



Biography of :

Ravbahaddur

Babasaheb Bole

(Sitaram Keshav Bole)

Foreword

Lokhitwadi Ravbahaddur Sitaram Keshav alias Babasaheb Bole was born on 29th June, 1968 and died on 14th January, 1961 in Mumbai. He established various organizations. *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali* was one of them. He took tremendous efforts to educate Bhandari community. Babasaheb's son Vishvanath and babasaheb's other colleagues like Yashvant Bole, Shantaram Bhikaji Golatkar, Vidyadhar Bapuji Bhatkar, Atmaram Bhikaji Parkar, Shivram Bhakaji Parkar helped him.

Babasaheb devoted his life not only for Bhandari community, but he brought reforms in backward, farmers and worker's communities too. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the first schedule caste student who passed SSC. Babasaheb felicitated him. Babasaheb presented bills regarding govt. schools, wells, hospitals, courts on behalf of schedule castes.

Pioneer of Konkan Railway was none other than Babasaheb Bole.

Mr. Anil K Joshi, Achal Publication, Ratnagiri, came into contact with *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali* recently. It seemed that he respects Babasaheb a lot. He proposed to publish a brief biography of Babasaheb. He wanted Babasaheb to be known by today's students.

We are very pleased to present brief biography of Babasaheb Bole, written by Mr. Joshi.

Copyrights - *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali*
Gokhale Road (North), Dadar, Mumbai - 400 028
Date : January 1, 2006

Brief Autobiography of *Lokhitwadi* Sitaram Keshav alias Babasaheb Bole

- 1869 Birth Year. Birth place : Palshet
- 1889 Passed SSC exam
- 1890 14 January (Makar Sankranti) Establishment of *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali*
- 1901 Foundation stone ceremony of the religious place of *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali*
- 1907 Initiated Bhandari Shikshan Parishad to promote education in Bhandari Community
- 1909 Rewarded Mr. Ramsey McDonald, father of India's first worker's organization, with a testimonial under the chairmanship of Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale
- 1910 Started Holy Festival Committee, which later on became popular as a Social Service League
- 1911 Babasaheb was felicitated for passing SSC. He was honored by attending Delhi Darbar. Initiated a movement regarding free primary education
- 1912 Rewarded with Honorary Presidency Magistrate by the Govt.
- 1913 Chaired first convention of *Bhandari Shikshan Parishad*
- 1914 Visited worker's locality with Mr. Ramsey McDonald and Mr. Pollack to make them realize about the problems faced by workers. Started a movement in order to open ration shops
- 1915 Celebrated Silver Jubilee of *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali* under the chairmanship of Sir Clawed Hill, IAS.
- 1916 Started Education-Growth Fund and started offering scholarships to needy and poor students

- 1917 Established Indian Education Society. Met Mr. Montague and Mr. Chelmsford. Became chief of Indian Education Society as well as Dadar Co-operative Institute
- 1919 Strove to organize Mill Worker's Convention. Became member of public organizations like Peoples Union and Saint George Ambulance
- 1921 Entered the Council
- 1922 Entered the Corporation
- 1923 Presented a bill in the Law Council regarding untouchables. Held vice-chairman position of Mumbai Trade Union Congress and Dadar South Indian Flood Relief Fund
- 1924 Chairman : Non-Brahmin Teachers Organization of Thane District. Succeed in getting passed a resolution granting maternity benefits to women mill workers. Felicitated with a gold medal in a function organized by Depressed Class under the chairmanship of J Addison, European Association's Officer
- 1925 Started a weekly, Navyug
- 1926 Got passed Joshi Wage bill, chairman : Co-operative Conference, Vasai
- 1927 Succeed in passing a bill restricting payment made to the members of the Municipal Standing Committee, irrespective of being a member of the same and saved Rs. 30,000 per year. Passed a bill about granting pension to the government servant. Chairman : Co-operative Conference, Kalyan
- 1928 Resolution to unite mill worker's team and established an organizations of them. Got felicitated with a testimonial by Vardha Municipal Corporation. Chairman : Non-Brahmin Conference, Vardha; Mahadev Koli Samaj Parishad and Bhandari Education Society, Malvan
- 1929 Celebrated Diamond Jubilee in Pune in the function organized by All India Depressed Classes under the chairmanship of Sir Rahiuddin Ahmad. He was rewarded with a Ravbahaddyur title. Held positions as a Vice-Position of Ambarnath Match Factory Worker's Union. Chairman of : Non-Brahmin Convention, Solapur; Bank's Peon's Union and Non-Brahmin Convention, Pune District.
- 1930 Residents of Palshet, Babasaheb's birth place, facilitated him by offering a testimonial.

- 1932 Facilitated by friends and fans all over Maharashtra
- 1934 Presented anti-*Devdasi* custom bill
- 1935 Put forward family planning bill. Govt. rewarded him with a medal
- 1936 Presented library-related bill to popularize libraries in rural area
- 1937 Inaugurated *Kitte Bhandari's* auditorium at the hands of Sir Rodger Lamely, Governor of Mumbai
- 1938 Held chairmanship of *Prantik Hindu Mahasabha* till 1945
- 1939 Joined *Hindusthan Balveer Pathak*
- 1940 Facilitated with a testimonial in a public meeting of citizens of Mumbai under the chairmanship of Narsimha Chintaman Kelkar
- 1941 Celebrated Golden Jubilee of *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali*
- 1961 Died on January 14

1. Early life & Education

Mr. Keshavrao, the father of Mr. Sitaram alias Babasaheb Bole, was born in 1828 in Aare, Guhagar District. Gopalrao, father of Keshavrao, died when Keshavrao was just two years old. Keshavrao came to Mumbai with his mother when he was 5 years old. He took tremendous efforts to obtain education and learnt up to 7th std. He used to work in a shop owned by a Parsi. After leaving this job he joined a printing press as an ordinary worker and he became the owner of a printing press in 1893.

