

|| H. H. Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi ||

# PICTORIAL HISTORY

Part 1



Based on Babamama's 'My Memoirs'



H.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi's youngest brother late BABA MAMA in his book "MY MEMOIRS" has narrated the history of "SALVE DYNASTY" from 1883. As he narrates---

... My grand-father late Keshavrao and grand-mother late Sakhubai belonged to the Royal family of "SHALIWAHAN DYNASTY". They were staying in a Castle at Shreegaon in Ahmadnagar District of Maharashtra (India).

Our great great grand-father belonged to a "Maratha Royal warrior family. who ruled over Rahuri and Shreegaon surroundings.

My grand-mother Sakhubai was pregnant at the time of my father's birth. For her delivery, well experienced cousin sister Renukabai, was to arrive on the day fixed in June 1883 by Railway at Rahuri station. To bring her home my grand-father Keshavrao left home early in the morning on horse back, to reach Rahuri station, which was ten kilometers away from Shreegaon. Monsoon, then had just begun... Heavy rains were also expected...



No worries for Sakhu's delivery if Renukabai is here!

To reach to Rahuri-station quite away by 10 kms. Keshavrao, left home early morning from Shreegaon, riding on the horse, ignoring the dark rainy clouds.



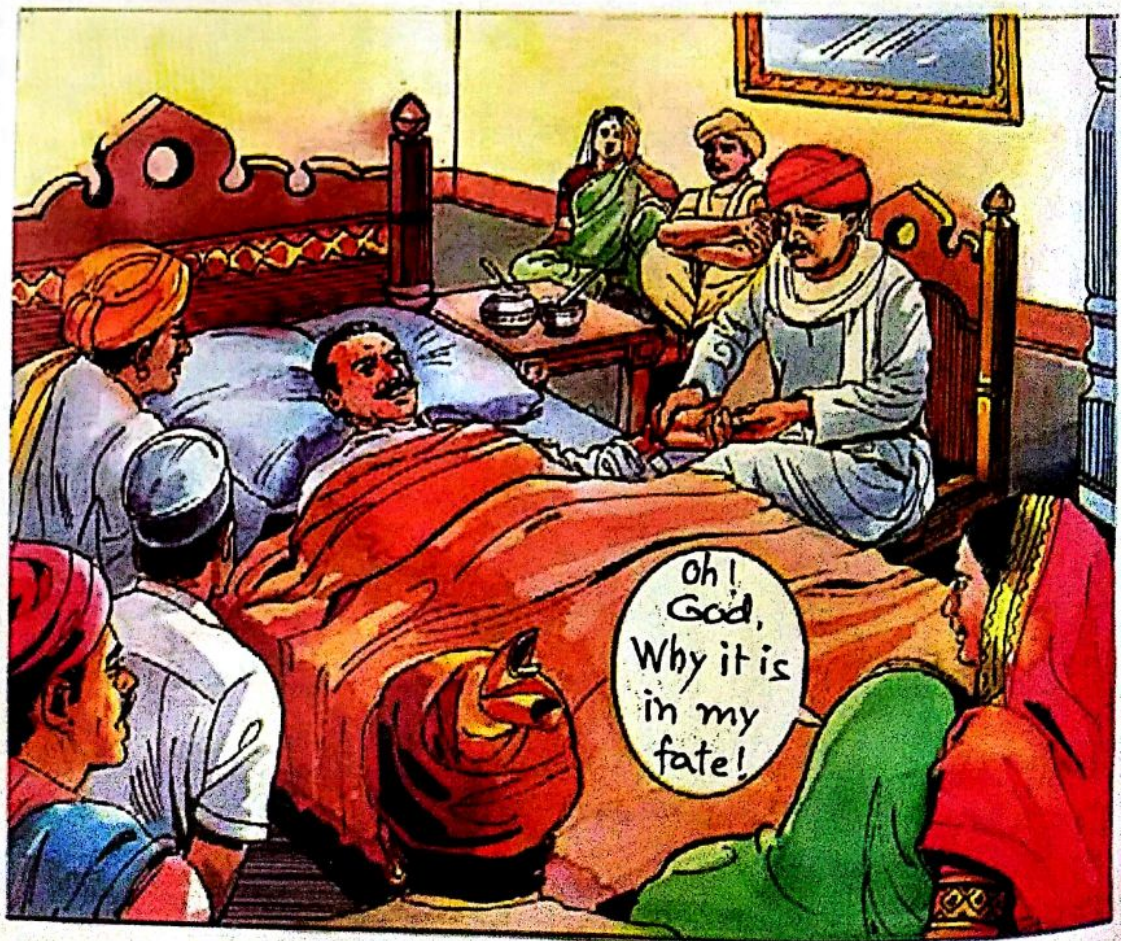
Oh! I wonder Why Renukabai not come?!

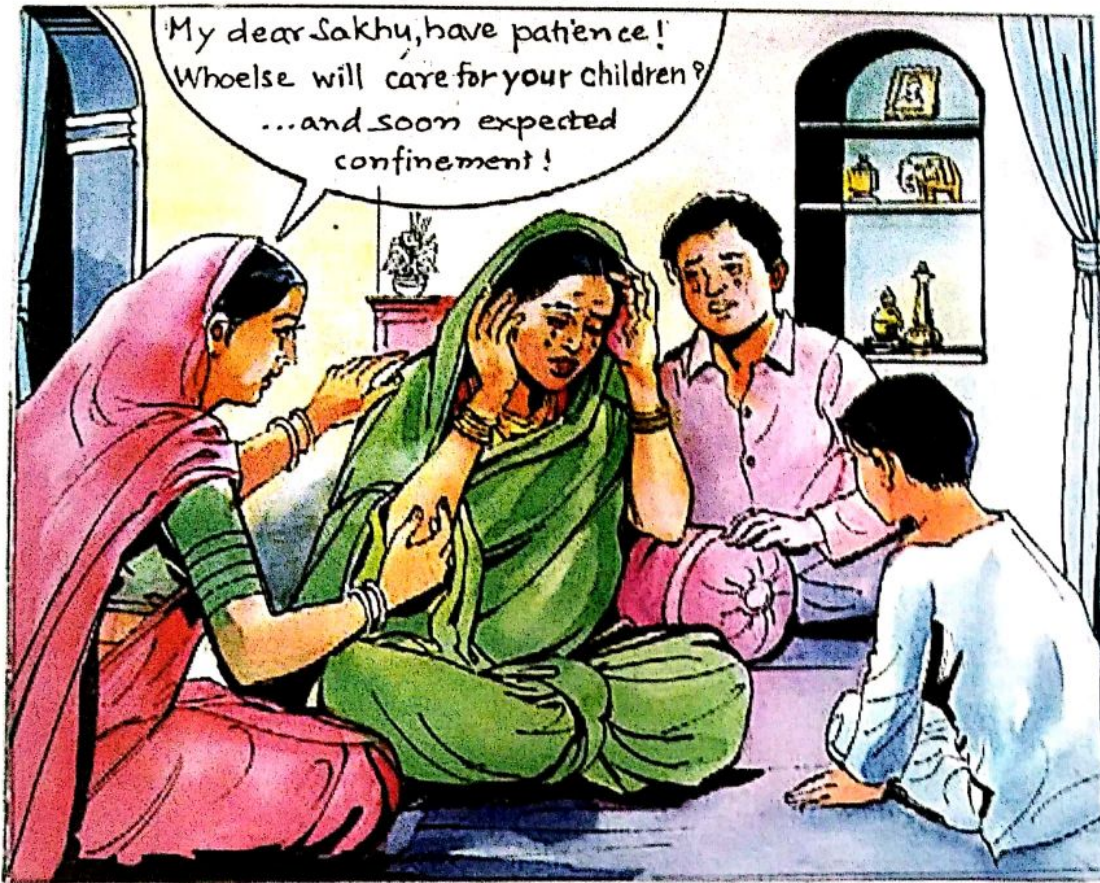
As Renukabai did not arrive by the predecided train, Keshavrao in dejected mood decided to return to the palace at Shreegaon.

On his way back, he was caught in a fierce thunderstorm. Undaunted, Keshavrao, not halting enroute, rode the horse on full gallop and crossed the swollen river. But while climbing the steep slippery opposite bank the horse slipped on a rock. Keshavrao hit the rock, became unconscious and remained in such state for a long time, while the rains lashed him mercilessly.



Keshavrao was brought home in unconscious state and treatment was started, but he developed pneumonia which proved to be fatal. Sakhubai lost her husband in her young age.



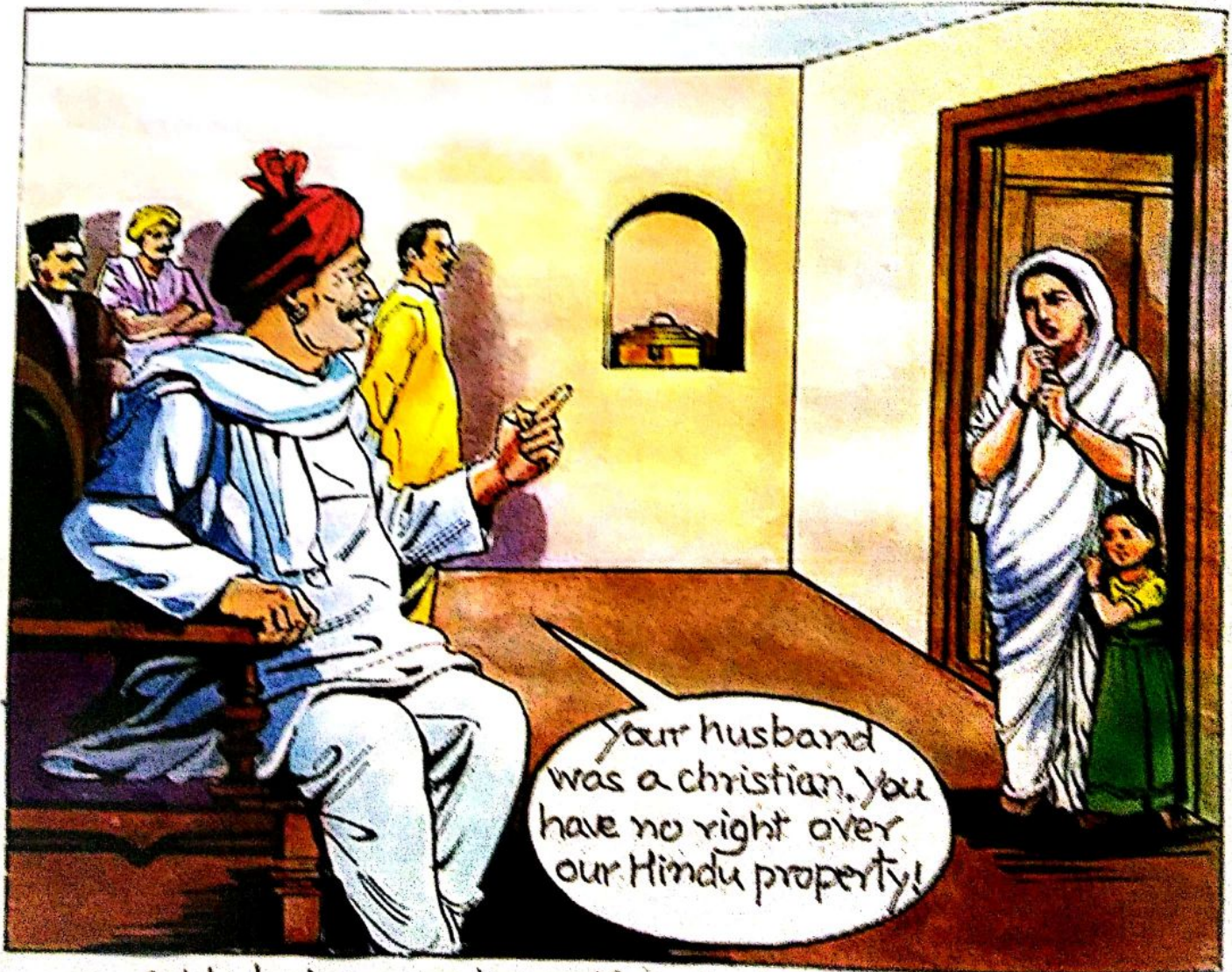


Sakhubai was completely broken down due to sudden, miserable, and early death of her husband, leaving behind small children to be cared for and soon expected her confinement.

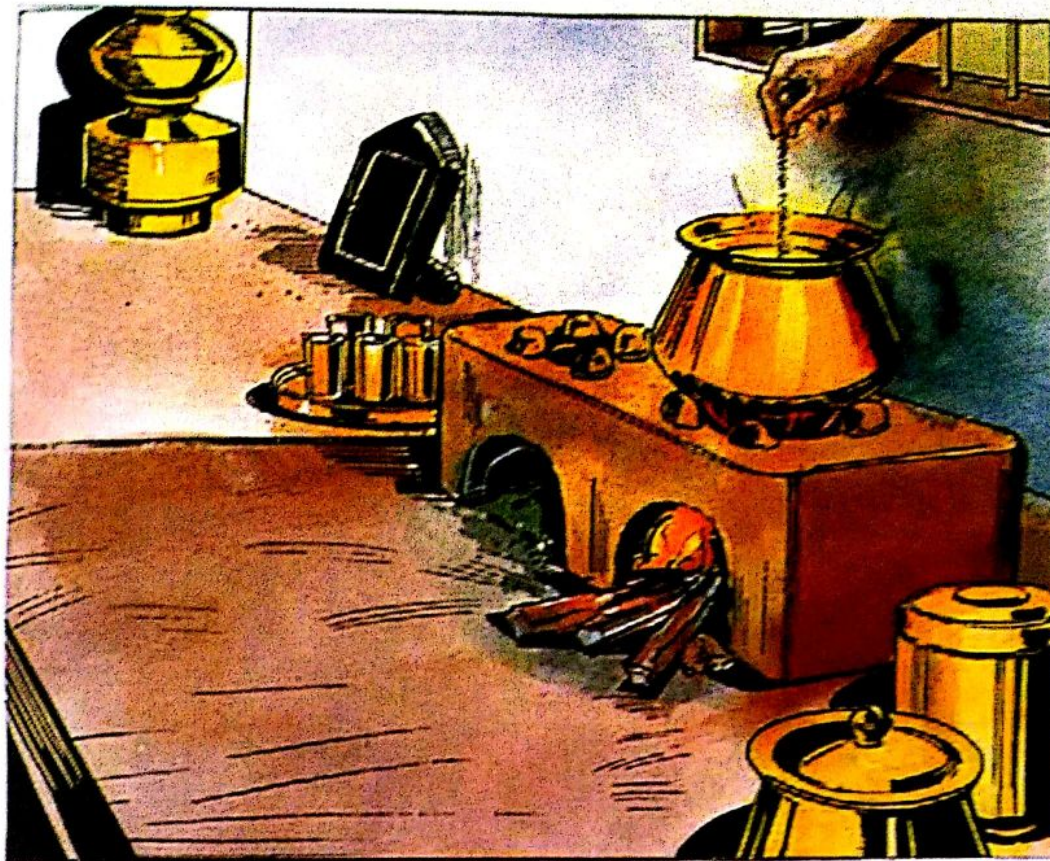


Gradually sensible Sakhubai overcoming her grief gathered enough courage to face the sad situation with her children's future and welfare in mind. However, her greedy in-laws gave her no sympathy nor support. Instead they hated her for they feared she would claim to their ancestral property.

