

### CONCLUSION

The Baroda State emerged as one of the most important and strongest States in India in the first half of the 20th Century. The credit of its progress undoubtedly goes to the Maharaja Sir Sayaji Rao III. He was among the foremost of the Indian Princes who worked for the good of his people. His conceptual contribution in rural and urban administration and development planning was unique. He was popularly known as the 'Maharaja Saheb'. The rulers of Baroda were commonly known as the 'Gaekwads'. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to speak about him as the Gaekwad of Baroda just as we talk of Bonaparte of France, Romanov of Russia, Hohenzollern of Prussia etc. In his own dominion he was always called the 'Maharaja Saheb' and the official designation of the Government of India was the Maharaja Gaekwad, like in the titles of other confederate States of Gwalior and Indore as the Maharaja Scindhia and the Maharaja Holker respectively.

Sir Sayaji Rao III was very fortunate in having experienced, honest and able Dewans during his reign. Among the Dewans, the contribution of Raja Sir T. Madhavrao to the growth of the Baroda State during his minority period and, even later on, was significant. The Dewans, who worked after Sir Sayaji Rao III came to power, also played an important role in the growth of the State. Among them the contribution of Sir V. T. Krishnamachari (1927-1943) was noteworthy.

The Maharaja ruled for a period of 64 years including his minority period and emerged as an able ruler, great builder, efficient organiser and an efficient administrator. He transformed the Baroda State from a traditional State to one of the most modern and progressive States of India.

Despite his insufficient education in the beginning, his disturbed domestic life and the adverse political climate, he was able to contribute immensely in the organisation of administration of the State.

The Maharaja used to travel a lot for various reasons. From May, 1887 to 1938, he made, in all, twenty seven tours abroad. He visited many countries of Europe, America, Africa and Asia. During the course of his tours, particularly in the advanced countries of the West, he always looked for ideas and methods and was eager to know in detail about their importance, functioning and organisation. He met leading personalities there and cultivated friendship with them and discussed about the growth of their countries, the steps which they had taken for the development of their respective countries. Owing to this, he was able to carry with him several new concepts, for example, those in education, law, industry, religion, social reforms, science, ethics and morality, sanitation and health, domestic institutions, welfare works, status of women, etc. He implemented these new concepts for the improvement and betterment of administration and the advancement of his people.

The prosperity of the country depends upon how the ruler organises his economic resources, utilises them and how he runs the administration. The 19th Century Indian thinkers and nationalist leaders were careful in observing the economic policies of the British Government. The Indian economic thought of the period was influenced by the progress of Western science, education, techniques, new devices, economic organisation and several European enterprises. The Maharaja also witnessed the economic organisations of the British in India and of the various foreign countries. After careful thinking, he made up his mind to improve the economy of the State by introducing reforms in it. He was quick to study and put into practice the beneficial changes introduced in British India.

The first and foremost step which he took for the economic administration was in the field of agriculture. From the beginning of his minority period, he was convinced of the fact that the agriculturists are the backbone of the country and the State's efforts to improve their lot are really necessary. Therefore, immediately after taking over the charge, he concentrated on the development of agriculture. For that, he made remarkable changes in it. The very first step which he took was the conversion of unfertile land into fertile land. Thus he increased cultivable land. From the table mentioned in Chapter III, it is clear that 15 per cent more land had been made available for cultivation. He then abolished the old ijara and bhagvati system and replaced it with a scientific land revenue system. He also made changes and solved the problems relating to the Barkhali or alienated lands by establishing a regular Survey and

Settlement Department in 1883. His main objective was to introduce a uniform land improvement measure.

The land, whether cultivated or waste but available for cultivation, was divided into survey numbers and then the soil of each number was valued. The valuation of soil was expressed in annas of a rupee. The rates of assessment were fixed.

One of the significant features of the land revenue administration of the Maharaja was the continuation of the ryotwari system, which was introduced by his Dewan, Raja Sir T. Madhavrao. The first change which was noticed in it was the revenue was assessed on each prevalent measure of land such as bigha. The second important change was the direct collection of revenue from the cultivators. By taking these steps, the Maharaja was able to remove irregularities in the collection of taxes.

Immediately after the successful result of the introduction of the Survey and Settlement Department, a large number of veros or special taxes on agriculturists were abolished. Then, he levied taxes on other sources.

From the table mentioned in Chapter III, it is clear that for the improvement of the condition of the farmers, he reduced the burden of taxes on land revenue by increasing the revenue on other sources. Even

then the land revenue receipts continued to form a major portion of the total receipts of the State. This shows that land revenue was still a major source of income of the State.