Keshavrao used to stay in his own two-storied building in cosmopolitan Kavathipada area of Old Nagpada. A religious minded Keshavrao got married to the elder daughter of Mr. Ambaji Narvankar of Palshet.

Visionary Sitaram Keshavrao Bole was born on June 29, 1869 at Palshet. He had elder sister Deu and a younger brother, Vinayak. Sitaram spent only six months of his childhood in Palshet. He was brought up in Mumbai, where his father had settled down.

Sitaram obtained his Primary education in Nagpada and Dongari. He was a student of Baji Shetye and Shridharpant respectively. He was very fond of education. He learnt up to 4th std. in Nagpada and then joined Govt. Anglo Vernacular School, Amarchandwadi. He joined Prabhu Seminary School in 1882 after learning three years in Amarchandwadi. During his school life, he was influenced by his teachers, Krishnashastry Godbole and Krishnarao Arjun Keluskar.

14 years old Sitaram got married to Laxmi Pandurang Mayekar, who was around 9 years old. After their marriage Laxmi used to stay at her parents place and often came to meet her husband. After passing 4th std. exam he took admission in Portuguese School, Cavel Street. Then he joined Elphinstan School, where he was influenced by his teacher, Mr. Ramchandra Bhikaji Gunjkar. He was also influenced by a speech of Justice Telang, delivered in Gigaum.

He started an organization, *Dnaynvardhak Mandali*, in his school life itself. He invited well-known personalities to address his community. It was the platform where Mr. Bole begun his career as a social reformer.

He ran night school for poor students while completing SSC from the Wilson College. He also taught there. He used to spend holidays in Palshet. He used to observe malpractices

of untouchability, castism, injustice, etc. He was keen to find out the reasons behind such social discrimination.

He failed SSC exam in 1888 and reappeared next year. He spent a whole year sitting at home and utilized it for reading. He had a habit of reading newspapers like *Kesari*, *Dinbandhu*, *Sudhakar*. It gave right direction to his thinking process. It was his vast reading and observation which made him usher in social reforms in the society. He started his way towards social reforms with the establishment of Bhandari community.

2. Beginning of the Career

Babasaheb along with his few friends established a pro-Hindu organization named as *Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandal*. He prepared organization's manifesto and distributed it among the Bhandari community. Various community-oriented organizations were in full swing at that time and being associated with such organizations was considered most prestigious. Though manifesto was distributed among Bhandari community only, it was about masses. Babasaheb was of the opinion that nothing else but only education to the lower class would lead the society to the reforms.

Babasaheb started a night-school in Umarkhed. This school was later converted into a regular school. 25 students were learning in the night-school. He implemented Scholarship Fund Scheme in order to help needy students. At the same time, he was conscious about his own learning too. He read a lot. Took tremendous efforts to hold a command over English language. He learnt short hand and passed Book-keeping exam also.

Babasaheb got a job of a Secondary Inspector in Central Excise Dept. But he resigned soon as his job was creating problems between him and the Bhandari community and there were some other genuine reasons too. His son, Vishwanath, was born on 20th May, 1891. Unfortunately, he lost his father during 1893 riots. Soon in 1894 his wife died at her mother's place. He brought up Vishwanath solely.

Babasaheb helped the Govt. officials in the epidemic of Plague. He opposed certain things which he didn't like. He was putting his best to make people aware about hygiene and medical help, at the same time he was struggling against the suppression of the British Police Force and doctors.

Mr. Sitaram got injected himself first in the Plague Prevention Campaign. He acted as a volunteer in this campaign and served hundreds of people. After this epidemic got over, he got married to his second wife Laxmibai, a daughter of Mr. Raghunath Tatya Pavaskar, in December 1897. Laxmibai had learnt up to third std. He brought up Vishwanath very well.

Babasaheb's brother Vinayakrao got a job in the Bombay Port Trust. Vinayakrao took the responsibility of the daily bread and butter of the Bole family and encouraged Babasaheb

to throw himself into social work. He had to face the unfortunate death of his one year old son Pandharinath. But it did not disturb the tempo of his social work.

Babasaheb was thirsty for social reforms. But he was not ready to pay the cost of his self esteem to the Govt. He never did show off before the British Govt. He was a real reformer and an activist. He was very much clear about his thoughts. He was strong and determinant enough to oppose even Lomanya Tilak. In fact, Tilak had to take one step back while they both interacted. Mahatma Phule, Samajsudharak Agarakar, Gopalkrishna Gokhale were the idols of Babasaheb.

The issue of primary education of children was first raised by Mahatama Phule in 1880 and Golakrishna Gokhale in 1912. Babasaheb also struggled a lot to give Primary education to all children.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar passed SSC exam in 1907. He was felicitated in a special programme, which was chaired by no one else but Babasaheb Bole. Dr. Ambedkar used to come to Babasaheb very often for guidance.

Mumbai was badly affected by frequent plague epidemics. Common people, especially women, were harassed under the name of health checking. Korgaonkar, Bole, Pawar raised voice against it and approached the Governor to ban this health checking. The Governor sanctioned an order in favor of Mr. Bole and his other associates.

Mr. Morden, the owner of the English paper 'Advocate of India', started a Marathi weekly 'Jadvritta' with the help of the British Govt. in 1908. Krishnarao Keluskar was offered a job in this publication on the payment of Rs. 100 per month, but he refused it reasoning that there was no freedom.