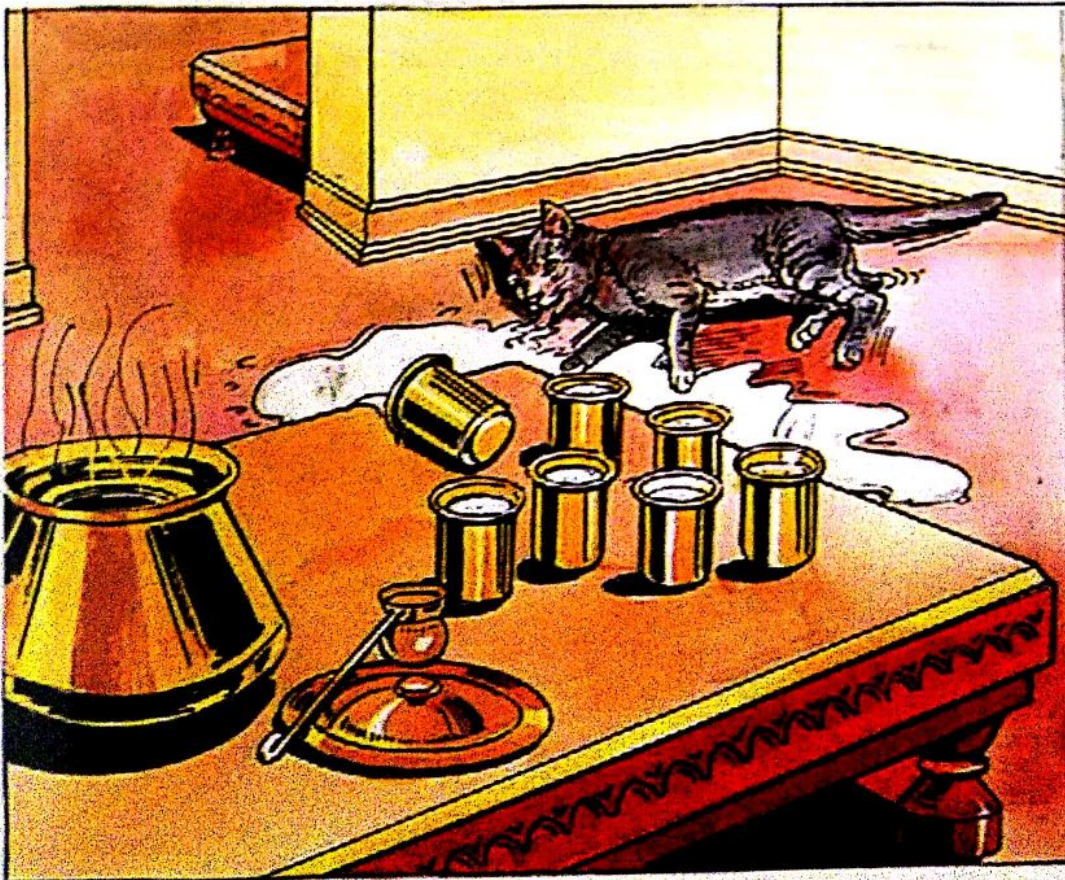
The facts were thus: Due to fanatic Hindu rituals and cruel conservative customs, especially regarding child widows, some Savles in protest had converted to christianity. Keshavrao was born in such a christian family. After his death, his widow Sakhubai was denied her rightful share in the ancestral property on the pretext that she was a christian and could not claim Hindu property.



Sakhubai knew her selfish in-laws would stop at nothing to deprive her of the ancestral property. She had to face their threats, and take care of her children, educate them with no support or means of income immediate or remote. All this with a soon expected confinement. Her condition was indeed pitiable.



To prevent her from claiming Hindu property her in-laws plotted to kill Sakhubai and her children. One day they stealthily poisoned her milk, but due to sheer good luck a cat drank the milk before Sakhubai or her children could drink it.



The cat began writhing in pain and soon died. Seeing this ghastly deed, Sakhubai got frightened and sensed that it was dangerous to stay in the ancestral palace any more. She realised that she had to flee immediately, wasting no time.



However, Sakhubai still had many dangers to overcome. Her wicked scheming in-laws, heavy rains, thunderstorms, crossing a swollen river with strong currents with five small children, in her pregnant condition, ignorance of rail travel, with no one to help nor any vehicle. Facing such invincible adverse conditions it was a flight into dark unknown, but Sakhubai knew she had no alternative.





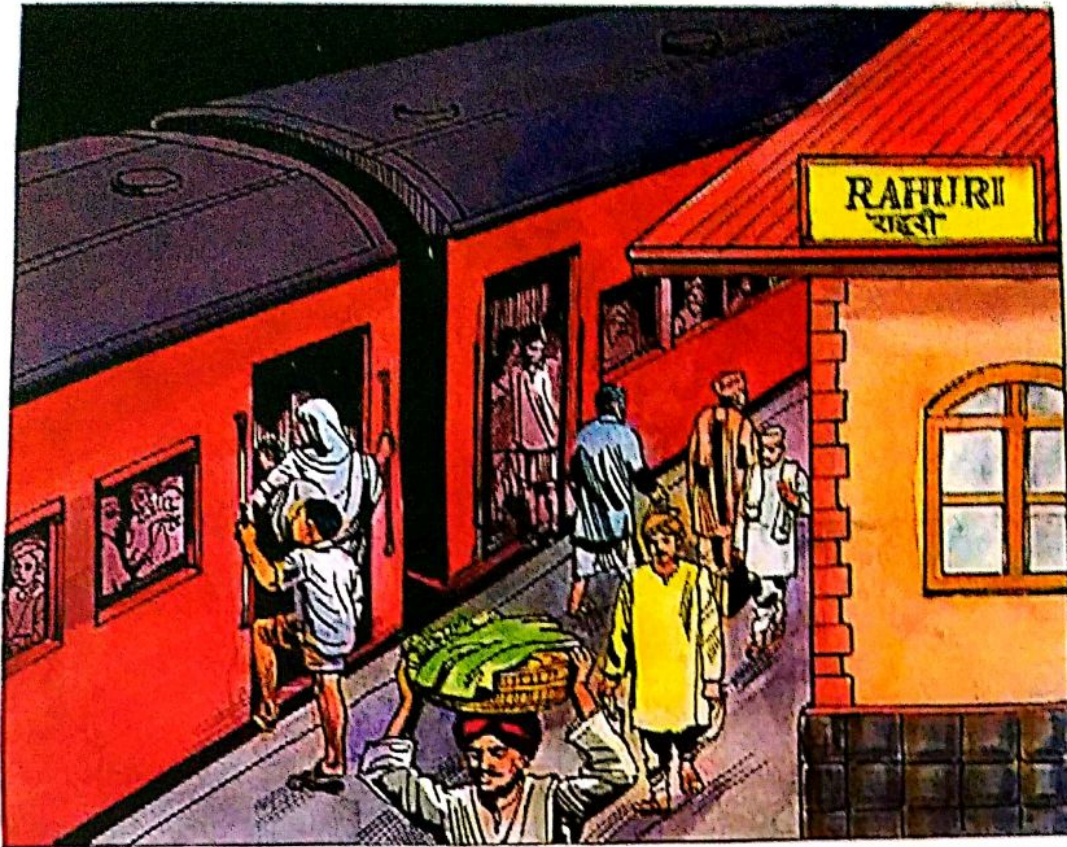


At the earliest opportunity, late one night, Sakhubai with her children, fled from her ancestral house. The rain was drizzling. She was familiar with the river but from its noise she knew it was in full spate. The flashing lightning and its thunder scared the children, but they could also find their way in its intermittent light. Slowly they reached the part where the river was a bit shallow. With her scarce belongings tied around her waist, with a nine yard sari, God's name on lips, Sakhubai handed over the children to eldest son Saloman and entered the river. Saloman, holding his sisters by his hand, took the brothers on shoulders, carefully made his way across the fiercely flowing river.

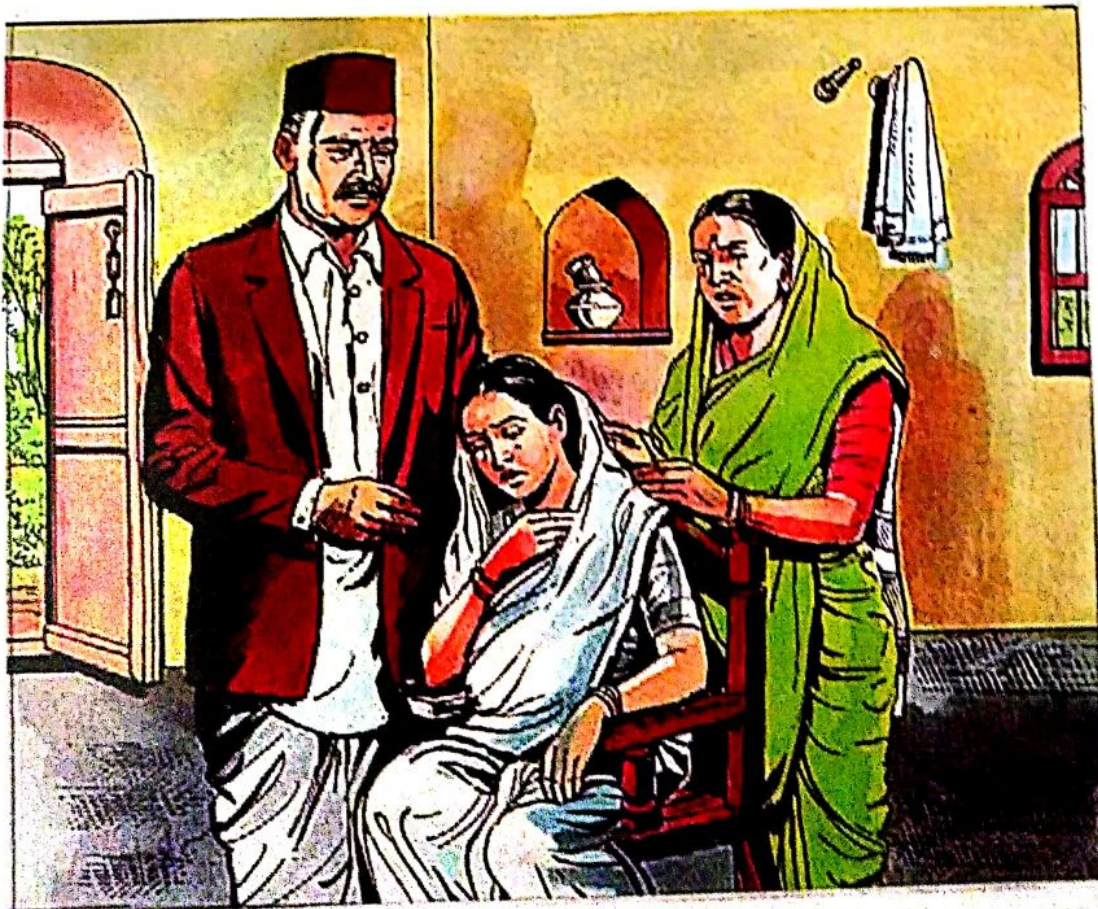


Overcoming all odds by her determined will power, they reached the opposite shore. Their belongings were wet but safe. They still had miles to walk in the pitch black night. Rahuri Railway station was ten km. away. Somehow, they reached the station late at night. The rains had relented a bit and to keep warm, they lit a small fire and sat huddling together. Sakhubai was afraid that their absence may have been noticed and any time her in-laws may come in search of them.



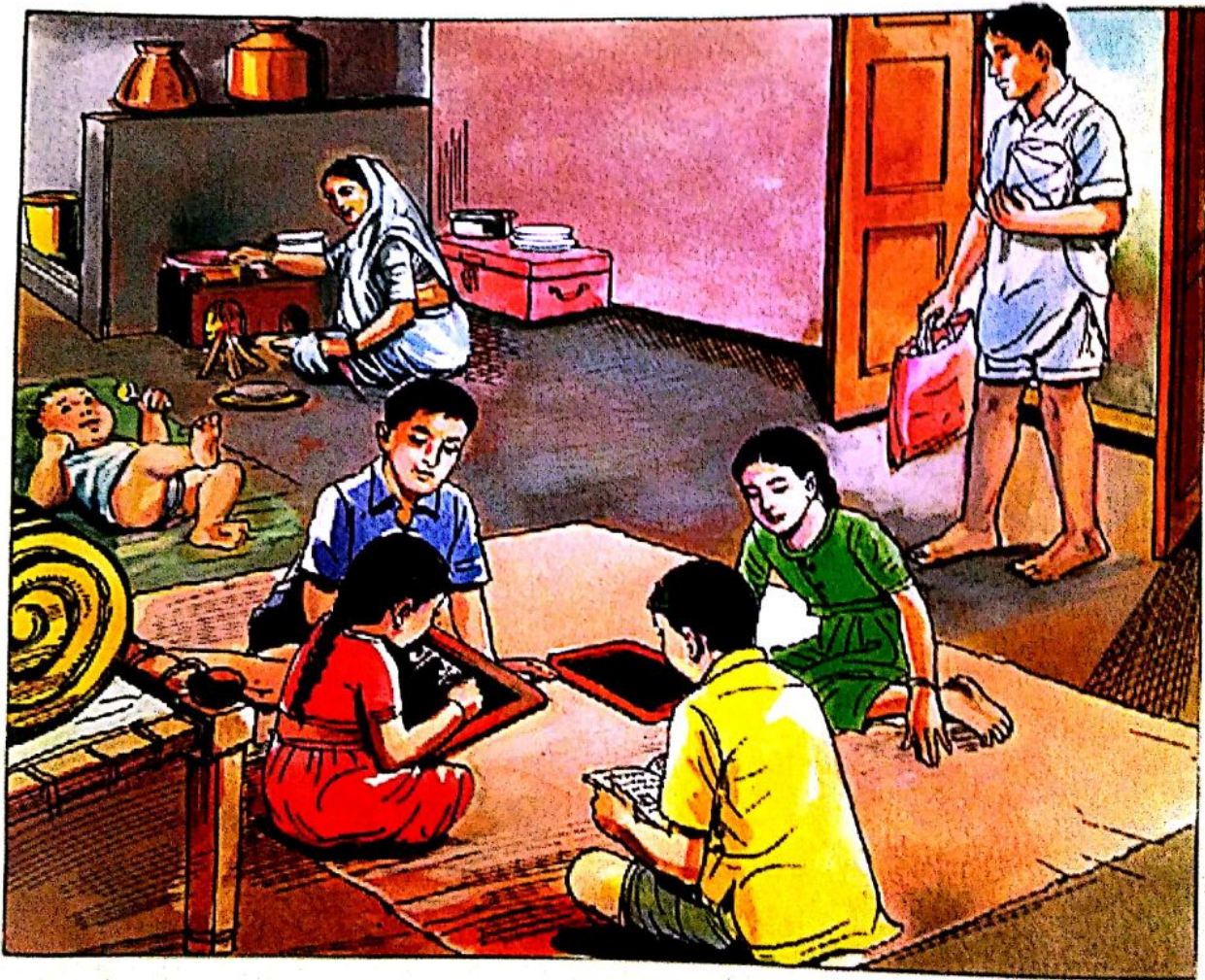


In those days there was only one train which ran from Rahuri to Manmad. Luckily, though late, the train arrived at dawn. All boarded the train and heaved a sigh of relief. Sakhubai had planned to first meet Keshavrao's friend Mr. Chhatre staying at Manmad and then to proceed to Ujjain to her brother's shelter.



