely successful in his work. [9]

In Mungeli region, Pt. Sundarlal Sharma and Mahant Naindas Mahilange had linked the Satnami community with national consciousness through social reform. This is the reason why a large number of people from this region attended the Karachi Congress session of 1930 and after returning were actively participating in the programs of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Here alcohol prohibition, boycott of foreign goods program was organized and there was awakening in the Satnam society. [10]

When Mahatma Gandhi came to Chhattisgarh in 1933 with the efforts of Pt. Sundarlal Sharma, while addressing the meeting of Rajim, he said- "Pt. Sundarlal Sharma is younger than me in age, but he is older than me in the upliftment of Dalits." Not only this He described Pt. Sundarlal Sharma as his guru in the field of Dalit emancipation. [11] He established "Brahmacharya Ashram" in Rajim and an orphanage in Dhamtari in 1933. [12]

Don't know how much humiliation he had to bear because of his dedicated work in the work of upliftment of Dalits. He was ostracized from the society. People addressed him with the epithet of 'Satnami Brahmin'. But he never got discouraged. His goal was to end social stereotypes and establish an egalitarian society. His life was devoted to the people only. He used to do every work with a pure heart. [13]

He believed that Dalits also have political, social and religious rights like the upper castes of the society. He made every possible effort to give equal status to the Dalit community.

He started reforms in all the sections of different society of Chhattisgarh. Connecting Satnami Samaj, Kurmi Samaj, Teli Samaj and Brahmin Samaj together and Tried to eradicate social evil. the custom of wearing a blouse among women Started, cow protection activities started with the help of Satnam sect. [14] In this way Pt. Sundarlal Sharma was successful in awakening national sentiment in Chhattisgarh. [15]

V. CONTRIBUTION IN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

In 1905, when there was a nationwide agitation due to the partition of Bengal, he played an active role in politics. He represented Chhattisgarh in the Banga-bhang movement. He did political awakening in Chhattisgarh through public meetings and speeches. He was a follower of Tilak's Garam Dal. [16]

When the branch of Congress was established in Raipur in 1906, Pt. Sundarlal Sharma became the first president of the branch of Raipur Congress. He laid the foundation of Congress in Chhattisgarh. Pt. Sundarlal Sharma, Narayan Rao Medhawale, Dr. Shivram Munje, Kelkar etc. represented Chhattisgarh in 1907 in Surat session. After returning from the Surat convention, Sundar Lal Sharma and Medhawale opened shops of Swadeshi goods in Dhamtari, Rajim, Mahasamund. With their influence, Puran Singh in Rajim, Yadav Rao and Harprasad in Dhamtari operated Swadeshi shops. [17] Those people who came to buy Swadeshi goods, they were taught to boycott foreign goods. Pt. Sundarlal Sharma established "Sanmitra Mandal" in 1906 for the sale of Swadeshi goods in Rajim. [18]

In the promotion of Swadeshi goods and the operation of Khadi Ashram, P. Sharma suffered a lot of financial loss, due to which he had to sell his village Muzgahan. This shows your patriotism. You were a devoted patriot. From 1907 to 1940 / till his death, he remained associated with the propoganda and national awakening of the Congress.

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma was associated with many national movements during the freedom struggle and did important work for the strengthening of freedom movements and public awareness in Chhattisgarh. [19]

In 1915, the Kisan Conference was organized in Rajim. Sundar Lal Sharma had an important role in organizing this conference. This conference was presided over by Vishnu Dutta Shukla, a prominent leader of the Central Provinces. In 1918, he had an important contribution in the establishment of the Political Council in Dhamtari. Organized Raipur district level conference in 1919. [20]

He organized a meeting of Chhattisgarhi farmers in Rajim in 1919 itself, in which thousands of farmers took part and protested against the atrocities on the farmers. After giving water from the canal, he also opposed the unjust action. [21]

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma went to Calcutta to invite Gandhiji to conduct Satyagraha of Kandel village. At this time Gandhiji was on a tour of Bengal. Pt. Sundarlal Sharma gave complete information about Satyagraha and the situation to Gandhiji. Gandhiji accepted the invitation. [22]

Gandhiji along with Pt. Sharma landed at Raipur railway station on 20th December 1920. Maulana Shaukat Ali, the national leader and leader of the Khilafat movement, also came to Raipur with him. As soon as they reached Raipur, the excited public gave the good news of the success of Kandel Satyagraha to Mahatma Gandhi. During the non-cooperation movement, he worked to encourage Satyagrahis in Raipur, Dhamtari and Rajim areas of Chhattisgarh. [23]

On January 21, 1922, at Sihawa in Dhamtari, the tribal protested against forced labor and low wages. Enthusiasm increased with the participation of Sundarlal Sharma, Narayan Rao Medhawale, Chhote Lal Srivastava etc. Sundarlal Sharma and other satyagrahis decided to violate the forest law by cutting wood from the forest. With his inspiration, the tribes of Sihawa felled the forest by defying the law of the forest department. For this reason, Pt. Sundarlal Sharma and Narayan Rao Medhawale were arrested and they were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one year. On the day he was sentenced, there was a hartal in Raipur and Dhamtari. This was the first imprisonment of Sundarlal Sharma in the fight for the freedom of the people of Chhattisgarh.