Babasaheb appointed as an executive of Marathi Aikyechhu Sabha in 1908. He always strived to collect funds for education. He played a lead role in the funds collection drives for Mahatma Gandhi.

3. Defender of the Labors

Marathi Aikyechhu Sabha put forward the demands of the labors after the death of well-known leader Narayan Lokhande in 1897. A number of bankrupt mills were closed down in 1909 and countless workers became unemployed. Sitaram Bole along with Bhivaji Nare and Harishchandra Talcharekar established Worker Welfare Association. This Association played a vital role in withdrawing strike and getting the workers paid their due salaries. Lectures, Kirtans used to be arranged for the purpose of keeping workers away from addiction. Free schools were opened for them. Workers were given legal advice. On the occasion of the facilitation of Ramse Mcdonald Mr. Bole informed him about the demands of workers.

In 1910 Mr. Bole became the chairman of Dyanvardhak Mandal of Old Nagpada. He organized get-together of workers in Holi celebration. He had arranged speeches about

alcoholic drinks and workers were appealed to give it up. Credit of banning vulgar activities during this festival goes to Babasaheb as he made workers aware about it through lectures.

Social Service League was established on 11 March, 1811. Conference organized by Aryan Brotherhood Organization was also memorable one. According to historians it would be the first grand lunch programs as representatives of all castes had lunch together. But on the next day itself all of them expiated due to social pressure except Babasaheb Bole. Bhandari Community tried to boycott him from the community, but it could not succeed.

Few days later he put forward the Primary Educations Bill in a meeting. He supported the Compulsory Primary Education bill put by Namdar Gokhale.

Education to all was the base of the social revolution. Thus, Babasaheb presented some demands to the Govt. including scholarship for poor students, etc. He also approached Samrat Pantham George, who announced amount of Rs. 50 lakh for the education.

Babasaheb was honored with Justice of Peace reward. He was felicitated for this achievement in various programmes. But he donated money during the functions to the fund of the learning children. Police Commissioner S M Edward appreciated the activities of Babasaheb. In case of conflicts in labor movements Edward always intervened for Babasaheb. He used to visit Babasaheb's home during Ganapati festival.

Mahatma Gandhi's colleague Mr. Henri Pollack had come to Mumbai from South Africa. He met Mr. Bole and visited worker's chawls. He observed worker's working conditions, their shelters.

During the same period, Maratha Aiykechhyu Sabha had pressurized the Govt. to amend the restriction about the debt taken by farmers. The entry in the temple was restricted to untouchables. Babasaheb fought against this injustice.

4. Plight of strike-affected workers

India was also affected by the First World War. A number of mills were either being closed down or facing worker's strikes. Workers became directionless after the death of their leader Mr. Bhivaji Ramji Nare. Babasaheb Bole supported these workers.

He never ignored his great contribution in the field of education. He played a key role in resolving crises between Topiwala High school and Bhandari High school in Malvan. Women workers of the Cassue factory contributed one paisa each for the Bhandari High school which was on its last legs. High school was permitted to have a Matric class by the Mumbai University only because of countless efforts of Babasaheb.

Backward classes, untouchables and workers presented statements before Lord Montague in the 1917. Lord Montague and Maharajyapal Chelmsford invited Babasaheb for the

discussion.

During 1918 Mumbai came under effect of the epidemic of Enfluenza. Bole's Kamgar Hitvardhak Sabha distributed medicines free of cost and helped people a lot. Mumbai suffered due to riots soon. Bole visited various parts of riot-affected areas with Vincent, Police Commissioner to establish peace.

Prof. Bundhust of Sydnahm College sought help of Babasaheb Bole in the survey conducted about workers residing in Parel area. Annasaheb Laththe and Babasaheb Bole, who were social reformers, had correspondence since 1918.

It was extremely difficult for Vinayakrao to run Bole family solely. Thus he made Vishvanath alias Anna, an elder son of Babasaheb to look for a job. Anna got some job offers from other cities, but he rejected them as Babasaheb wanted him to stay in Mumbai only. In 1918 Anna started earning as he got employed in the Port Trust.

Bole offer his services to backward classes workers and a society as a whole in the fields of culture as well as educatin. He established a political organization, Loksangh, in order to get his political rights and to represent in Assembly, Council and District Boards.

In the beginning of 1919 one and half workers of the Centaury and other mills went on strike for the demand of 25% salary hike. Workers attacked workers of other mills. Babasaheb acted as mediator between the owner of the mill and workers. He went up to the Governor and gave justice to the workers. Wealthy and most influential people of the society used to mediate in such problems. It was a bias process as these mediators were in favor of mill owners and least bothered about workers. But there was contrast situation when Babasaheb took the responsibility of mediation. He resolved so many strikes.

There was a controversy in August 1919 about the name of apt candidate supposed to attend International Workers Conference, Washington. Names of Lokmanya Tilak, N. M. Joshi and B. P. Wadia were rejected.

5. Solidarity of Workers

The graph of the activities of Kamgar Hitvardhak Sabha was constantly upward in 10 years period. Workers of the organization were extremely enthusiastic and decided to organize worker's conference. First conference had been held on 14th December, 1919 in Kamgar Theatre at Delite Road. It was attended by around 175 representatives of mills situated between Kurla to Colaba. How Reduction in working hours from 14 to 12 hours faced a lot of problems was discussed in the conference. Various resolutions were passed including to help almost 2 lakh workers who were treated badly by their employee and some of them as follows -

Working hours of the mill should be reduced to 8 from present 12 hours and workers should be given one hour lunch break in stead of a half an hour.

Unjust rules and regulations should be replaced with just rules.