As decided Sakhubai came to Ujjain at brother's shelter.

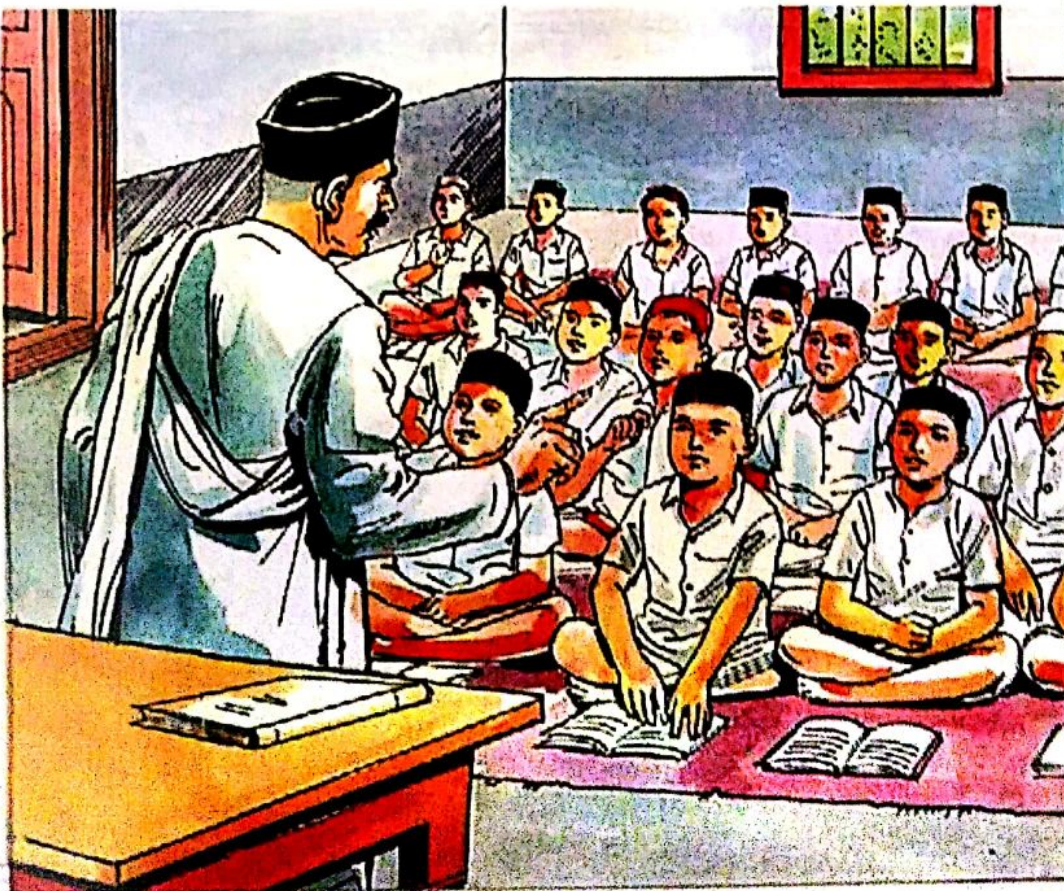
Noble and hard working Sakhubai set up new life in the small room of the church premises. She attended church every Sunday with her children. The children too carried on their studies while giving a helping hand to their mother. Eldest son Saloman, was observing the hard and labourious efforts of his mother for earning and maintaining her family in her meagre income.



Saloman was very good at studies, but due to his compassionate and caring nature, he thought of ending his education and to begin earning to give some respite to his mother. He expressed this thought to the mother, but she did not agree with him. She advised him to complete at least matriculation. Even in poverty, she gave priority to education for all her children.

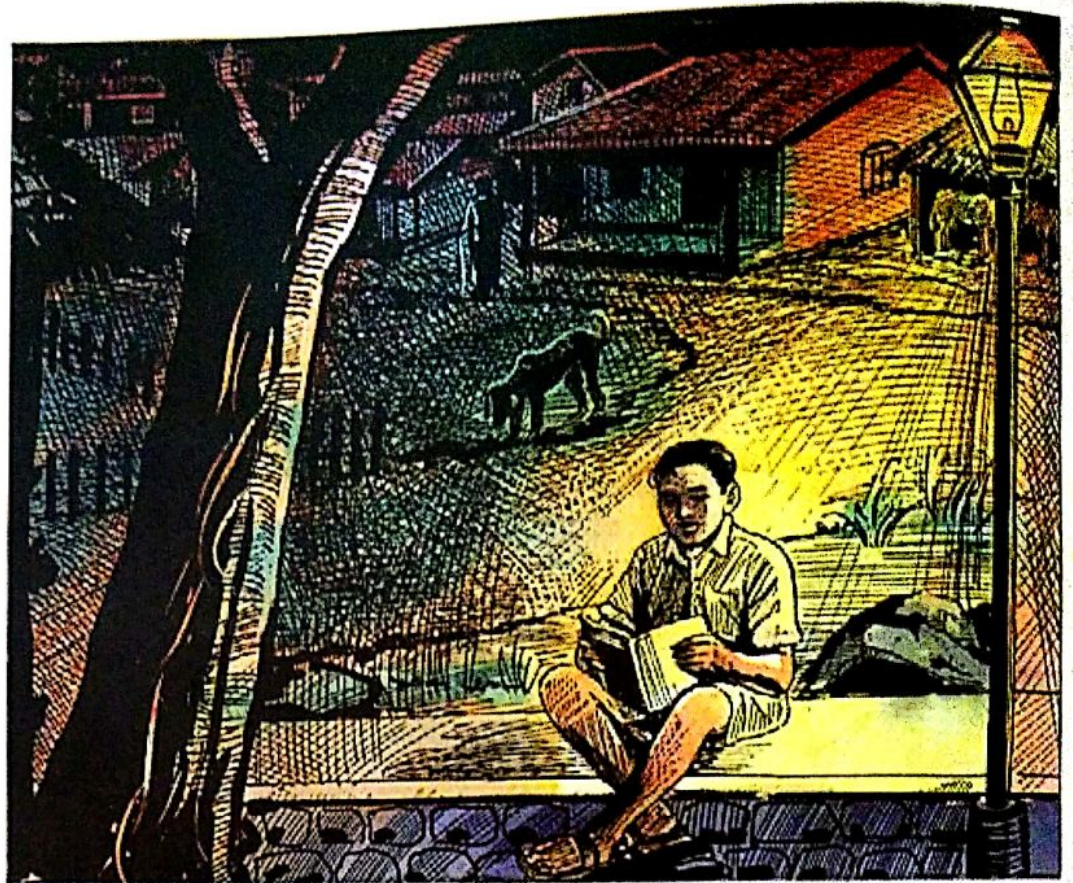


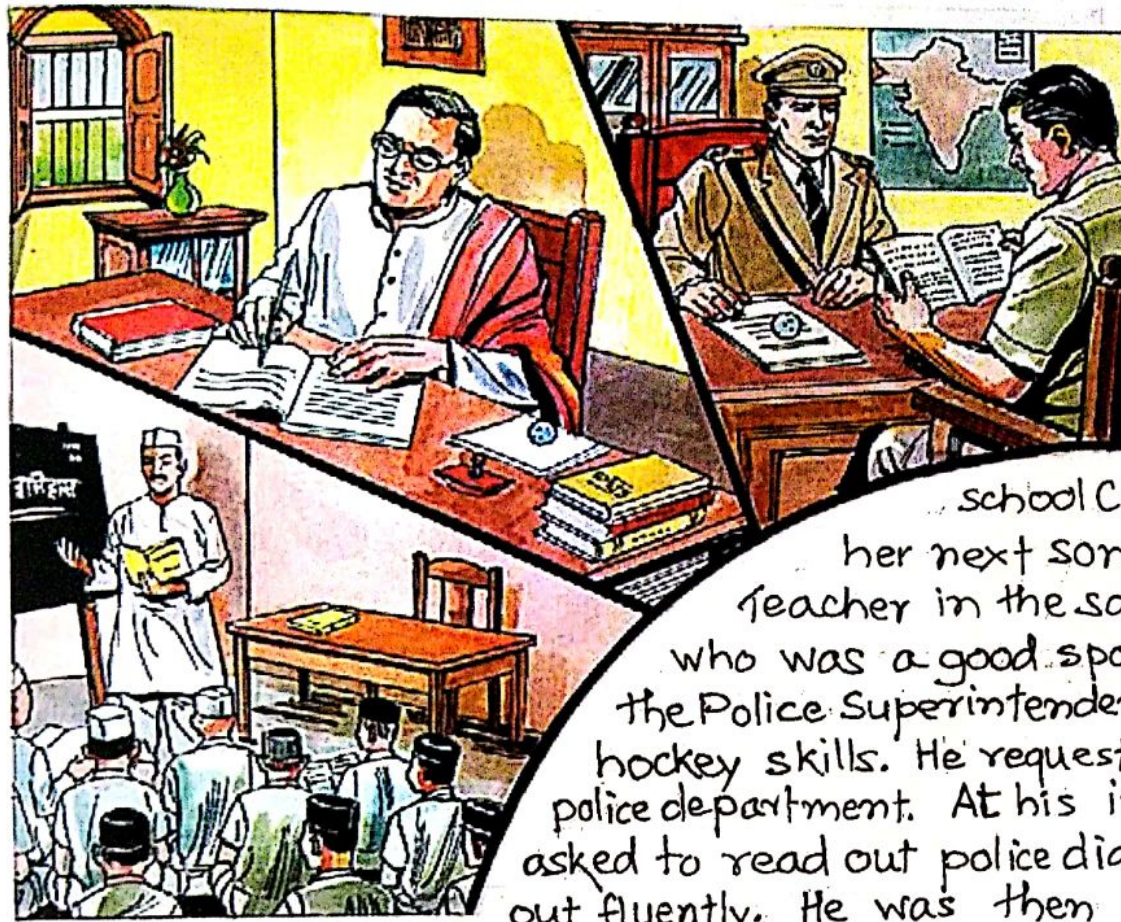
As luck would have it, Saloman did not have to give up his education. It so happened that one Sunday, the peon who used to toll the heavy church bell did not come for the duty. The priest Mr. Wilkey was searching for a strong and able person to toll the bell. Saloman at once rushed forward and immediately tolled the bell perfectly in rhythm. Mr. Wilkey was pleased and at once appointed him for only Sunday duty on a monthly salary of Rs. 5/- This became a steady income for Saloman and Sakhubai.



Youngest Prasad too helped the mother in small family works. He studied in primary school and gradually joined middle school. His sharp memory and aptitude for reading made him the top ranker through the education.

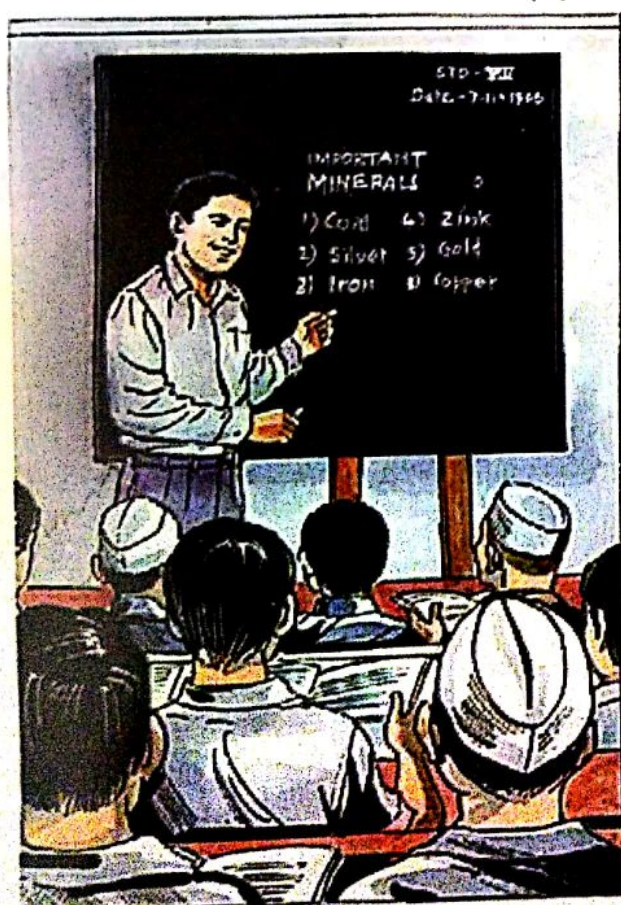
Due to their meagre income, Kerosene lamps were not affordable so young Prasad studied under street lamps after evening. He studied on scholarships, and also earned some income by giving tuitions. Thus he had saved Rs. 10/-. He had a liking for shoes, so he bought for himself costly shoes for Rs. 8/- without mother's permission. On coming home he delightedly, told his mother smartly "Look I have bought shoes for me from my own savings". Sakhubai was not happy with his action. She said, "Will you be happy wearing costly shoes, while your brothers and sisters are using slippers?" Prasad at once realised his mistake. He returned the shoes and handed over all his savings to the mother. He never used shoes till he had graduated. Thus Sakhubai instilled values of love and sacrifice.