With a view to improving agriculture, he introduced agricultural education. For this, he opened agricultural horticulture and started Model Farms in different parts of the State. The objective was to expose the farmers to better techniques and methods and help them in increasing production which in turn might fulfil the increasing requirements of his subjects. Thus his agricultural reforms were based on practical considerations which were fairly successful and stood the test of time.

The Maharaja was the first ruler in the entire Western India to open the first Agriculture Institute for the rural farmers for learning the scientific method - "agro-know-hows". Then he opened classes for giving actual agricultural education through demonstrations. Agricultural film shows were organised to make the farmers understand the use of the improved techniques of agricultural devices. A mobile agricultural exhibition was also started. These innovations of the Maharaja resulted in considerable progress in agricultural production. This improved the economy of the State.

After taking these steps, he re-organised the Agricultural Department by placing it under the Dewan. Thus he fulfilled the cultivators' demand.

Another important attempt made was for Research in Agriculture. By it, a nucleus for pure and improved seeds for every crop suitable to the different tracts of the State was provided. Then an Agricultural Engineering Section was created for the improvement of wells, the introduction of power-driven machinery and the creation and trial of agricultural new scientific devices. With this the age-old agricultural instruments were slowly and gradually replaced by the new ones. Another important step which he took for the improvement of the financial condition of the farmers was the establishment of Agricultural Co-operative Societies and Agricultural Banks. He did this for the weakening of the influences of money-lenders on the farmers. Prior to this, the money-lenders used to meet all the requirements of the farmers by giving loans at a very high rate of interest. Those who failed to repay the loans lost their land gradually and even became landless. So the Maharaja established the agricultural co-operative societies and banks and helped the farmers by providing necessary loans at a very nominal rate of interest. As a result of this the influence of the money-lenders on farmers was minimized.

To improve the breed and to protect the cattle from common diseases, he opened Veterinary Dispensary Units. These units carried out preventive measures against various diseases and also trained and advised the farmers in taking care of the cattle. To improve the livestock, a premium bull system was established and, later on, developed on a large scale. The Maharaja also solved the problems of the Rabbaries or Bharwads, who were dependent on the cattle, by providing fodder for their cattle.

Another important feature of the agricultural administration of the Maharaja was the land classification, crop pattern and distribution of land holdings. The land was divided according to the use made of it. Several new agencies were also created to bring improved methods of cultivation. The first was the rotation of crops and double crops. For that he provided irrigation facilities to the farmers. The second was the drinking water facility in villages, the construction of link roads and rails between the remotest areas of his State and towns, soil conservation, flood control and famine relief works. These were innovative measures and were implemented in the most scientific manner.

The Maharaja's next important step for the economic development was the development of industries. Prior to him, the people of the State responded less to adoption of modern industries. But owing to his pioneering efforts, a number of them were firmly established in the State. The establishment of the well-known Alembic Chemical Works in 1907, the opening of the Bank of Baroda in 1908 and the establishment of the Sayaji Iron Works in 1914 were important landmarks in the development of industrial growth in Baroda. Initially he started industries with State Capital but learning from his experience, later on, he changed his concept and adopted a State-aided industrial policy as he was in favour of private enterprises for the development of industries. For the promotion of industries, he also took some major steps like the establishment of the Special Department of Commerce and Industry, the abolition of import and export duties,

the revision of rules and the industrial education. In the period between 1927 and 1941, the number of industries grew slowly but steadily. The progressive character of the State resulted into considerable expansion of the departments and the development of Port Okha. The foundation laid by the Maharaja and some important basic infra-structure created by him helped his successors to expand the industrial sector with greater ease and the industrial development of Baroda could be accelerated in the post-Independence period because of this existing infra-structure and favourable conditions for which the Maharaja should rightly get the credit.

Owing to the efficient economic administration, the finances of the State became sound. The comparative statement of the receipts and disbursements of the State clearly shows that new sources of income had been found as a result of the many-sided development that had taken place in the State.

The introduction of the ayapat vero (Income-Tax) was a novel step taken by the Maharaja. The gradual but significant increase in the minimum ayapat vero which had been raised from Rs.100 in 1896, to Rs.750 in 1907 and to Rs.2000 in 1939-1940 clearly shows the financial improvement of the State.

The healthy spirit of the new administration was to be seen in the reorganisation of the Judicial Department. Raja Sir T. Madhavrao took particular interest in establishing a new and efficient Judicial



Département. Between 1875 and 1881, he made efforts to put it on a firm basis, though the real reforms came only after 1881.

First of all, the Dewan created a new judicial department mainly based on the system in practice in the British India. He found that the Vahivatdars, who were vested with civil powers, were not performing their duties properly. Hence, he took away their powers. After this, he made changes in the civil and criminal administration. Another important change which he made was the establishment of the Sardar's Court for the privileged persons but it was abolished in 1904 owing to certain difficulties faced by the Maharaja. In short, the Dewan tried to organise the judicial department on modern lines which was further improved and systematised by the Maharaja.