Workers should declare the confiscated and due amount and it should be utilized for worker's welfare. Salary should be given 15th of every month.

Employment of the children below 12 years should be banned by the law.

Detailed information about an accident should be disseminated. A full time doctor should be appointed in the mill. He should also treat children and wives of the workers.

Childcare Centre should be formed in each mill for the women worker's children.

Workers in the age-group of 12 to 16 work part time. There should be municipality schools for them and education should be made mandatory for them.

All mill owners should build cheap and proper ventilated chawls for their workers. Total number of liquor shop should be reduced in the mill area. Tavern should be closed during festivals. Tavern should be closed down after 8 o'clock everyday.

International Peace Conference condemned the govt. if representative of the workers belongs to some other community. Thus due care should be taken the govt's account. Along with holyday on festivals and other leaves, workers should get off on every Sunday. Literate women should be appointed for the supervisions and clerical work in the departments of reeling and winding. Men workers should not be there in the women's department. At least some workers should be trained about ambulance and use of first aid kit. Contribution towards the doctor should not be cut.

There should be facilities like library, toilets, entertainment centre, swimming pool, etc. Workers also demanded that all of them should get bonus. Govt. should appoint a commission to review the condition of workers and determine their minimum wages. Some workers should be members of the commission.

In 1919, Mumbai witnessed so many strikes. Worker's movement had begun to get the justice. So many leaders were not aware of the demands of workers until the movement as started.

Governer had appointed a private committee to resolve industrial disputes. Babasaheb was one of its members.

6. Safeguarding the interests of the labors

Although Babasaheb's younger brother was capable of earning bread and butter for his family, he had to take other responsibilities. He had six children from his second wife- Moreshwar, Devdatta, Surendra, Padmaka, Vatsala and Malati. Vatasla got married to Dr. Vasantrao Kir, a son of a social worker Makharam Kir.

Babasaheb was much closed to his mother. His mother died at the age of 88. It was a shock for him. He was doing his social work while facing ups and downs in the life. So many deserving candidates of backward classes got jobs because of Babasaheb. He spent his life in fighting against unjust treatment given to backward classes.

At that time, there was a monopoly of rich, influential people. Babasaheb tried hard to break this monopoly. A bill regarding voting power was about to be introduced. Parse lobby demanded that those who were paying Rs. 10 as a house rent should be given right to vote. Babasaheb was against this demand. Finally, a bill was passed on July 31, 1922 giving right to vote to the tenants who were paying Rs. 5 as a rent. But, on August 17, 1922 H. P. Modi introduced a bill condemning the Govt. for passing a bill regarding right to vote and his bill was passed.

Workers were being used as a political tool. Illiterate and ignorant workers fall a prey to political propaganda. But the literate people are clever enough to protect their own interests.

Various resolutions including BMC should keep the roads and surrounding area of the residency of workers clean, police should raid the gambling places and people paying Rs. 5 rent should get voting right by amending BMC Act should, were passed in the meeting organized by Kamgar Hitvardhak Sabha on July 14, 1922 in Lower Parel. It was demanded that the Govt. should elect two worker's representatives in BMC. Workers demanded that rooms of the chawl, which were specially built for them, should be rented to workers only.

Babasaheb Bole's son Annasaheb used to look after correspondence, drafts of resolutions as well as questions on behalf of his father. Babasaheb's brother used to take care of Babasaheb's appointments. *Pagari* and *Uparane* was Babasaheb's favorite dress. But colleagues of Shahu Maharaj used to flinch from it. Thus *pagari* was replaced with a turban.

Babasaheb was very honest, lovable and modest, but determined and an outspoken person. He was very caring with his workers. He was far away from hypocrisy, selfishness, groupism, deception and ego problem. He hardly got mixed with the workers of the Bhandari Shikshan Parishad. He attended only two to three sessions of the Parishad even though he was the Chairman and one of the founders of the same.

Babasaheb admired the Govt. for the construction of 50,000 rooms in Mumbai under the development scheme. Factory owners and industrialists were supposed to build houses for their workers, but they didn't. These rooms were lacking some facilities, but the workers got the shelter at least. Workers demanded that they should be charged nominal rent and these rooms should not be rented to the factory owner because there was a threat that workers might be asked to leave the rooms during the strike.

7. Twist in the fortune of mills

Govt. introduced a bill in the Assembly in order to get the statistics collected by the Industrial Disputes Committee, set up by the Govt. The bill was opposed by the majority of the members except Babasaheb Bole. According to him this bill was essential for the workers because Mill owners often hide the important information. They were never in favor of worker's increments. Workers didn't have proper facilities like houses, medicines, etc.

While supporting a bill regarding amendment in Mumbai Cooperative Act on 25th July, 1924, he said that cooperative movement was in the interest of the workers and farmers. But the Govt. was reluctant to empower the movement.

Nowadays Universities and educational institutes are becoming self-sufficient. This thought was put forward by Babasaheb Bole long back in 1924. He had suggested that the Govt. should provide funds for the Primary Education, but it should draw a line up to which it would support higher education financially.

Worker community played a key role in building the image of Mumbai city as a rich and industrial destination. Thus he always stood by the workers to get them maximum facilities. Urging to keep all liquor shops closed when the workers get their salary, demand for maternity benefits for female mill workers were few of his efforts.

He insisted that workers should be united department wise and there should also be a central organization of all workers, which would run night schools, provident fund, etc. He was also of the opinion that free and compulsory education is necessary, small houses should be built instead of chawls. Babasaheb Bole delivered a speech in the 5th convention of the All India Workers Conference. Various resolutions were introduced in the session including technical education, pension, hygienic houses, etc.