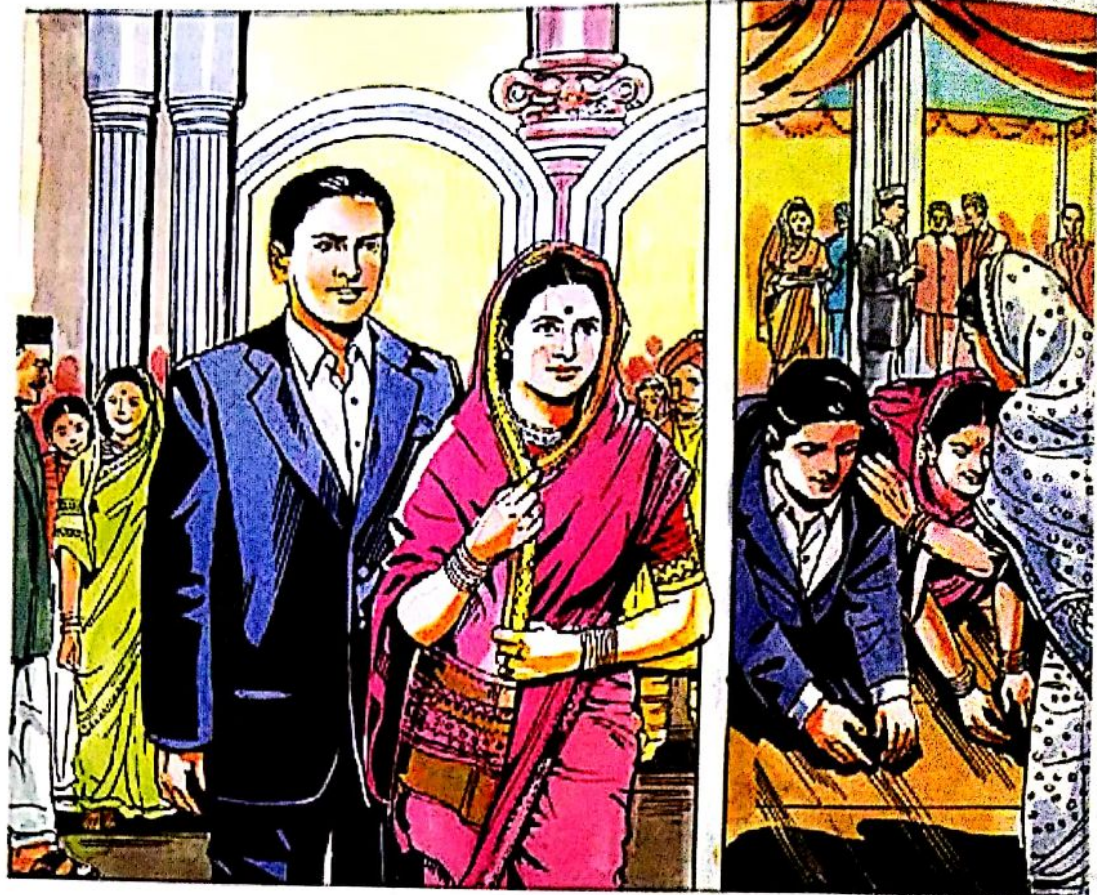
Even though they grew up in poverty all of Sakhubai's children completed their studies and began to earning. Saloman after matriculation became Head-Master in Middle

school Chhindwada. Shantwan, her next son, also joined as a teacher in the same school. David who was a good sportsman impressed the Police Superintendent Indore by his hockey skills. He requested David to join police department. At his interview David was asked to read out police diary which he read out fluently. He was then immediately appointed as a Police Officer.

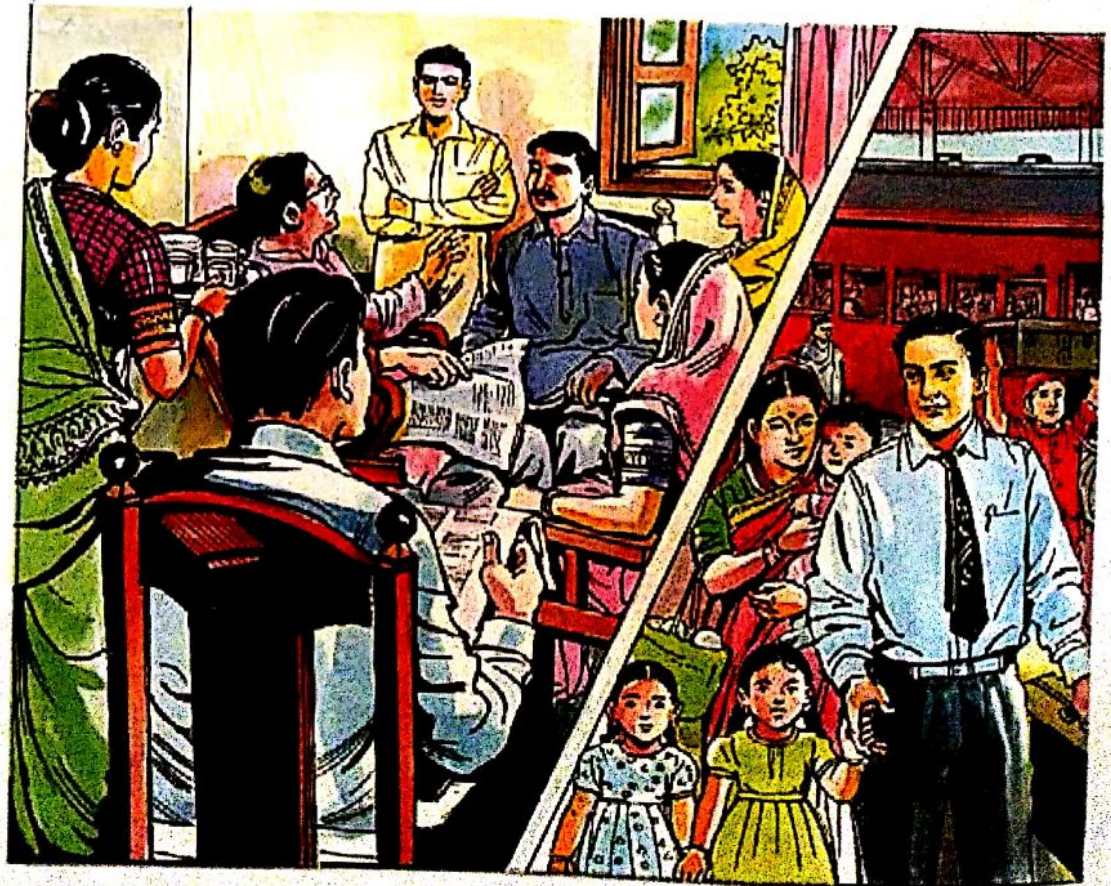


Prasadrao graduated from Christian College Indore. He wished to be a Pleader, but Law College was at Agra. So he shifted to Agra from Indore. He took up a job as a Teacher in St. John High School to earn while learning. Thus he obtained a Law Degree. He had a brilliant and exemplary academic career.

In the meantime in 1906 Prasadrao first married with Karunabai, the daughter of maternal uncle. They were blessed with three daughters Urmila, Vimala, and Ashwini while at Agra.



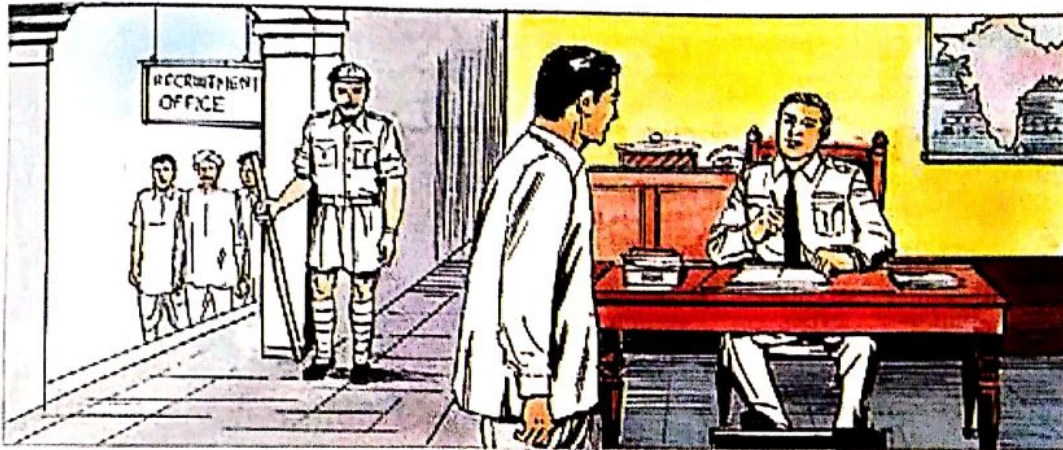
All the brothers used to gather, in summer season at elder brother Saloman's house at Chhindwada. They had gone elsewhere for their own reason. Saloman desired, at least Prasadrao should come back to Chhindwada and do his practice here. Agreeing to his persistence desire Prasadrao returned to Chhindwada and started his law practice.



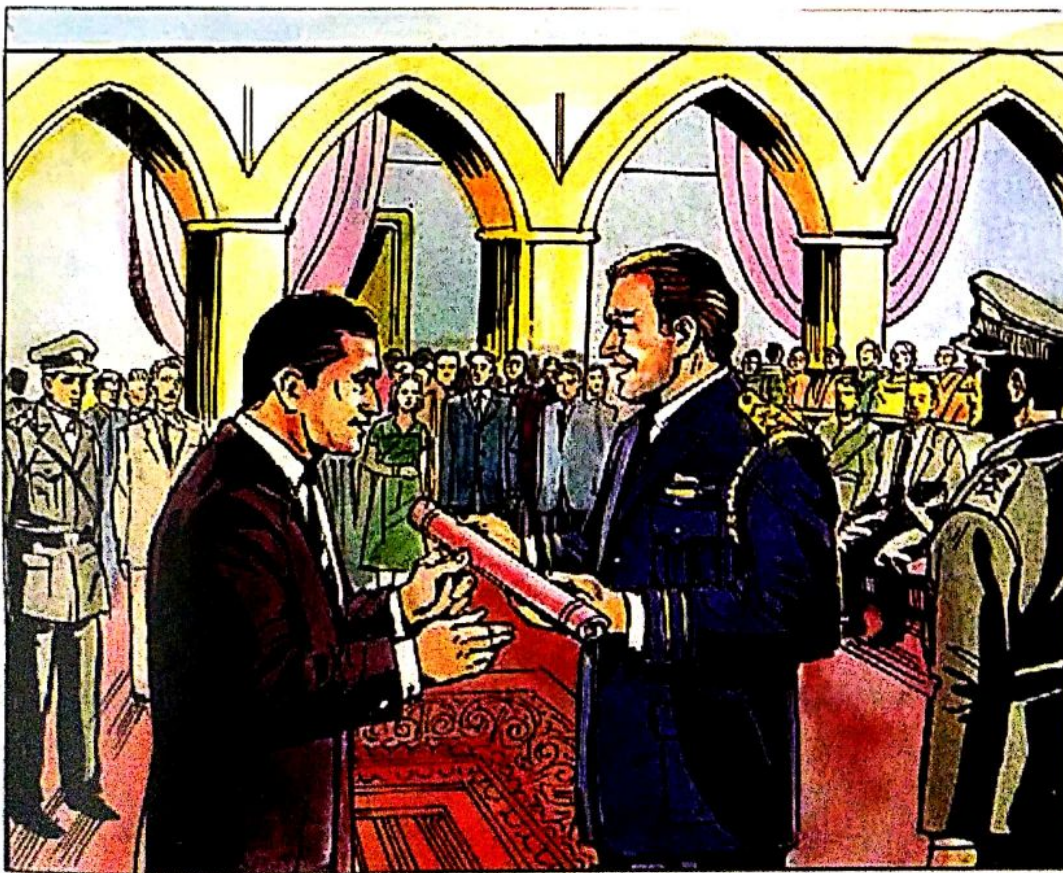




Soon due to his innate intelligent quality, Prasadrao became a renowned Advocate at Chhindwada.

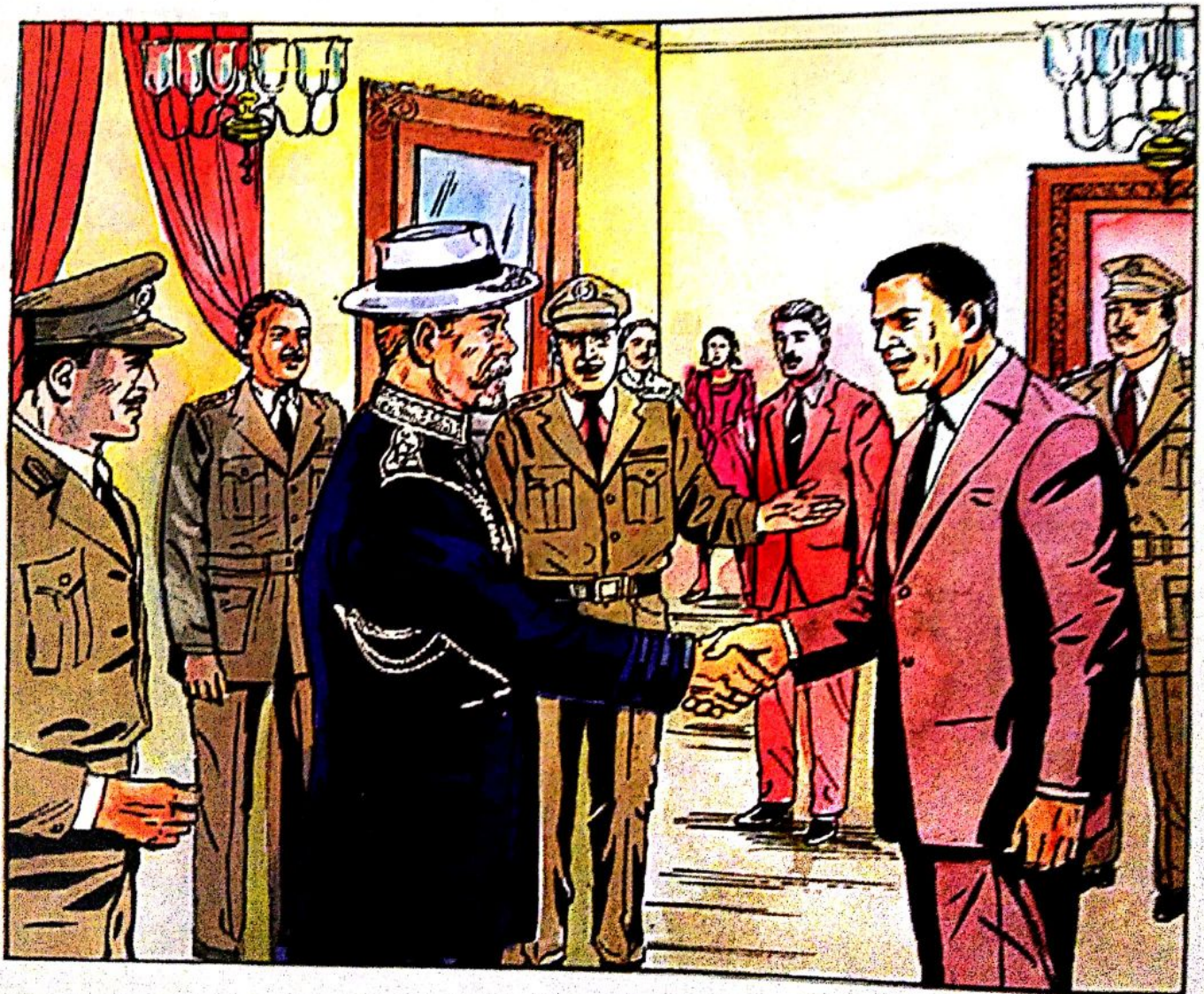


In the meantime, World War I began. Prasadrao was a very famous pleader by now. The Dy. Commissioner of Chhindwada requested him to accept the post of Recruitment officer which he accepted and executed his duty most satisfactorily.



