



DR. PANJABRAO S. DESHMUKH



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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The life of Dr. Panjabrao S. Deshmukh was a saga of selfless service to the people of India. He was an eminent educationist, renowned social worker and selfless political leader. He was also very committed to the development of the agricultural sector in the country. His contribution in ameliorating the lot of the backward classes is legendary. Above all, his humane approach to the problems affecting the people endeared him to all sections of our population.

Panjabrao Deshmukh was born on 27 December 1898 in the Papal village of Amravati district in Maharashtra. As there was no school in his village, he used to trek to Amravati daily for his studies. Despite overwhelming odds, he completed his high school education at Amravati and went to Poona for his collegiate studies. Subsequently, he left for the United Kingdom for higher studies and secured the M.A. Degree from Edinburgh University and Ph.D. from Oxford University. Later, he also became a Barrister-at-Law.

Having completed his studies, Dr. Deshmukh returned to India in 1926, and began to practise law at Amravati. The interests of the peasants, which were never far from his heart, now claimed his close attention, and with a view to promoting these interests in an organized manner, he founded the "Shetkari Sangh" or "The C.P. & Berar Farmers' Association". From 1928 to 1930, he was the Chairman of the District Council, Amravati, and it was during this period that he took several pioneering steps to spread literacy among the peasants of Berar. He spared no effort to fight the scourge of untouchability with all the strength at his command. With the cooperation of a large number of

educated young men, who had already begun to regard him as their leader, he opened public wells for the use of all, irrespective of the considerations of caste and creed. He is also credited with the establishment of the Shraddhanand Hostel at Amravati that was open to all students, without distinction of caste and religion.

The cause of education had been dear to his heart from the very beginning and this led him to establish the Shivaji Education Society in 1931. This Society was instrumental in setting up a number of schools, colleges and institutions which rendered a great service to the country by spreading awareness and education. These educational institutions opened the doors of higher education in the rural areas so that the poor children living there could take advantage of the opportunity of pursuing higher studies. Today, this Society is running a large number of engineering, medical, agricultural and higher educational institutions successfully, which bear testimony to Dr. Deshmukh's farsightedness.

Dr. Deshmukh was a member of the CP & Berar Legislative Council during 1930-37. He also served as the Minister of Education, P.W.D. and Agriculture from 1930 to 1933. He took over as the Chairman of the Amravati Cooperative Central Bank in 1934. His unwavering commitment to education saw him becoming the Member of the Nagpur University Court during 1936-37 and then the Member of the Executive Council of Nagpur University during 1945-52.

Affectionately known as 'Bhausahab', Dr. Panjabrao S. Deshmukh devoted his entire life for the welfare and development of the farmers. He founded the 'Bharat Krishak Samaj' to champion the cause of the farmers and remained its President throughout his life. Owing to his concern for

the downtrodden and the farming community, he was actively involved in various associations and organisations. He also served as the President of the All India Federation of Backward Classes. He was also a member of the Standing Committee for Education of the Government of India during 1950-55.

Dr. Deshmukh's association with the Indian Parliament began in 1946 when he became a Member of the Constituent Assembly and subsequently of the Provisional Parliament of India. He was also a Member of the First, Second and Third Lok Sabhas from Amravati, Bombay. He served the country as the Minister of Food and Agriculture and Cooperation. A great supporter of the farming community, he worked tirelessly to improve the lot of the rural poor. In this regard, he took various measures for their progress and advancement. During his tenure as Minister of Agriculture, he was able to persuade the governmental authorities to pay the much needed attention to the agricultural sector. At the same time, he was able to persuade the farmers to use new techniques and methods for increasing agricultural production. His administrative acumen was widely appreciated in the country.

Dr. Deshmukh had a firm grasp of whatever problem he dealt with. All through his life, he identified himself with the common people of the country and tried to serve them primarily by supporting the two causes that were most dear to him—education and farming.

Dr. Panjabrao S. Deshmukh passed away on 10 April 1965. Paying tributes to the departed leader, the then Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri acknowledged in the Lok Sabha that 'Dr. Deshmukh was a great supporter of the *kisans* and had worked a great deal amongst them'. The then Speaker of Lok Sabha, Sardar Hukam Singh, observed that

Dr. Deshmukh's contributions to the amelioration of the lot of agriculturists and farmers would be remembered for a long time.

[The Portrait of Dr. Panjabrao S. Deshmukh, painted by Shri Ganesh Deshmukh, will be unveiled by the Hon'ble Vice-President of India, and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. The Portrait has been donated by the Government of Maharashtra.]