In 1882, a Law Committee was formed to look after the work of legislation. This Committee introduced several Acts like Stamps, Registration and the Police. In 1892, the Maharaja appointed Shri J.S. Gadgil for the preparation of the Civil Procedure Code on the model of the British Code. Accordingly, a revised Civil Procedure Code became the law in 1896, while the new Penal Criminal Procedures, a General Clauses Act etc. were drafted and implemented in the beginning of the 20th Century. The three trend-setting (trial-blazing) social measures, namely, the Hindu Remarriage Act, the Freedom of Conscience Act and the Child Marriage Laws were passed in 1902. By putting them in practice, the Maharaja reduced the social evils in the State. Another remarkable achievement of the Maharaja in the judicial administration

was the Codification of Laws. Among them, the most radical was the Hindu Sons' Liability Law, passed in 1908. By it, the Maharaja freed them from the liabilities of their ancestral debts. This step became very popular among the people. Then, he separated the judicial and executive functions. By doing this, he made the judicial administration highly effective and efficient. He also abolished anomalies in the appointment of qualified pleaders to the lower courts by empowering the Legal Remembrancer Department to appoint qualified public prosecutors. Then, he revised the powers and functions of the Courts. Thus, by making radical changes in the administration of justice, the Maharaja brought it to such a high state of efficiency and integrity that the decrees, passed by the Baroda Courts, were executed in British India as if they were passed by the British Courts themselves. This clearly shows his administrative ability and revolutionary nature.

His steps to create some order in the judicial field would not have succeeded if changes had not been carried out in the Police, Jail and Extradition departments. The Dewan had changed the earlier system of the Police by separating the magisterial and police functions, by appointing a Police Superintendent and by constituting a police force on modern lines. The Maharaja organised its administration. First of all, he provided uniforms to the police force. Then, he made a change in the designation from the Head of Police to Police Commissioner. The Police Act was passed in 1881 and was subsequently revised as and when required. To make the police force active, he opened Police Schools in

all district head-quarters. To relieve the police from the influences of the saukars (money-lenders), he opened Police Banks and raised their salaries. The most impressive arrangement which he made was the registration and investigation of crimes and the introduction of the Finger Impression System. By this, he was able to reduce the offences in the State.

Along with the police administration, the Maharaja also made changes in the jail administration. For that, he passed the Prison Act and prepared a Jail Code. The prisoners were employed on remunerative works. The Borstal System to reclaim criminals was adopted and was later on replaced by a better system known as the Baroda Model Farm, which aimed at reforming the offenders/criminals more systematically.

The revival of the old administrative system of governing village affairs by the elder people of the same village was a major step of the Maharaja. He revived and encouraged the spirit of the village community by passing Laws in 1902. The laws provided that every village, with a population of one thousand or more, should have a Panchayat of its own. Then, important functions were given to the Panchayats. By doing this, he was able to lessen his burden of village administration. The participation and involvement of village people in the decision-making process was also ensured through this measure. Another important change which he made was the formation of Taluka and District Panchayats by passing the Local Self-Government Act in 1904. By it, he separated their works and ensured better administration.

Decentralisation through village, taluka and district-level administration, i.e. three-tier 'Panchayati Raj' administration in free independent India, clearly shows that this system introduced by the Maharaja in his State had a practical value and importance which he had realized long, long ago. Theory and Practice went hand in hand with the Maharaja. A theoretician, who practised, learnt from experiences and further improved. In other words, a continuous evaluation, quality and readiness to improve were the hall-marks of his administration.

Another notable step he took was about the municipal administration. In fact, for its development, an attempt had been made by his predecessors, but it had been in a rudimentary form. So the Maharaja made an advance in it by passing the Municipal Act in 1892. In 1905, in order to remove certain anomalies in the Act of 1892, another Municipal Act based on the Bombay District Municipal Act was passed. After this, several Acts, relating to conferring different rights on municipalities of different classes, were enacted. As a result of this, the Local Self-Government made commendable progress.

No permanent sound and stable development is possible without education. To him, education was a basis for the socio-economic progress of the people. Initially he concentrated on primary education by making it free and compulsory and he made it available to the people living in the remotest areas of the State. This pioneering measure of the Maharaja set an example to independent India.

His ideas on education and the success of his educational scheme can be known from his various speeches delivered from time to time on various occasions.