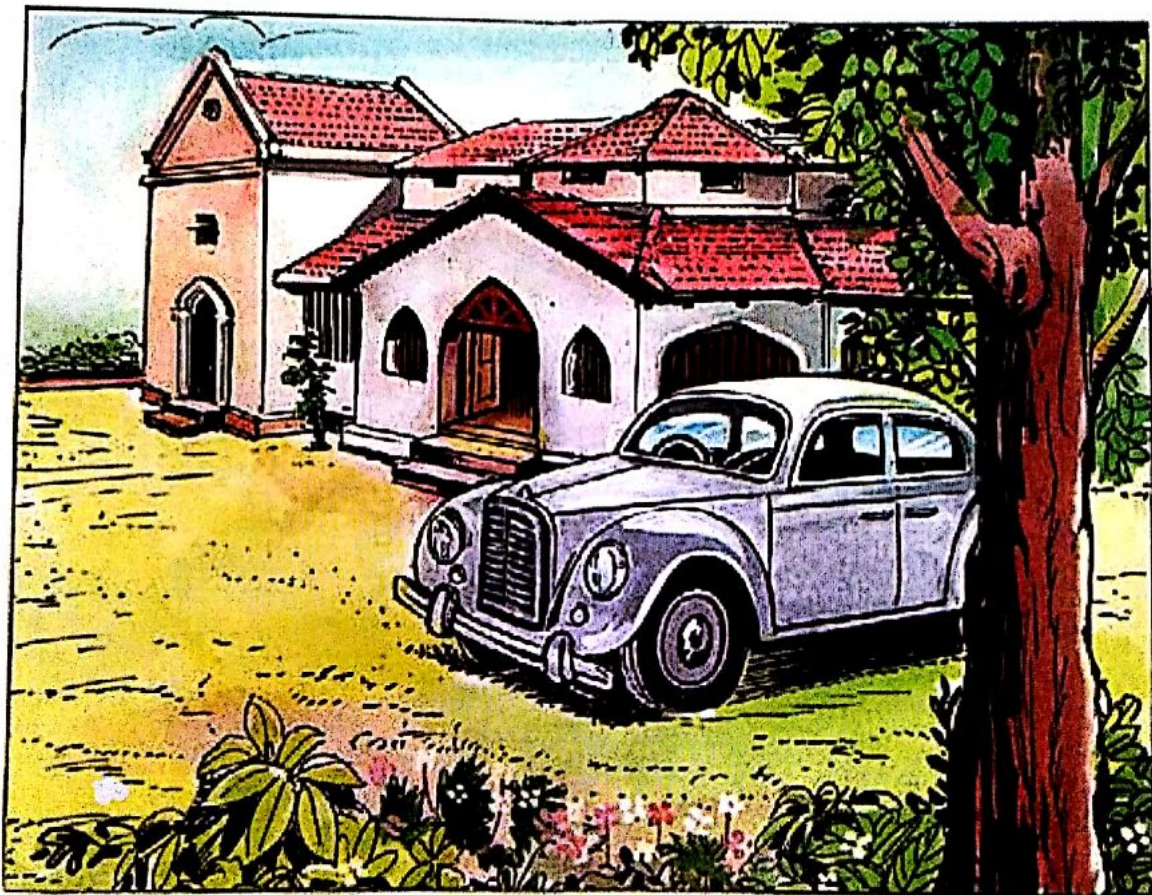
Prasadrao performed the duty of "Recruitment Officer" excellently. So the British Govt. was pleased to honor him with the respectable title of "RAOSAHEB".

The British Govt. conferred the title "Rao Sahab" on Prasadrao and requested him to accept the assignment of "Additional Assistant Commissioner". However, he modestly refused the offer as he preferred practicing Law than to be in service. When King George Vth of England visited India, Prasadrao was one of the luminaries invited by him.



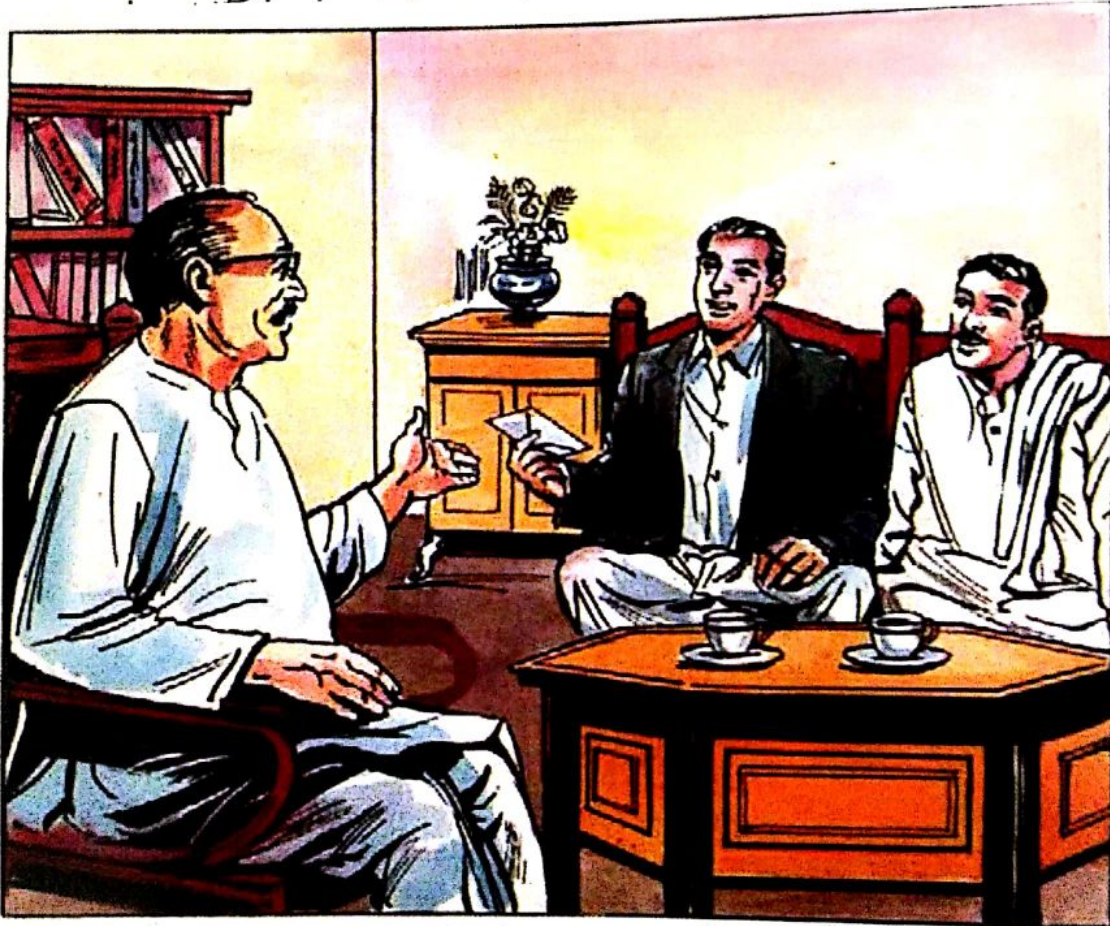
In the year 1918 the World War ceased. Prasadrao resumed his Law Practice. Initially, he practiced with the help of Advocate Rai Bahadur Mathuraprasad. In a short time he gained fame as a leading law practitioner.

In the vicinity of Chhindwada and Nagpur Prasadrao became renowned Advocate for criminal cases. He had to make frequent trips to Nagpur court for his cases. Hence he purchased a motor car. Besides he built a house at Chhindwada on Nagpur main Road. His family life was quite happy and joyous with Karunabai, a loving nature wife. They were blessed with four daughters – Urmila, Vimala, Ashwini, Kamla and youngest son Sushil. Thus his home was full of bustle and joyful.



Karunabai was an intelligent and capable woman interested in Social work. She was expert in knitting. She ran the Adult Education Institute with the help of Mrs. Lemon. Alas! cruel fate intervened and she fell seriously ill, which proved fatal. She expired on 29th Feb 1919. Urmila was then just 11 years old and the youngest Sushil was barely three years old.

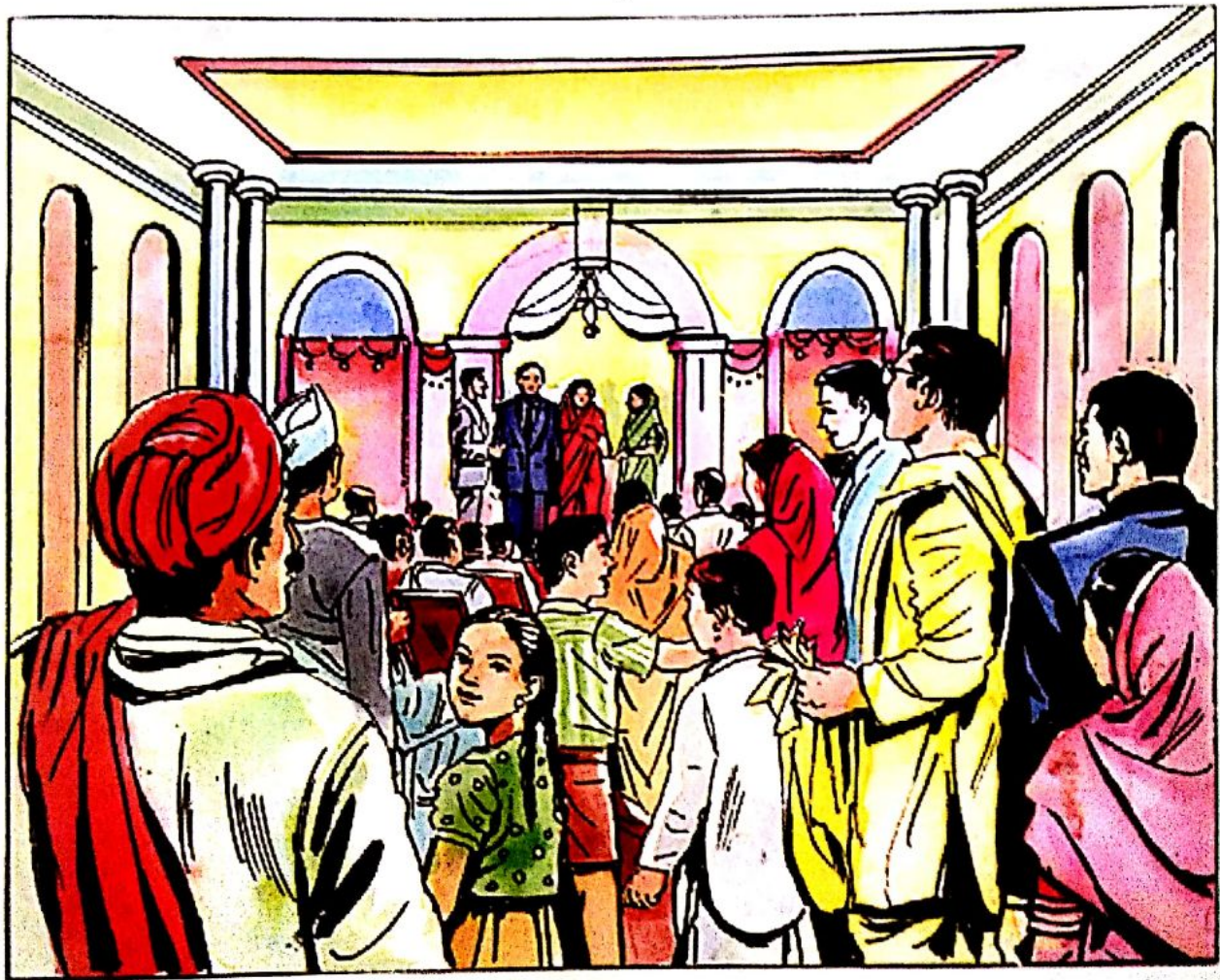
This sudden calamity on Prasadrao disturbed the family. All brothers and sister-in-laws persisted upon him to remarry for the sake of the small children whom he would not be able to attend due to his very busy practice. Finally Prasadrao relented. Mr. Jadhav was a retired Librarian from Ahmadnagar who had settled in Nagpur after retirement. He had a



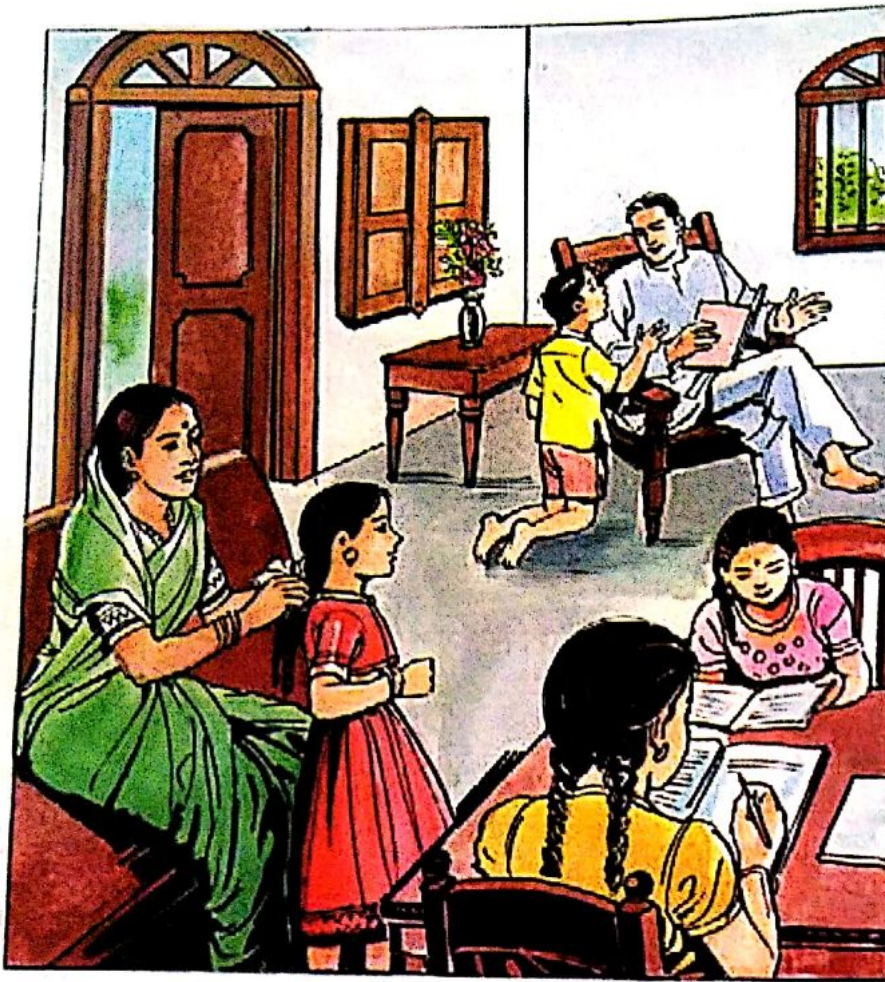
highly educated daughter Carnelia whose marriage had delayed due to her being highly qualified. She was a student of the famous Mathematician Wrangler Paranjpe and also a scholar in Ancient Indian Culture. A befitting match was not available in the then Christian Community. Common friends put up the proposal for Carnelia and Prasadrao to Mr. Jadhav. Though Prasadrao was a widower with four children, he was still young, handsome

teetotaler with no vices, an eminent advocate, God fearing, and had his own house and a car. Kind hearted and wise Carnelia accepted the proposal. She knew she would have to be a loving mother to the children.

This marriage shortly took place on 21st June 1920 at Chhindwada in E.L. Church.