In March 1923, the Congress leaders of the Central Provinces decided to organize a flag satyagraha for which Nagpur was made the center. Satyagrahis of Chhattisgarh went to Nagpur under his leadership. [24]

Sundarlal Sharma and his associates left for the Kakinada Congress session in December 1923. This padayatra was of 700 miles which he did through the rugged forests of Bastar.

He was a member of the Provincial Congress Committee between 1923 and 1930.

In 1930, Sundarlal Sharma was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment for Rudri Navagaon Forest Satyagraha of Dhamtari. In the second phase of Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932, he became the second dictator from Raipur. Arrested while picketing in Raipur and was sentenced to 6 months. [25]

VI. FIRST CONCEPTULIZER OF CHHATTISGARH

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma was the first dreamer of Chhattisgarh state formation. He specifically outlined the geographical boundaries of Chhattisgarh province. "The part which starts from the Vindhya range and Narmada in the north, till the Indravati river and the Brahminy river in the south, which is located in the middle of Wainganga in the west, where the village named Garh is located, where the horns are played, where women The dress and clothing system is almost the same, where paddy is the main agricultural produce." [26]

He was strongly in favor of giving Chhattisgarhi dialect the status of a language in order to give a high place to Chhattisgarhi self-respect. The culture, political and social awakening of Chhattisgarh got a new identity from his Chhattisgarhi compositions. [27]

VII. COMPOSITIONS

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma has enriched Hindi literature by writing four plays, three biographies, one novel, one story, fourteen poems. Apart from this, he also composed three poetry books in Chhattisgarhi language. That is why Pt. Sundarlal Sharma is considered the originator of Chhattisgarhi poetry. He composed in Chhattisgarhi poetry and popularized it as a language of rural dialect. "The place of Pt. Sundarlal Sharma is unique among those who created poetry in Chhattisgarhi. [28]

His works include Chhattisgarhi Danlila, Rajim Prem Piyush, Karuna Pachisi, Edward Rajyabhishek, Victoria Viyog (all poems), Kansa Vadh (Khandakavya), Sita Parinay, Parvati Parinay, Prahlad Charitra, Dhruva Akhyan, Vikram Shashikala (all plays), Sri Krishna Janam Akhyan, Sacha Sardar (Novel), Shrirajimstrotram Mahatmya, Raghuraj Bhajan Sangrah, Brahmin Gitavali and Chhattisgarhi Ramayana (unpublished) etc. are prominent.

Madhav Rao Sapre praises him and writes: - "I believe that my Chhattisgarhi brothers will get some improvement from the Danlila written on Lord Krishna. My hope becomes even stronger when I see that this book of yours is widely spread and respected among Chhattisgarhi brothers. Mr. Bhuvanlal Mishra has called Pandit Sundarlal Sharma "Jaidev of Chhattisgarhi language".

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma published the newspaper 'Krishna Janmasthan - Jail Patrika' from Raipur Jail in the year 1922-23, as well as published the newspaper 'Dularwa' in Chhattisgarhi dialect after some time. People's life and culture of Chhattisgarh can be seen in these newspapers. [29]

VIII. DEATH

He died on 23 December 1940. Entire Chhattisgarh remembers him as Gandhi of Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh government has established state level Pt. Sundarlal Sharma Samman in his memory to encourage regional literary creation.

Dr. Khubchand Baghel has written in one of his articles - "The three Lal-Ghasi, Sundar and Pyarelal of Chhattisgarh" they considered all three to be the idols of Satyam, Shiva and Sundar. Due to the ascension of such a visionary, entire Chhattisgarh has suffered an irreparable loss, which is not possible to recover. We offer our humble tribute to him." [30]

IX. FINDINGS

Pt. Sundarlal Sharma was deeply concerned about the plight of the untouchables in his contemporary society and led a vigorous campaign for their emancipation. Pt. Sundarlal Sharma advocated the right of Satnam community in the society.

X. CONCLUSION

Mr. Bhuvanlal Mishra writes - "Who could have thought that the simple poet of Chhattisgarhi Danlila had the spark of revolution in his heart. Who could have thought that the poet of "Victoria Detachment" was sitting with a rebellion in his heart against the British authorities When the affluent class of Chhattisgarh and the princely states bowed down before the British rule, when the common man could not dare to speak against the British, then Pandit Sundarlal Sharma toured the whole of Chhattisgarh, awakened political consciousness in the public life and raised awareness about the British rule. Shouted freedom against." [31]

Pandit Sundarlal Sharma was indeed a multi-talented person. He was a true son of Chhattisgarh. Also worked for social reform, freedom struggle, farmer's movement, alcohol prohibition, tribal movement. His immense contribution in the field of literature also cannot be forgotten.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the social condition of Chhattisgarh was very pathetic. A large section of the society was facing the brunt of untouchability. They were not allowed to enter the temples, at that time Pandit Sundar Lal Sharma emerged as a true son of Chhattisgarh. He not only did important work for the establishment of social equality but also became a source of inspiration for the national movement. Made the people of Chhattisgarh aware with his literary talent. He first presented the idea of Chhattisgarh region. In fact, he deserves to be called Ram Mohan Roy and Mahatma Gandhi of Chhattisgarh.

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