On February 15, 1925, Babasaheb started a weekly, Navyug. He wrote in the edit of the Navyug published on the 7th April, 1929, that the purpose of the Navyug was to raise voice against the problems of Bahujan Samaj community and to fight for the justice.

He was concerned even about the smallest social problems. His minute observation could realize the problems. He requested the Govt. that passengers should get tickets at least half an hour prior to their journey.

Mumbai is facing the severe problem of influx of outsiders. He had a nose for it in 1920s itself. A number of Clarks in Mumbai became unemployed. A lot of people migrated to Mumbai from South India, which caused a huge unemployment in Mumbai, he was told by the Govt.

Babasaheb raised his voice in the Assembly against the *Khot* system. He also started a movement to abolish this system. *Tillori Kunbi Samajonnati* community had organized a public meeting, which was chaired by Babasaheb Bole, during 27th to 29th March, 1925 in Valamb village of Guhagar Tehsil. He used this platform to enlighten and encourage farmers through his one and half hour speech.

Sir P. Tyagraj Chetti, a senior leader of All India Non-Brahmin party, died on April 29, 1925. Navyug commented in its obit that it was a second tragedy faced by Non-Brahmin Movement. First was the death of Dr. Nair. Mr. Chetti was truly the captain of the movement. He got its party elected, but never held any prominent position. He was the one who took the Non-Brahmin party on the national level. Babasaheb further advised that non-Brahmin leaders should follow the example laid by Mr. Chetti. Non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra state was lacking behind only because of the absence of the visionary, talented and capable leader like Mr. Chetti.

He had a great respect not only for South Indian Non-Brahmin leaders but for Lajpatrai as well as Deshbandhu Das, who died on 16th June, 1925. Mr. L B Bhopatkar put forward a resolution to organize a meeting to express condolences. Mr. Bole supported this resolution by saying that worker's defender Das was a chairman of a Trade Union Congress once. He wanted to trigger inter-cast marriages to reduce the social discrimination between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. He had a scheme for the improvement of *Gram Panchayats* in rural area. He gave up his practice as a lawyer forever, which was going well and donated all his estate.

Mill workers of Mumbai were going through a tough period during 7 weeks strike. They were worried about their salary. Babasaheb Bole introduced a resolution, in order to call off strike, in the Assembly on November 4, 1925 asking to set up a committee to check the accounts of mills.

Majority of mills were in the worst condition and bearing losses. He underlined the brokerage which had been being taken for the years. Some directors, who were holding the post in many mills, were responsible for the deterioration of the business. Executive officers invested money in the stock market. Whenever the market went up, they enjoyed profit and when they lose the money, it was included in the accounts of the mill. By many ways these people extracted their commission.

Governor of Mumbai had sympathy about the workers, but in reality he never helped workers. His intervention was required to control the situation. Workers would become notorious if they could neither get the salary nor loans, Babasaheb expressed his opinion. He criticized that the Govt. didn't cooperate workers, but it always stood by mill owners and provided them police protection. He expected the government to be unbiased and demanded that if mills were to survive, there should be nationalization of all mills and the profit should be equally distributed among shareholders as well as workers. This resolution was turned down.

8. Towards Socialism

In April 1928, around 1, 50,000 mill workers went on indefinite strike. Mill owners had installed new looms which had a capacity to work as much as three workers could. Workers opposed it strongly as it could have resulted in the reduction of the workers. Mill Workers Corporation, a prominent worker's organization of that time blowd a fire. Poor untouchable workers suffered a lot during the strike. The entry to the weaving

department was restricted for the untouchables. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Babasaheb Bole visited workers communities and asked them to resume at the work. According to Mr. Bole the strike was going to harm both, workers as well as owners. Govt. was not willing to appoint an arbitrator and leaders were fighting with each other. Govt. appointed Conciliation Board. Mill owners wanted the workers to resume immediately, but worker's leaders didn't. Finally, the strike was called off in October, after almost six months.

During this time in Ambarnath workers of the Swedish matchbox-making company called a strike. Babasaheb interacted with workers. Worker's organization was established under his the chairmanship followed by a public meeting. Babasaheb Bole and N M Joshi succeed in making settlements after talking to the owners of the company.

Women and untouchables were in the worst social condition at that time. Society had got divided on the basis of class and caste and was reluctant to change. Mr. Bole tried to bring changes in such a conservative society.

Simon Commission arrived in India in the month of February, 1928. Congress declared non-cooperation as the Commission had not a single Indian representative and later boycotted the Commission. But, Mr. Bole, V P Chavan welcomed the Simon Commission. Both of them were criticized badly by almost all newspapers.

Those, who have boycotted the Commission and not cooperating it, were truly patriot, but they tried to communicate with the members of the Commission. So why did they pretend something else, Babasaheb raised the question. Dr. Ambedkar agreed with him. Later on Non-Brahmin party also cooperated the Commission.

Khoti sabha organized a public meeting in Chiplun. It was reported in Navyug on 10th May. According to an Advocate P M Sathe the report contained some mistakes. He also pointed out that *Khot* were not farmers, though Bole had mentioned it. Mr. Bole replied that he is the farmer who tills. The one who thrives on the labor of the farmers can become a landlord, but he can not be called a farmer. We had allegedly called as a socialist, but it doesn't matter. Because even though we are socialist, we are not anti-social and we firmly believe that India will not get independence easily unless and until the entire country becomes socialist. Agriculture and farmers will not prosper until they are given lands.

Third Mumbai Regional Non-Brahmin Conference had been organized in Kalyan on July 15, 1928 under the chairmanship of K S Naidu. It was decided in the conference that the Simon Commission should be cooperated.