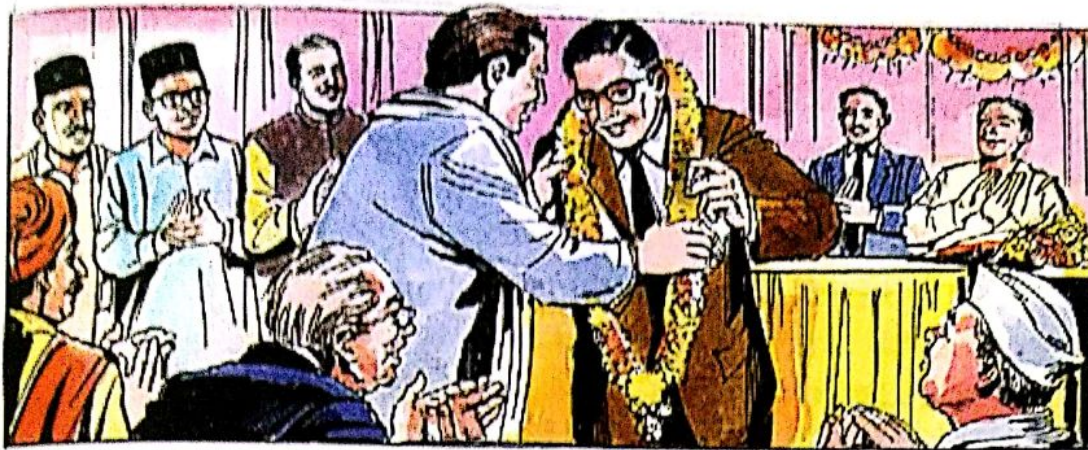
Mrs. Carnelia was honest frugal and orderly by nature. Deeply devout she at once endeared herself by her love and care to the entire family. Joy and happiness once again returned in Prasadrao's home. She had also worked as the Principal of Ursula School, Nagpur.



After this marriage Mrs. Carnelia's happy married life started at Chhindwada. Her duty as a house wife and as a step-mother of four small children was a great challenge. Gradually, by her kind and loving nature, she proved soon as if the real mother of the children.



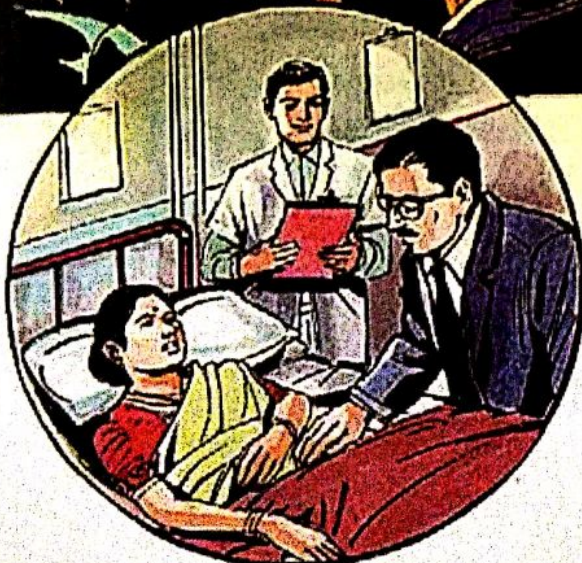
In due course of time she was blessed with a first son on 18th March 1921. He was named "Narendra". Highly qualified Mr. Narendra was famous as NKP Salve in politics. Once he was a Cabinet Minister in the Central Government of India.



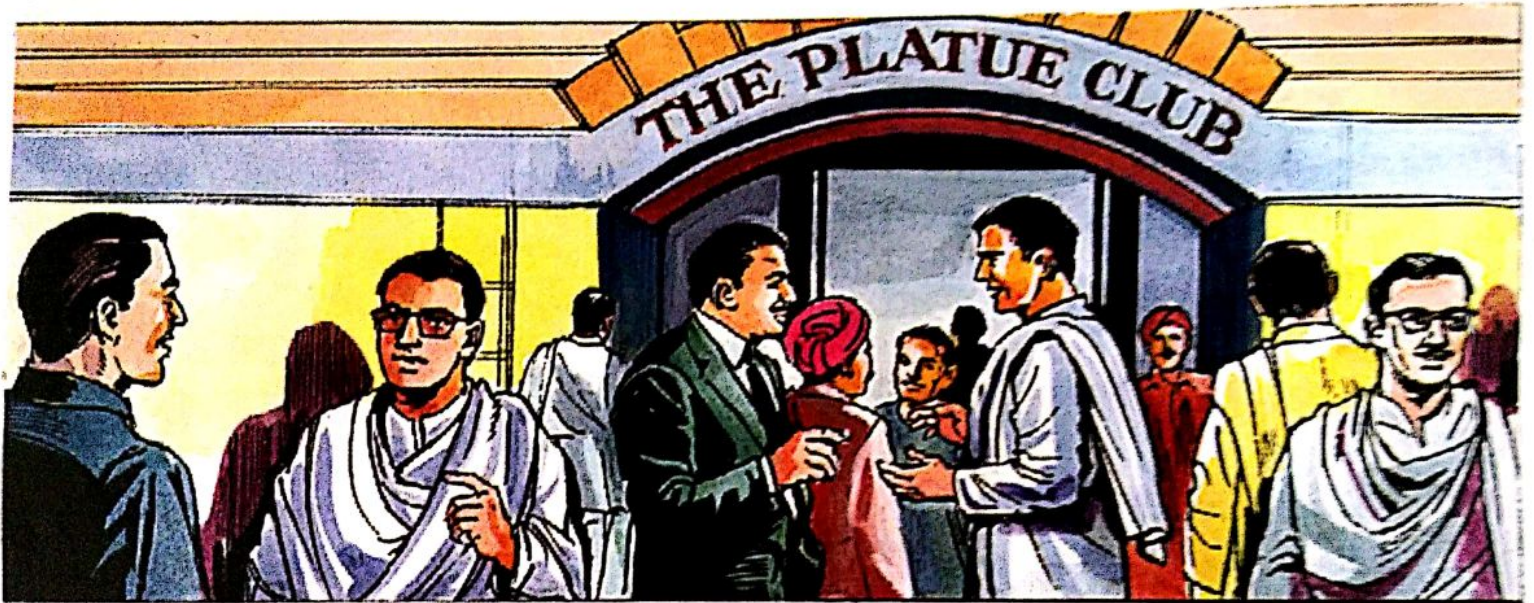
Besides being a practicing Advocate, Prasadrao took active part in politics. He was elected as Vice President of Chhindwada. He stayed in Chhindwada, till 1927.



As Vice President of Chhindwada Municipality, Prasadrao was instrumental in constructing a hospital for women. He also gave a huge personal donation to the hospital. Till date this hospital is functioning well.



Chhindwada is famous for coal mines. Many Europeans and English people were staying at Chhindwada to work in coal mines. They had formed their own sports club wherein Indian players were prohibited to become members. Therefore, Indian players also formed their own club naming PLATEAU club. Sportive natured Prasadrao and his brothers became members of this club:



Some members of the plateau club used to drink alcohol. Prasadrao being teetotaler could not tolerate this. He took a stand that at least no one should drink wine inside the club as well as in the club premises. Thus he prohibited their drinking in and outside the club. Later on for want of funds the club could not function, so the land of the club was formed into a cricket ground. Many renowned cricket players played cricket on this ground and became more famous players.

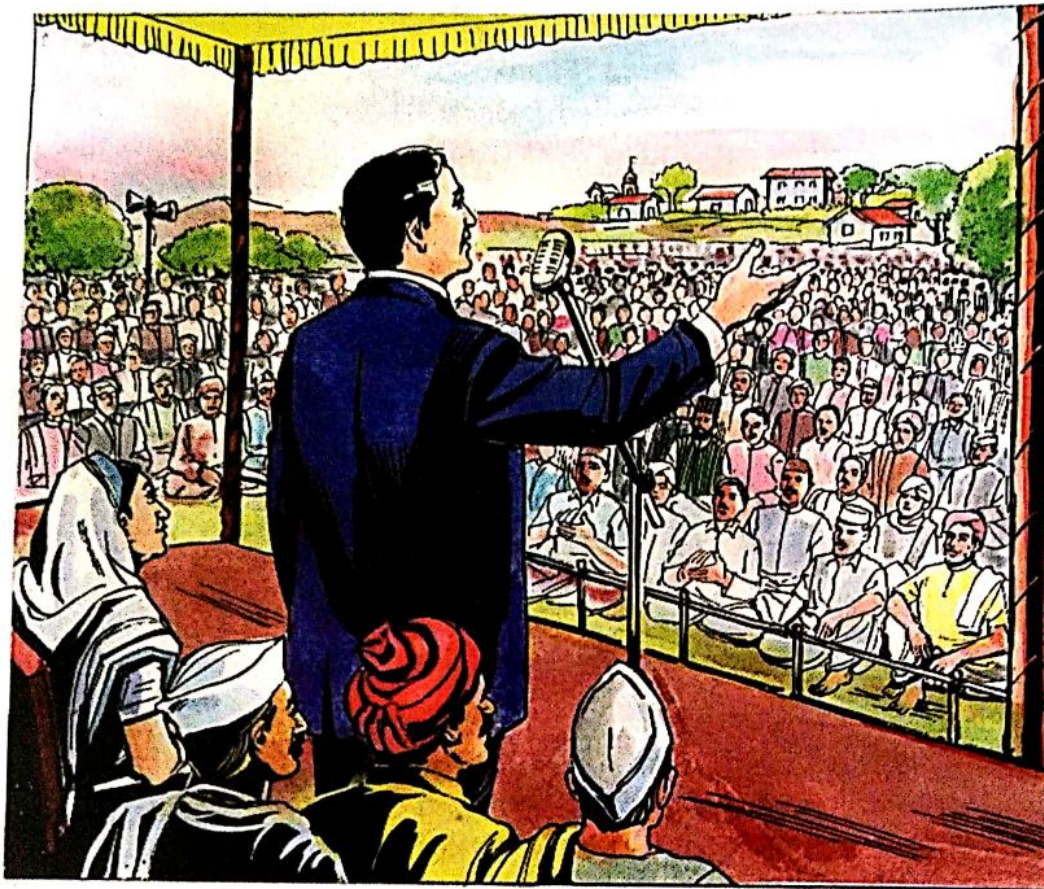


Prasadrao by nature was a staunch patriot. Once Ali Brothers, leaders of the Khilafat movement were kept under house arrest in Chhindwada in a bungalow near Prasadrao's house. They were allowed to visit Prasadrao at his house almost daily. The British Superintendent asked Prasadrao to use this intimacy to find



out of their anti-Government activities. On listening this request Prasadrao point blank refused and boldly said, "If I have been given the title of "Rausahab" by the British Govt. for doing such anti-national activities I would renounce the name rather than betray my country and my countrymen"

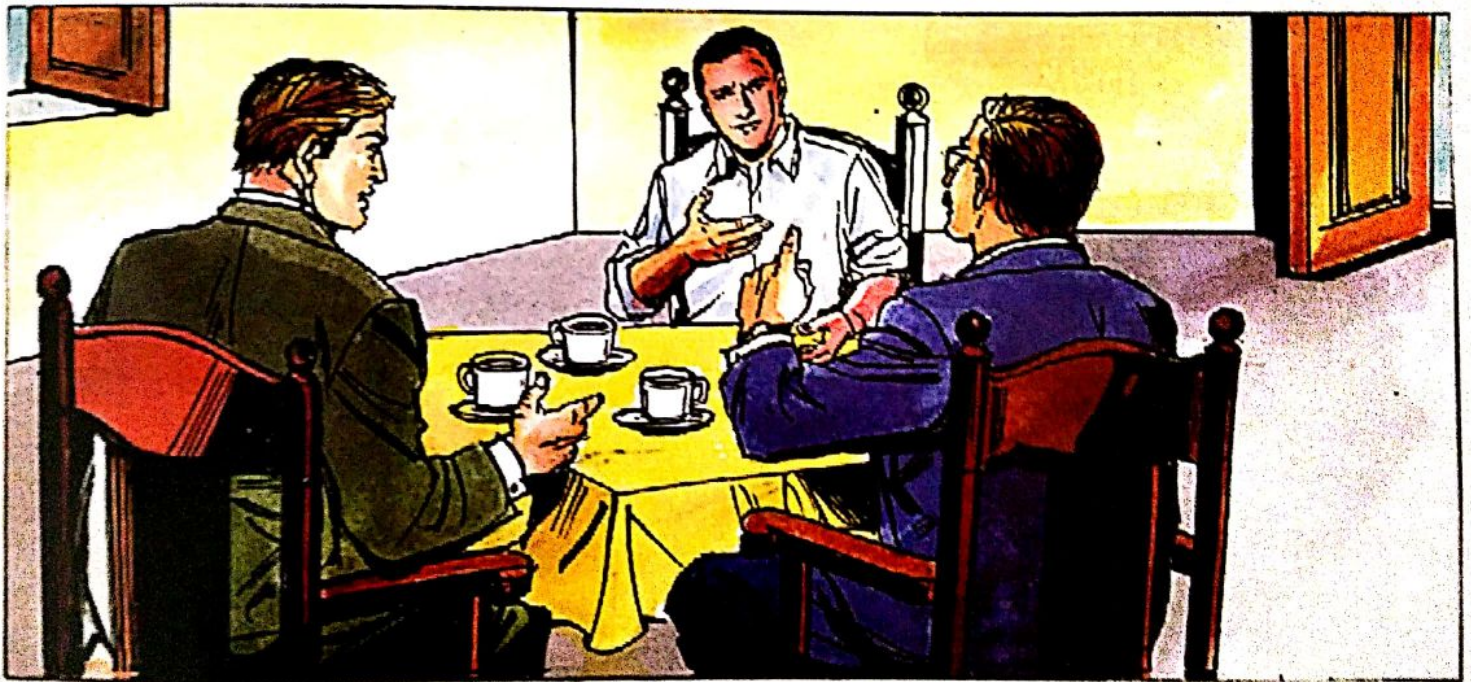
From the very beginning Prasadrao was a staunch patriot. Later he took an active part in the freedom movement.