From the beginning of his reign, the Maharaja attached great importance to female education. Women held a special place in his esteem. He believed that the mother was the most important influence in the child's life. The Maharaja felt it was essential that the mothers be exposed to an atmosphere of intellectual freedom. In those days, the rigid purdah (Ghumto or Ghunghat) system was observed by the women of the upper classes, while those from the lower classes lived their lives unpleasantly. But even the lives of the women from the Sardar families were based on orthodoxy. Their lives too centred round domestic duties. They were hardly consulted in any matter of importance. So he himself set an example by giving education to his second wife Maharani Chinnabai II. He persuaded her to come out of the purdah. Though the conservative attitudes of his relatives came in his way, but the Maharaja was able to persuade them. In due course of time, the Maharani came up to his expectations.

After succeeding in his attempt, he thought of providing education to women for the upliftment of their status in the society. For that he, opened girls' schools, provided scholarships, arranged for lady teachers, etc. His profound interest in education in general, and female education in particular, created healthy attitudes and a conducive atmosphere in the society for promotion of female education.

This did help the cause of female education in the State, where there was practically none before. In this sense, his was a creditable achievement.

For the qualitative improvement of education, the Maharaja opened teachers' training colleges for male and female teachers. One important feature noticeable was the admission of the untouchable students to the colleges. The Maharaja dealt a severe blow to caste rigidity by bringing the untouchables for the first time to the institutions of learning. This was a bold and revolutionary step in the field of social reforms which he attempted, when not many were prepared to do it and, even in his own State, the Caste Hindu teachers refused to teach the untouchables in the schools.

The development of higher education was another significant step of the Maharaja. For that, he opened the Baroda College. It was affiliated to the University of Bombay. Later on, the Maharaja made efforts for the establishment of a separate University at Baroda, but his efforts did not materialise during his life time. But after his death (1939), his successors continued these efforts and ultimately the University at Baroda was established in 1949 and justly named as "The Maharaja Sayaji Rao University of Baroda".

The Maharaja's scheme of technical education was unique. He founded the 'Kalabhavan' or 'School of Home Art' in 1890. For the development of this scheme, the contribution of T. K. Gajjar was

remarkable. The school was divided into seven departments. Then many steps were taken by the Maharaja for its growth. As a result of this, many small-scale industries started in the State. Because of the Maharaja's keen interest and Mr. Gajjar's efforts the Kalabhavan, even today, stands as a proud institution in the academic world - in the name of the Faculty of Technology and Engineering. Student-wise it has grown in number and course-wise in a variety of technical and engineering courses.

After evaluating the progress of education, he found that still the children of the farmers and the backward castes (antyajas and tribes) were not taking education. Realising this, he offered them special training in agriculture and related trades, in which they might be interested. For that he opened four Boarding schools, provided scholarships to all and gave free lodging and clothing facilities. By giving such facilities to them, he was able to bring them closer to the advanced section of the society, which contributed to a better understanding of each other and also to social harmony under the State's protection, care and control.

The Library Movement was another important step of the Maharaja. He knew that once his people would learn to read, the thirst for knowledge would lead them to wider pastures... and to encourage the reading habit, he established circulating libraries all over the State, even in the remotest parts of his State. The contribution of Dr. William A. Borden, an American Expert, for the planning of library

administration was noteworthy. For further development of this movement, the Maharaja himself donated his own excellent collection of 20,000 books to the Central Library in 1910. By 1927, its collections increased to 10 lakh books. The foundation of the internationally - reputed Oriental Institute was a further milestone in this movement.

In this way, Sir Sayaji Rao III effected numerous changes in the various aspects of the administration of the Baroda State. He cultivated profound interest in all aspects of social, cultural, political, economic and educational fields. His conceptual contributions in rural and urban administrative planning were unique. His contribution to rural transformation in the Baroda State was the best testimony of his profound interest, innovative spirit and conceptual clarity of modern thoughts.

In fact, his policy of de-centralisation of administration created self-confidence and consciousness among the people for self-development.

He had a keen sense of duty and was a keen observer and a good judge of man. He was a sagacious ruler with an inquisitive and receptive mind. His administrative, social and educational reforms placed Baroda State much ahead of the rest of India. His people revered him and held him in high esteem. The M. S. University of Baroda is a proper monument to the memory of this great patron of



learning and knowledge. He enjoyed international fame for his extraordinary success in making the Baroda State progressive and modern in many fields of activities. In the words of K. M. Munshi, he had no doubt, "carved out a unique place for himself in the India of today".

That his reforms and infra-structure had practical utility and relevance was proved beyond doubt when his State merged with the Bombay State after independence in 1949. At that time his Baroda State was already on the map of India and many of his welfare activities and reforms became an integral part of the planned policies, programmes and activities of the independent, democratic and secular India. He was, in the true sense of the term, an institution-builder, a trend-setter and a sincere and devoted reformer.

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