9. Social Reforms

Babasaheb Bole had a compassion for the poor, farmers, workers and scheduled castes. He was well-known for his great social work, which fetched chairmanship of Non-Brahmin Conference. Non-Brahmin's convention was to be held on 13 February, 1927 in

Vardha Borgion. Devrao Balbantrao Deshmukh was swagatadhyaksha. Kashinath Dhanuskar and Krishnarao Deshmukh were secretaries of the convention. Babasaheb Bole was welcomed by Devrao Deshmukh, Dadasaheb Meghe, R V Naidu, Kedar, Anandswami, Pandharinath Patil, Mane, Gole, Dhanuskar, etc on Vardha station.

Mr. Bole in his speech praised the great social work done by B R Naidu. We could fill the belly only because farmers sweat blood in farms. Still if they are treated as untouchables, it would be unjust to them.

Everyone has to give up selfishness if he wants to be a part of Non-Brahmin movement. One has to be ready bare financial crisis for the sake of the party. A fund has to be established for the party, he stressed this in his address.

On the same day, Vardha Municipality thanked MLA Sitaram Keshav Bole for his countless efforts for the resurrection of poor. Mr. Bole united workers. He encouraged workers to give up drinking habit. He inspired them to pursue education. Mr. Bole was felicitated by the municipality for the great work he did in Mumbai Corporation and Law Council; for the introduction of Joshi Bill, which brought social reforms and for the resolution, which open the doors of pubic organization for untouchables.

In 1927, around 400 people had applied to be elected in the Assembly as the Govt.-appointed representative. Mr. Bole was selected as a secretary of Worker's Welfare Association and worker's representative.

Shapurji Sakalatwalla, a Communist member of the British Parliament, was in Mumbai during January 1927. Mr. Bole met him. Mr. Sakalatwalla criticized the principals and the leadership of Gandhiji, which was not liked by people at all.

In the March of 1927 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started freedom movement of untouchables at Chavdar Lake in Mahad. ON 4th August, 1923 a resolution was passed in the Assembly but, yet to be implemented. Dr. Ambedkar demanded proper implementation of this resolution several agitators gathered on this occasion drank the lake water and performed their rights. It was resulted in the attacks on agitators, their wives and children. Untouchables also gave the tough fight. It was a tit for tat.

Though untouchables and backward classes are intelligent enough, they are not given opportunities. It has led to the illiteracy. There are few teachers from untouchable community. They are purposely transferred in remote areas and not even given postage allowance. They are not allowed to enter into Primary Training College. Ministers should think about these problems and usher in changes in the education system, Mr. Bole demanded in his address delivered on 14th of March.

Tukojirao Holkar, a King from Indore, was about to get married to an American girl, Ms. Miller. This marriage was opposed by all political parties. A public meeting of Shepherd community, to which Holkar belonged, was organized in Baramati in order to take the decision about the marriage. Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Bole and Keshavrao Bagde also attended the meeting and asked Ms. Miller to get converted into Hindu religion. She accepted the

condition and got renamed as Sharmishthadevi. Sharmishthadevi and Tukoji Rao Holkar got married with the consent of the Shepherd community.

11. Pioneer of Konkan Railway

You will be surprised to know that the idea of Konkan Railway, which is the milestone in the transport system, was came out first from Mr. Babasaheb Bole's mind. Great engineers, experts bowed their knee as it seemed impossible to develop rail-route through the narrow hills. Finally, 760 kms route came into reality after spending crores of rupees. Babasaheb had demanded Konkan Railway three quarters ago.

On 17th January, 1926 Babasaheb had written a feature in Navyug about the necessity of Konkan Railway. In fact, Konkan Railway had been being demanded since 1890. Buckley, a British engineer had planned out the route of the Konkan Railway. He had drawn route from Apta to Goa including stations like Apta, Pen, Nagothana, Mangion, Dasaion, Mahad, Poladpur, Khed, Chiplun, Ratnagiri, Rajapur, Malvan, Vengurle, Sawantwadi and Goa.

The entire plan was ready, but it was not being taken seriously. Mr. Bole triggered the discussion about it in the Assembly on 13th March, 1926 by saying that the Konkan region has no contact during rainy season with the rest of the world. Such transport provision is badly required and it could not be completed without the support of the Govt.

Konkan region is very beautiful and the Konkan Railway is considered as its one of the prominent attractions. Highly attractive bridges and tunnels attract not only Indian tourists but foreigners too. Railway, which is considered as faster and comparatively cheap means of transport, has connected different poles like Ernakulam of Kerala and Delhi, Rajasthan. The plan of the Konkan Railway had been being prepared from the year 1890. Few engineers and technicians were working on it. It got due Govt. support only because of the efforts made by Babasaheb. He included it in the Budget Session of the Assembly too. Gangadhar Anantrao Mirkar had another plan, which was also supported by Babasaheb.

Mirkar's plan, which was known as South-West Railway Co., included rail route of 750 kms. Babasaheb had mentioned this plan in the letter he drafted for the Times of India in June 1942. Mirkar's plan had been approved by the Railway Board. Ravbahadur N T Vaidya also had another plan, but both of them were not supported.

Resolutions introduced and supported by Babasaheb, and off course Konkan Railway, underline that he was a great visionary. Konkan Railway Corporation has forgotten the contribution of Babasaheb. Historians proud of Babasaheb.

12. Appreciation of Babasaheb's work by the stalwarts in the society

Babasaheb devoted his life for the upliftment of dalits & poor. A selfless person was rare

to be found in his times. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sought cooperation from Raobahadur Bole in all his activities. If a person was respected by Dr. Ambedkar to such an extent, what can we say about him? - well-known writer & editor Achary P.K.Atre.