After attending the Congress Seminar at Nagpur in 1921, Sarojini Naidu a prominent Congress leader came to Chhindwada to address the public. The Supt. of police deputed some senior police officers to record her speech so that they could charge her sedition. One officer was sitting in front of Prasadrao. He was overwhelmed by the forceful speech

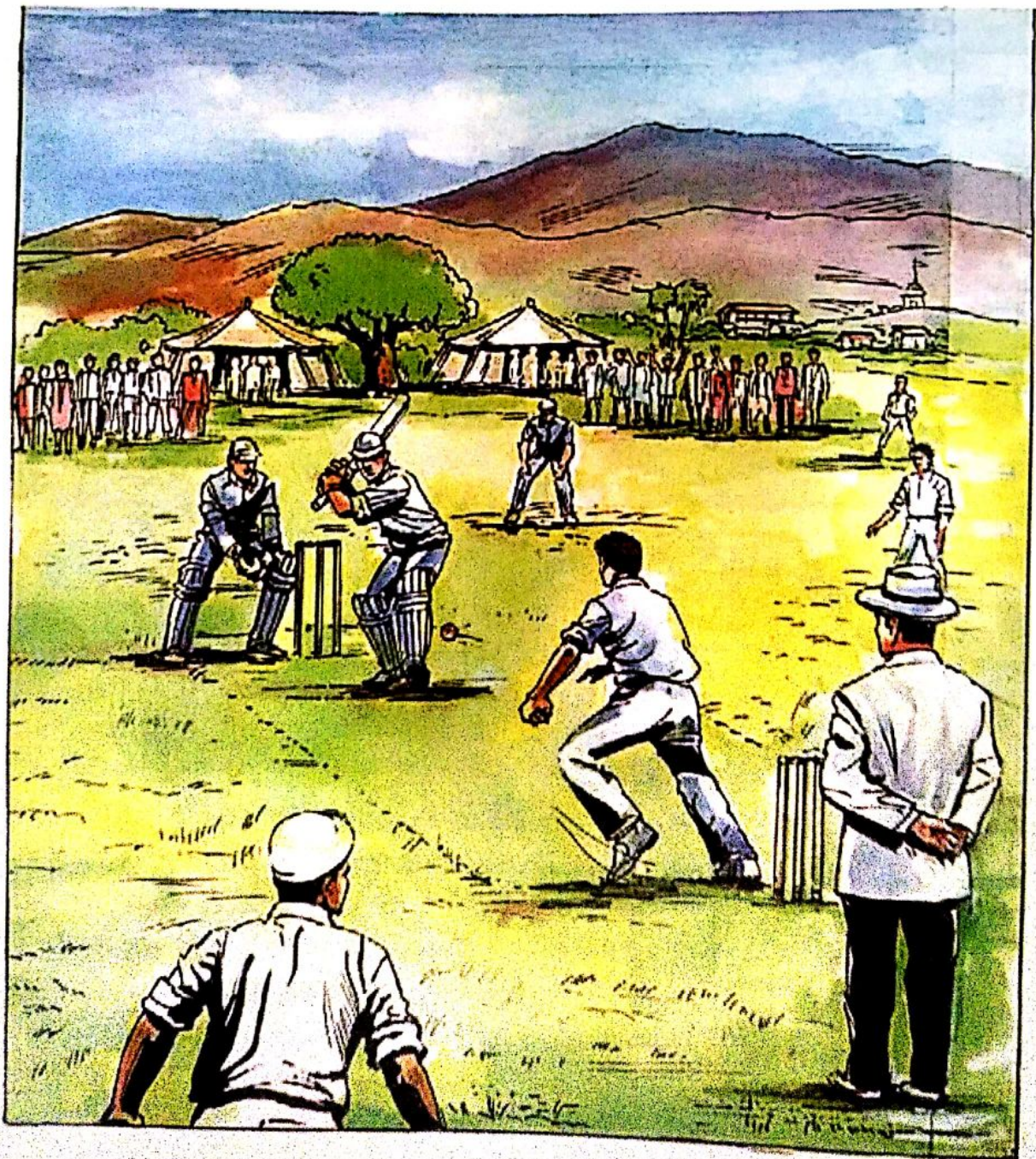
of Mrs Naidu and was applauding her instead of taking notes. Other Police officers reported this to the Dy. Commissioner. When confronted, the officer explained, "If you see my report, you will see my verbatim notes. This was possible only because I got engrossed in the speech." When this fact was narrated, Prasadrao commented, no true Indian will fail to get inspired. He recited an Urdu couplet in praise of Sarojini Naidu meaning that there may be millions educated and a few thousands graduates; but she is the sole cuckoo who sings in the garden while the rest are mere cawing crows.

Cricket matches were often played between British and Indian sportsmen at Chhidwada. During these matches two tents used to be put up close to each other for the team players and they were allowed to sit in any tent. But one Sunday, during a match, the British Superintendent in charge of ground arrangement gave orders to build two tents; the better built one under the tree shade for the British players and the other simple one away under the hot sun for the Indian players. When Prasadrao came on the field with his team, he at once noticed the discrimination and realised the demeaning intentions behind the act. He at once sent a message to the S.P. and D.C. that he was



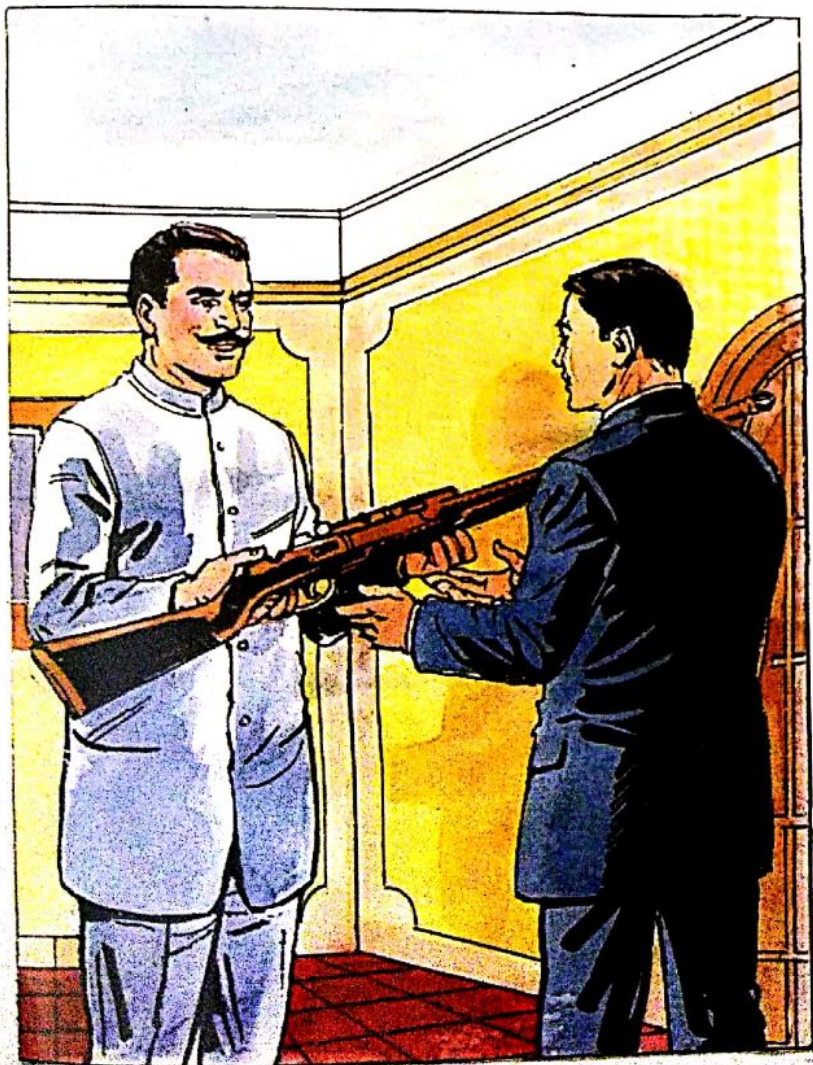
boycotting the match in protest. On reaching home he declared that the match would not be played due to the racial discriminating act of the Superintendent.

On getting match cancellation message from Prasadrao, the D.C. Colonel Ploughdon and Col. Chitaly at once met him at his house. They persuaded him to play, on this Prasadrao modestly but clearly told them that such a racial discrimination is a social crime, so not only this match but no matches will be played in future. They then assured Prasadrao to set things right. On this apology and assurance Prasadrao agreed to play and then only did his team come to the ground.

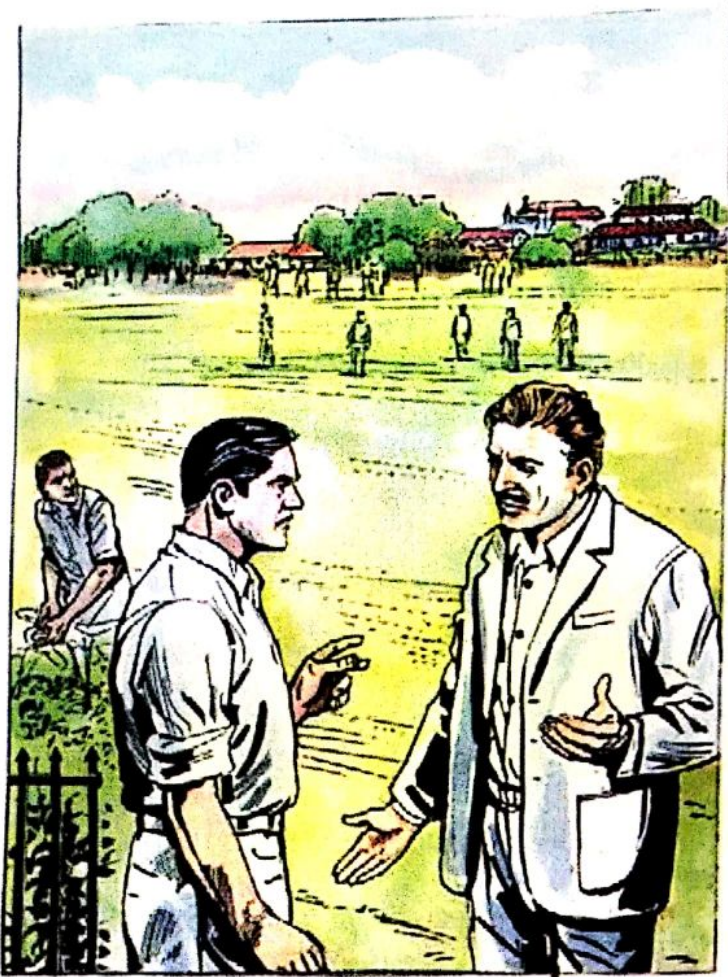




One more aspect of Prasadrao's multi talented personality was his love for hunting. He had hunted many man eating tigers. In 1921-22 the Maharajah of the princely state Khilchipur, situated near Bhopal was on a visit to Chhindwada for training as a Judicial Officer.



He was an excellent sportsman and hunter. Due to these like minded hobbies he became a close friend of Prasadrao. They often went for hunting together. Once Prasadrao killed two wild animals with a single bullet shot from his Rifle No.301. The Maharajah was so impressed by this skill that he gifted Prasadrao with a gun of higher calibre and range. After his training, The Maharajah returned to Khilchipur. But he fondly invited Prasadrao and his family as state guests of Khilchipur. Prasadrao visited Khilchipur for 8 days to honour the Maharajah's invitation. At that time Shri Mataji was only one year old. Strangely, she remembers minute details of the Khilchipur visit.



Apart from cricket Prasadrao was also fond of Hockey, football, billiards, tennis etc., and also he was a good swimmer. Due to his love and interest towards sports, Prasadrao earned a lot of friends.

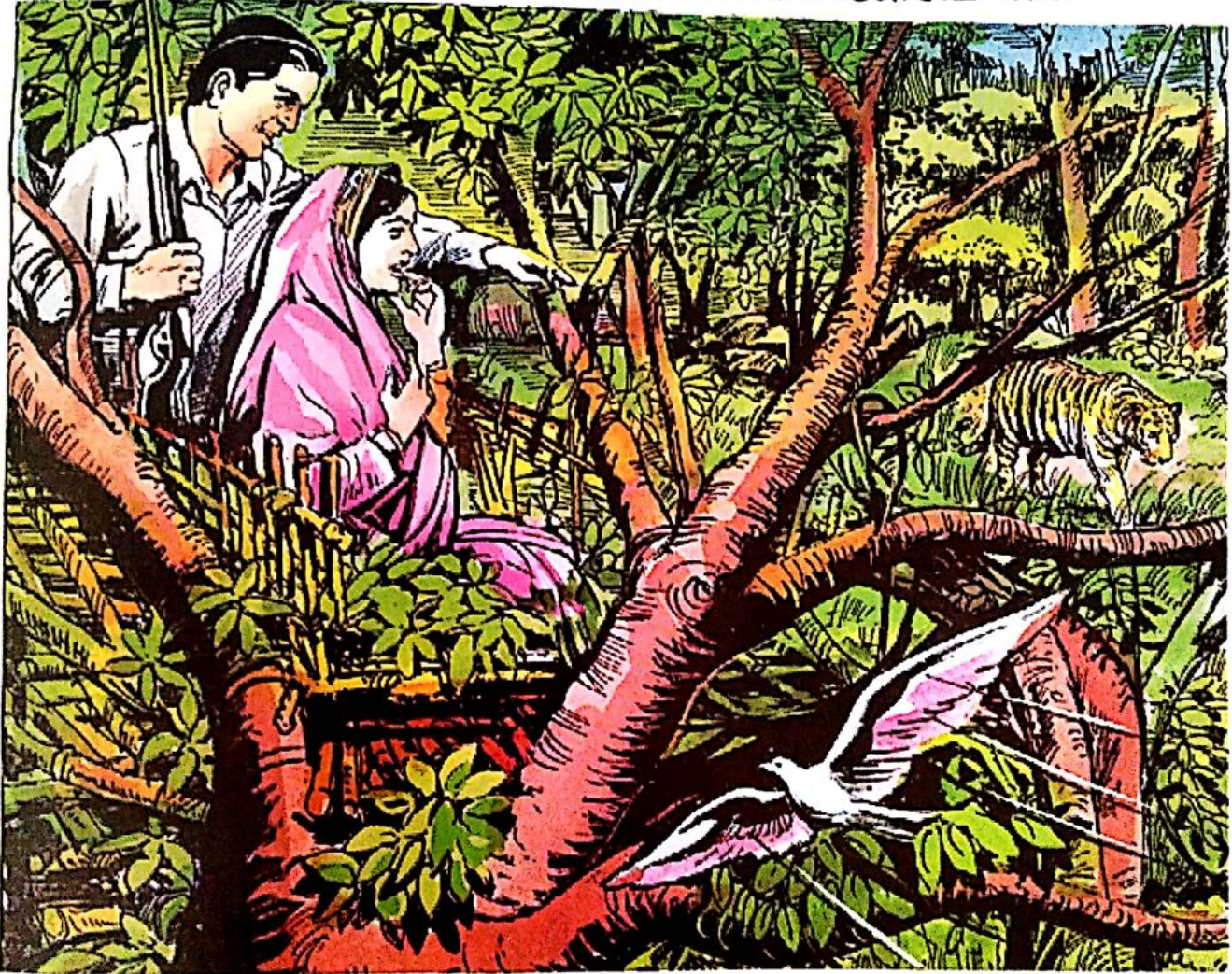
Prasadrao's friends also included famous Judge Mr. Pollock whose judgments and verdicts are referred even today in several cases. Justice Pollock earned title 'Cambridge Blue' for his achievements while playing for Cambridge University.

Justice Pollock was impressed by Prasadrao as a cricketer as well as good advocate.

Prasadrao earned fame during Justice Pollock's tenure. Apart from Justice Pollock, Prasadrao also had friends like Colonel Ploughdon the District Magistrate, and Justice Abdul Subhan Khan-like many famous people. Prasadrao was also well-versed in fourteen different languages.



Mrs. Cornelia was expecting Nirmala (Mataji) in the beginning of March 1923, she had a strong desire to see a tiger in the wild. There is a custom in Hindus to fulfill the desires of the pregnant woman as they are considered as omens and signs of the future nature of the foetus. When she told her wish to Prasadrao he at once organised a hunting expedition in the nearby jungle along with Mrs. Cornelia. There were drum beaters and shouters who



would wake up the animals. A wooden frame was built on a tree to sit safely to watch animals. Both sat on the frame. After a while, a large tigress came in shooting range. Mrs. Cornelia observed carefully and noticed that the tigress was too pregnant. She stopped Prasadrao from hunting the pregnant tigress. On her compassion for the tigress, Prasadrao jokingly remarked "It must be the Goddess Durga who rides on a tiger, in your womb!" How prophetic these words proved to be!

On 21st March 1923 the day of the Solar Equinox Mrs. Cornelia started having labour pains. She was hurriedly taken in to the middle room. Soon at the very stroke of mid-day she gave birth to a radiant baby girl of spotlessly fair and pink complexion with jet black hair. The child's birth was unique in many ways :-



The child did not cry. Had to make her cry.

The mother had very little labour pain.

The child had radiant bright shining eyes with charming smile.

When Renukabai saw her she said ---- The child was Nishkalanka, without any blemish on the body. Nishkalanka is the name of 10th incarnation of lord Vishnu. Being a girl let us call her "Nirmala".

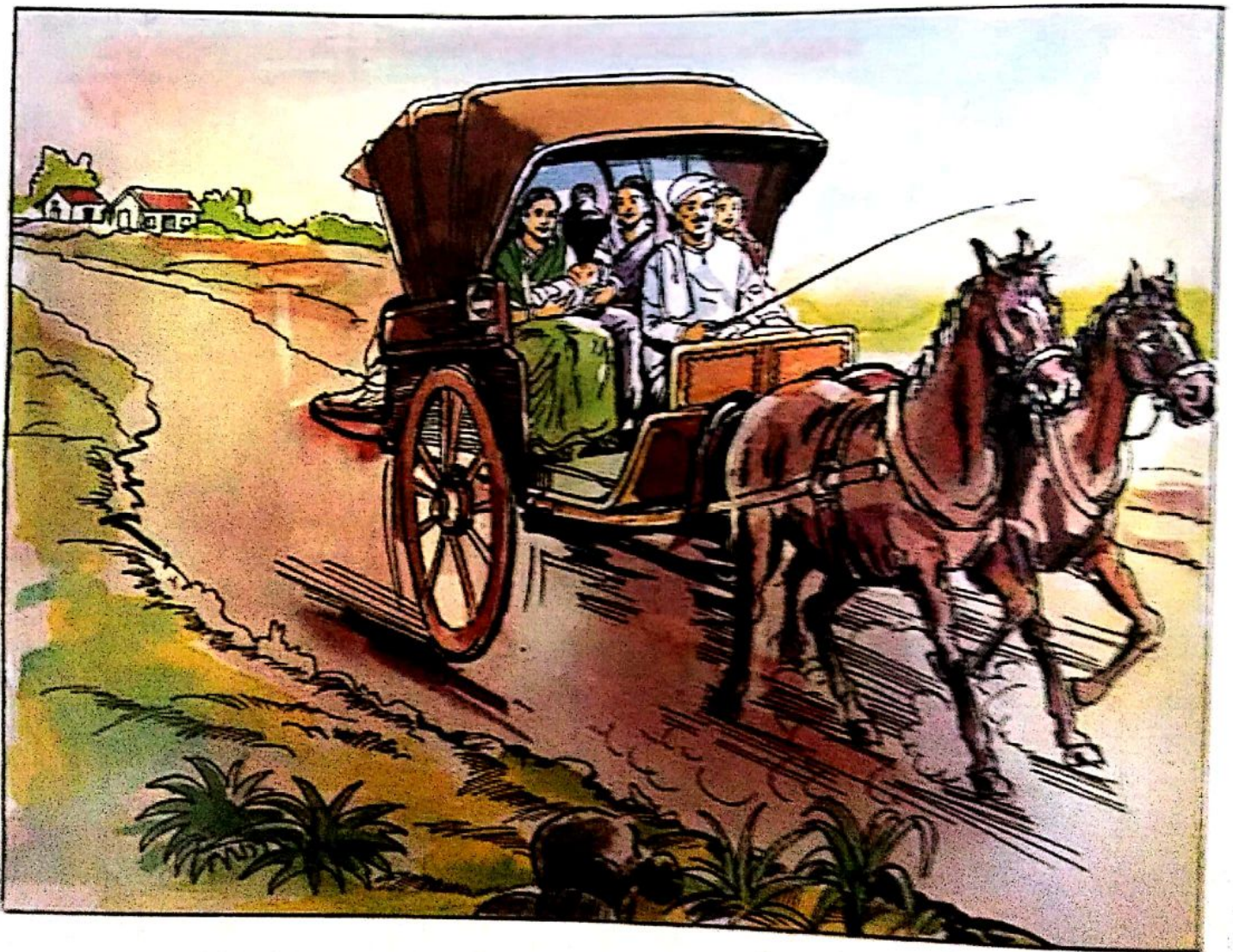


The birth of the child was unique in the following ways :-

- Birth time - Exactly middle of the day... 12:00 Noon.
- Birth Date - 21st March, is significant because the day and night are exactly equal that is 12 hours each.
- Day of birth - Wednesday - It falls in the middle of the week.  
Many Saints were born of Wednesday
- Place of birth - Chhindwada, which remarkably located both in the center of India and also on the center of 'Tropic of Cancer' which again passes from the middle of country
- The child took birth in a Royal family
- The parents were pious and righteous.
- They had the sense of honesty and truthfulness.
- They were scholars and well-versed in Sanskrit language.
- They were extremely patriotic.

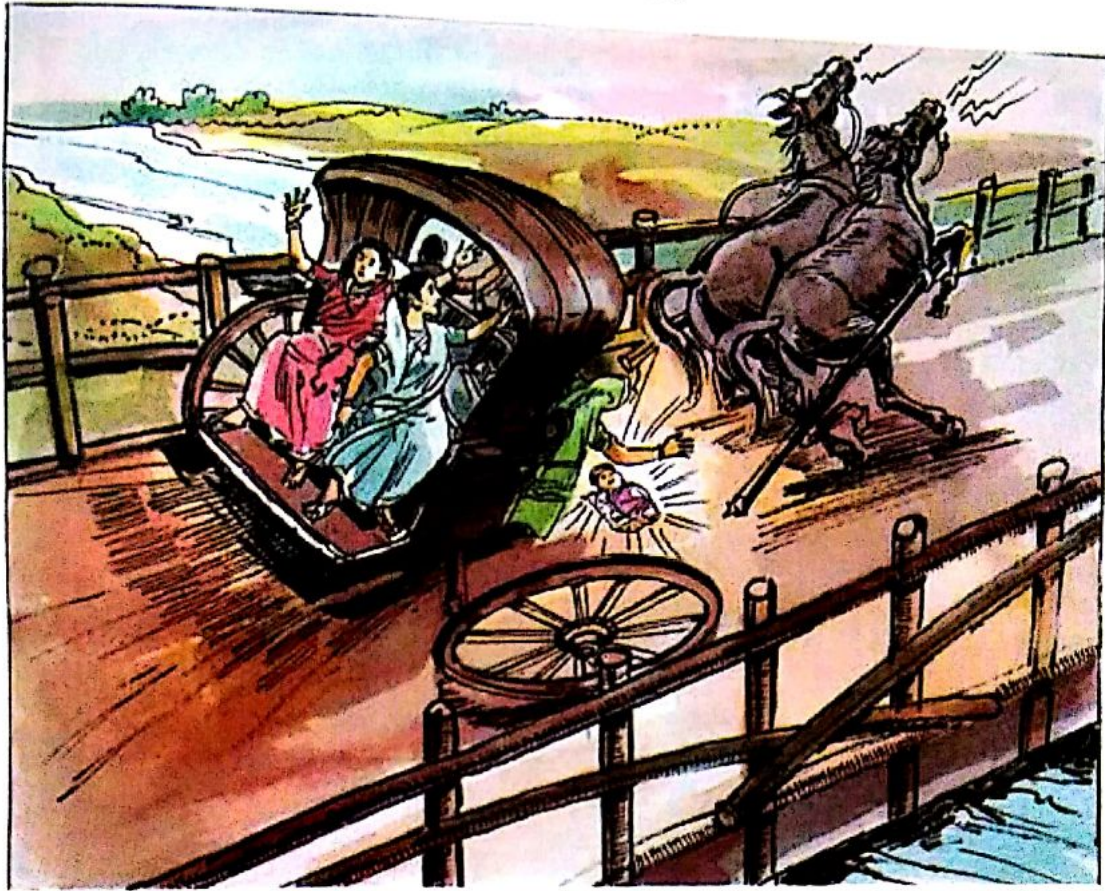


This great Soul will take birth in INDOIA, Was the prediction of great saint Brugu Muni, in his ancient book "Nadigrantha". This prediction was further Calculated thoroughly by Bhujander Swami and stated firmly that the period of the incarnation will be around the year 1923. Thus the prediction came true with the birth of H.H. Shri MATAJI in the year 1923.

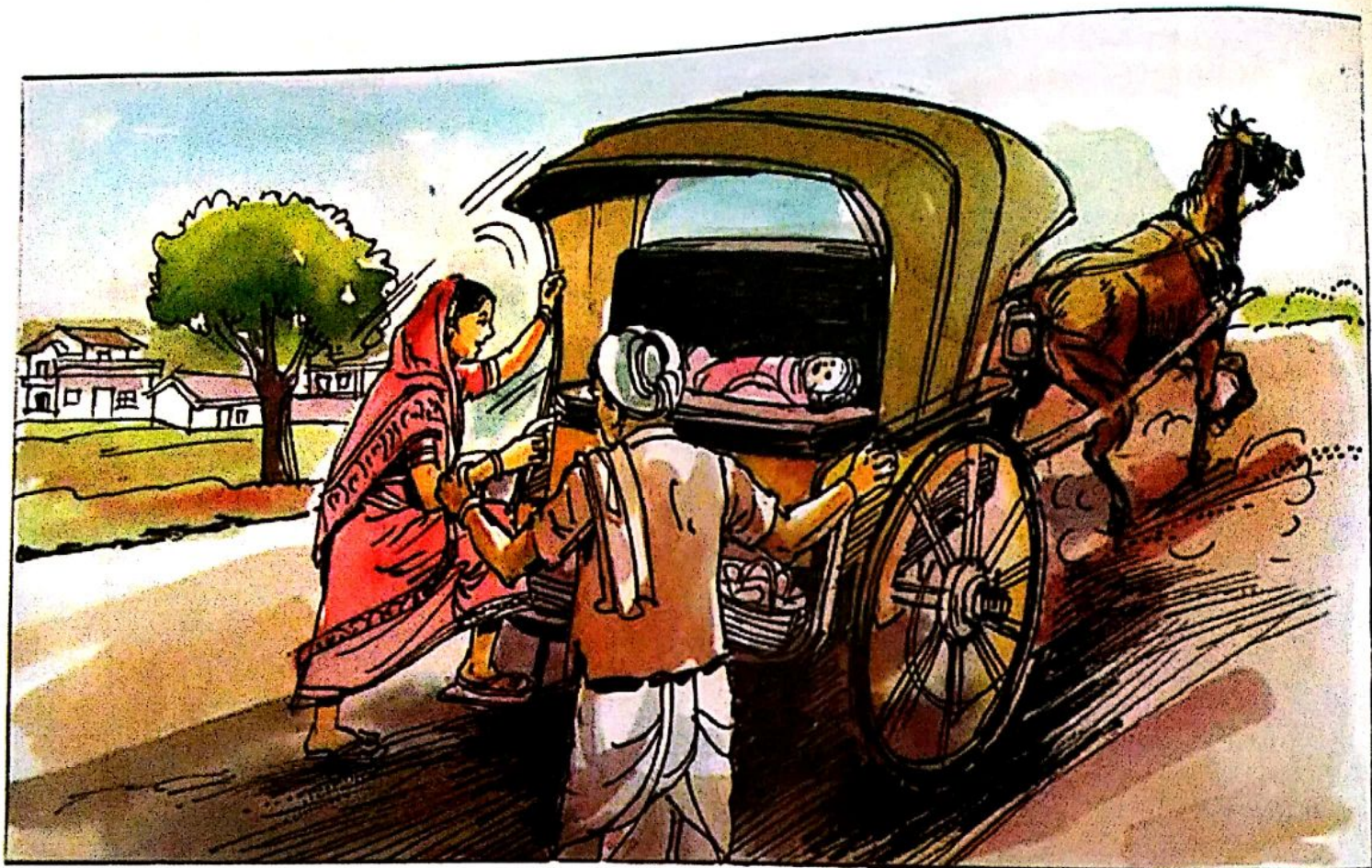


On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of her birth Shri Mataji was to be baptised and for the same to go to the Church of Chindwada. She was accompanied by her Mother, her aunt and aunts and cousin Uttam to a Church at Chindwada in a Horse-Carriage

On their way to the church as the Horse-Carriage was crossing wooden bridge on the Bardi river one of the wheels of the carriage came out and the carriage tilted. Because of this mishap the horses of the carriage went wild and the tanga broke at the middle in two parts Shri MATAJI fell down from the carriage and everybody's condition was miserable.



When they recovered their senses, everybody looked out for Shri MATAJI who was surprisingly unhurt and smiling on the ground. At this sight everybody were delighted as the baby was safe and sound



Once when Shri MATAJI was six months old in the arm she was taken to the Market place of chindwada by the mother for some shopping, Though the market was not too far from their bungalow (around one mile). Shri Mataji's mother hired a tanga for return after shopping the needful.

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Shri Mataji's Mother first put Shri Mataji on the back seat of the tanga and as she was about to board the carriage she found it difficult to board and hence Shri Mataji's mother called the Tanga driver to help to climb the step. But suddenly the Tanga for unknown reason started moving without the driver and poor mother and the Tanga driver started running after the Tanga which was without anybody to control and little Mataji was in it on the back seat but everything went in vain. The tanga was rushing ahead.



Everybody on the way were watching out this Tanga which was running without driver as it was evident that this carriage will come across any accident. Her mother and the Tanga driver followed this Tanga in other Tanga. The Tanga carrying Mataji reached to a T-junction which had right and left ways but straight across the road there was a very deep ditch. If the tanga continues to go straight it would have fallen into ditch and had it turned right it would have gone the opposite direction from Mataji's bungalow but surprisingly the tanga carrying Mataji slowed down near the T-junction and took a left from the junction. And amazingly the unmanned carriage carrying little Mataji reached the bungalow and stopped exactly on the gate of the bungalow. And the little Mataji was safe and sound on the back seat.

In a short while scared mother and the Tanga driver reached the bungalow and found SHRI MATAJI lying on the back seat, without showing any sign of fear. She gave her usual smile that relieved mother and delighted her for the miracle that saved her child later on. She hugged her child and thanked God almighty. Everyone was surprised to know that the Tanga which was carrying the little baby was without a driver.

In spite of that the little baby reached home safely. Since her childhood, Shri Mataji manifested her divine powers. Baba Mama says "I need not mention who was controlling the "Tanga" which did not have a driver."