Raobahadur Bole was a very committed social worker. His contribution to the labour movement & social reforms in Maharashtra is noteworthy. I am proud to say that initially both of us worked together. – Then President of India, V.V.Giri.

From among the social reformers of the 20th century, C.K.Bole has to be placed at a very high level. He was the first one to say in public that untouchability is a blot on the Indian culture in the year 1923 to fight against the injustice caused by untouchability, he moved a bill in the assembly of Mumbai which speaks volumes about this visionary. He always tried to contribute to the overall development of the socially downtrodden people of Mumbai – Ex Chief Minister & Central Home Minister Y.B.Chavan.

Raobahadur whole heartedly devoted his life for the social cause right from his young age. He never discriminated against caste or religion. He always made himself available to solve any problem faced by the poor at any place. He was the only one to lead the labour movement during the first two decades of the 20th century. He got many legislations passed in the Assembly as well as in the Corporation for the upliftment of the society – Prabodhankar Keshav Sitaram Thackeray.

Bole was a very simple, gentle & innocent social worker. He was not a Raobahadur for the sake of the name or title but always helped needy people & also guided them. - Balarao Savarkar.

Baba had sympathy for backward classes in general. He helped economically, educationally, socially or politically backward classes, which were hard workers & adventurous. They were also poor, ignorant & addicted to some extent. It is not easy to classify these classes according to castes & organize them, make provisions for their education, employment as well as bring about awareness among them. It is possible to achieve only for a person having the virtues of consistency in efforts, positive attitude & total dedication.- Journalist Appa Pendase.

Bole worked so hard to abolish untouchability that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar thanked him & remained his friend throughout. Bole propagated the bill on primary education drafted by Namdar Gokhale. Bole believed in the theory that backwardness of the society was directly related to that of education. He therefore tried to make education available to the backward classes in the society.- Journalist P.V.Gadgil.

Raobahadur Bole was associated with a number of social institutes, not for the sake of it. He was really interested in doing good work for the society. He was seen working very hard in spite of suffering from typhoid.- Playwright S.N.Navare.

Babasaheb did not limit his focus of work for any particular caste or social problem. His area of work included social, economic, educational & political enhancement of the entire

society. He never discriminated between rich & poor, higher & lower caste, touchable & untouchable or between men & women. Therefore he had an easy access in the slums of the poor, palaces of the rich as well as in all government offices, which he utilized for the benefits of all. – Principal A.N. Chikhalikar.

Bole tried his very best for getting the backward classes educated. He also organized a movement to fight against the religious, social & educational injustice emerging out of inequality in the Hindu religion, throughout his life. – B.R.Kadrekar, Editor, Prabuddha Bharat.

Babasaheb's contribution in the social field is extremely valuable. The prominent movements he was associated with could be cited as literacy campaign, educational facilities, abolishing untouchability, regularizing working hours of the labour & scout movement. The government had appointed him as a representative of labours in the Mumbai Assembly from 1921 to 1937. He took major initiative in getting various socially significant resolutions passed. – Vaman Bapat.

R.B.Bole initiated the movement against untouchability for the benefit of the labour class, when nobody had thought of the massive movement of the present times. He tried his best from the government level. He also put in a lot of efforts for educational development of the poor classes. Raobahadur Bole created a pathway through his efforts for the backward classes. – V.B.Waraliker, Ex Mayor, Mumbai.

If one has to compare the efforts put in by Raobahadur Bole in various social fields, one remembers the great Mahatma Jotiba Phule. Bole tried throughout his life to bring about awareness in educationally, socially & economically backward communities. – Dr.T.R.Naravane.

Late Mr. Bole had tremendous energy & enthusiasm on the basis of which he could concur multiple social fields. It would not be wrong to say that he started his social work with the first epidemic of plague in Mumbai. Later on he was associated with the labour movement, cultural & educational reforms up to 50 years continuously. He was the one to raise his voice 60 years ago to regulate working hours of the labours, when most of the labour unions of the present era were not even born. He also took initiative in organizing special programmes during the Holi festival. – Dr.Vasant Randive.

His performance in the Legislative Council of Mumbai is exceptional in the context of social benefits for the poor communities. Untouchability has been abolished by Law today. But very few today may be knowing about the efforts put in by Babasaheb for abolishing untouchability. There were not only separate hotels for caste Hindus, but it was also difficult for the untouchables to fetch water from wells. Against this

background, Babasaheb showed the courage to felicitate Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar when he passed the Matric examination. Government took cognizance of his services & honored him by the titles of Raobahadur & Justice of Peace. But he accepted the honor as an opportunity to work more for the society till the last moment of his life. – Manohar Bandiwdekar.

Babasaheb Bole was a born social worker & acted for national integrity, rather than fully talking about it. He brought about considerable awareness through reforms in the labour field, social unity, improvement of libraries & also control on the growth of population. The visionary in him could be seen through all these efforts. – Ex Central Finance Minister, C.D.Deshmukh.

Babasaheb was an exceptional visionary. He had anticipated that the problems of unemployment & family planning are going to become very serious in future. He therefore tried to bring about awareness towards these problems. He took help from some international organizations in his mission. The importance of his efforts will certainly be realized by the next generation. – Kakasaheb Limaye.

13. Sunset

Babasaheb Bole had entered 92nd year. Still he had total control over his body & mind. He was very quiet & tolerant in public life. But his family members used to live under his pressure. He did not hesitate to beat children by hands or a stick when angry. He usually did not blame anybody, but remembered insult from anybody for a very long time. He believed in staying away from the person with whom he had strong disagreement, but did not carry the feeling of animosity. His daily favorite food was fish curry & fried fish. His wife, Lakshmbai, maintained his diet in spite of her religious practices.

Bole was becoming very old. His eyes & ears were not working well. He also could not walk properly. His frail frame a five feet five inches walked with the help of a stick, crossed the roads & would visit somebody to felicitate him or enquire about somebody's health or to offer condolences. He used to attend a meeting in the morning in one corner of the city & the other one at some distance. He also used to attend meetings in the evenings in spite of somebody's sickness at home. He always followed the principle of accepting the responsibility that came with the membership of any social organization. He always paid his membership fee in the very first meeting of the financial year. He always made it a point to inform the organization about his absence in advance & used to get information from the Secretary 5 minutes prior to the meeting. This helped him in expressing his opinion during the meeting.

Babasaheb Bole had made minor change in his dress. He used to wear a long coat, dhoti, black cap, golden spectacles & chappals. He used to visit ancient Hanuman temple & also Kittebhandari hall. Famous Dr. V.S.Salaskar from Mumbai treated needy patients free of

costs from June 1955 onwards with the help of his colleagues Dr. Srirang Patkar & Dr. Vasant Varadkar during all Sundays. Patients of all religions used to benefit from it. Bole felt very happy about it. He started extending some financial support to Dr. Salskar's noble cause through Kittebhandari Aikyawardhak Mandali.

Babasaheb never celebrated his birthday. But some organizations used to celebrate it. His 90th birthday was celebrated by *Kitte Bhandari Aikyawardhak Mandali* in Kitte Bhandari Hall on 29th June, 1958, under the chairmanship of Bhai Shantaram Mirajkar, Mayor of Mumbai. Veer Savarkar wished Mr. Bole through a letter. Anantrao Gadre, D. Matkar, N V Khandke, R T Masurkar, Corporator S M Thackeray, V R Bhide were present on the occasion and delivered a speech.

Though I was born in Bhandari community, I fought against untouchability on behalf of Marathi community, said Babasaheb while accepting the honor. Further he said, I initiated worker's movement, bonded labor's movement. I have actively participated in the *Sanyukta Maharashtra Movement* also. I wish that I would celebrate 100th birthday in a *Sanyukta Maharashtra*.

He turned 92 on 29th June, 1960. He was told to not to move anywhere alone by the family. But after spending entire life in social work, it was extremely difficult for him to seat quietly at home.

It was the morning of December 31, 1960. Without letting know any family member Babasaheb managed to come out by 9 o'clock. Truck dashed him on the Portuguese road while Babasaheb was crossing the road to go to the saloon. Joints of his lap got cracked. He underwent a successful surgery in the clinic of Dr. Talwalkar, orthopedist and a surgeon, Girgaum. He was improving gradually but suddenly he died at the hospital on Saturday, 14th January, 1961, exactly on the same day on which he started *Kitte Bhandari Aikyawardhak Mandali* 70 years ago. He is survived by five sons, two daughters, 16 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. The body of Babasaheb Bole was kept at his residence, Keshavalaya, near the Portuguese Church, on that day itself.

The funeral procession started from 10.30 on the next day from his residence. Leaders of all political parties, social workers, literary persons, workers of Bhandari community joined the funeral procession. Almost 200 organizations, various organizations located in Dadar, newspapers like Bharari, Mammik, Navuyg, Maratha and Saanj Maratha and prominent personalities like Prabodhankar Thackeray, Acharya Atre, Prof. V G Rao, S N Navare, Dr. Vasant Randive, Dr. Matkar, Dadasaheb Nagvekar, G A Kale, Vamanrao Varde, Seetarampant Sivatar, Babubhai Dhabbuwala, Prof. K P Kulkarni, Prof. Hemant Karnik, Acharya Nabar, Dr. Munagekar, V D Sarang, Dr. Torskar, Gunvant Todankar, N V Gore, Prabhakar More, N V Khandke expressed their condolences for the departed soul.

A one-day mourning period, on 16th January, 1961, was declared by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation. A number of social, educational and other organizations followed it. Babasaheb Bole's wife, Laxmibai died in the year 1968.

One can observe social reforms in the rigid and orthodox society, but so many movements and proposals, regarding free and compulsory primary education, family planning, Konkan railway, capitalism, general election, farmers, workers, untouchables, were initiated by Babasaheb before more than 70 years.

Photo Captions

1. On the occasion of the inauguration of bust of *Lokhitvadi Ravbahaddur* Late S K Bole Balasaheb Desai, Home Minister, Maharashtra; Yashvantarao Chavan, Union Home Minister; Dr. Dhanjay Kir, writer of Mr. Bole's biography and Narhari Balaji Hadkar, Vice-President

2. Bole family
Babasaheb Bole with wife and children

3. Babasaheb Bole with freedom fighter Mr. Savarkar

4. Birth place
Babasaheb was born in this house in Palshet, Guhagar Dist.

5. Bole family
Babasaheb and Vinayk Bole along with their family

6. *Kitte Bhandari Aikyavardhak Mandali*

7. People's Education Society
(From Left) 1. Prof. Rao, 2. Principal Mr Gajendragadkar, 3. Principal M V Donde, 4. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, 5. S K Bole, 6. D G Jadhav and 7. K V Chitle

8. *Guru-Shishya*
S K Bole and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

9. Shri Hanuman Vishvast Mandal
(Standing from Left) Ad. D V Jawle, S N Panshikar, Damaniwalla, Dr. J M Purandare, Anna Bole, (seated from left) Dr. Y V Purandare, S K Bole, Ad. Navalkar, S P Athavale, B H Devare and P H Bhatte