



MAHATMA JYOTIBA PHULE : HIS ROLE IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

PARMOD KUMAR

DEPT. OF HISTORY, KURUKSHETRA UNIVERSITY, KURUKSHETRA, HARYANA.

ABSTRACT:

One of the most notable social reformers in India throughout the nineteenth century is JYOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE. Jyotiba Phule rebelled against the unjust caste system of Hinduism. Many social and political philosophers launched movements against these systems and practices during this time. These intellectuals sought to improve women's status in social, economic, educational, and political spheres. These sociopolitical philosophers, including Mahatma Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and others, formed movements to promote equality for women, members of the underclass, and dalits. So, one of the first leaders who vehemently condemned gender inequity was Mahatma Phule. He truly was a remarkable thinker and truth-finder. He believed that only when each person sought the truth and changed as a result could human society stay content. He claimed that during British control, the common people had the chance to free themselves from the Brahmins' slavery. Caste and gender issues were raised by Jyotiba. He rose up in rebellion against the unfair caste system, which had long caused suffering to millions of people. Phule sought to construct a society based on the values of individual liberty and equality in place of the oppressive Indian social system, and he would have preferred to replace Hinduism with a global religion. In India, Jyotirao Phule is regarded as a champion of women's education. In 1848, he and his wife Savitribai Phule established the first school for girls. He made significant contributions to the problems of women and advocated for widow remarriage and against child marriage. He brought up the issue of women's oppression, and his ideas on how to end it through women's own initiative and autonomy place him in the same category of other male feminist scholars. In this essay, I try to analyse Mahatma Phule's ideas and his fundamental philosophy regarding the empowerment and educational efforts which were done by him for women in Indian society.

KEYWORDS:

AUTONOMY, CONTRIBUTION, EDUCATIONAL, EMPOWERMENT, INTELLECTUAL, PHILOSOPHY, WOMEN.

Lack of education leads to lack of wisdom, which leads to lack of morals, which leads to lack of progress which leads to lack of money, which leads to the oppression of the lower classes. See what state of society one lack of education can cause

- Mahatma Jyotirao Phule

INTRODUCTION

On April 11, 1827, Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was born in Maharashtra's Satara District at Katgun. He was an Indian social reformer, writer, theologian, and activist. In India, he and his wife Savitri Bai Phule were pioneers in the field of women's education. His work included a wide range of topics, such as untouchability eradication and the upliftment of women and widows as well as caste system reform, education, and agriculture. He is renowned for working to educate both the public and the lowest castes, as well as women. He started the first school for girls in August 1848 after educating his wife. In order to achieve equal rights for peasants and members of lower castes, Phule founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj in September 1873 together with his supporters. He was introduced to Satya Shodhak Samaj with the intention of achieving the goal of advancing the welfare of underprivileged groups including Shudras, women, and Ati Shudras. The following are actually references to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule's services to the welfare of women and members of the underprivileged classes.

TIMELINE – MAHATMA JYOTIBA PHULE-

- 1827 born in Khatgun, Satara in a poor peasant family
- 1840 married to Savitri Bai
- 1848 started first school for poor girls with his wife Savitri Bai
- 1854 started a home for upper caste widows for prevent female infanticide
- 1873 formed the Satya Shodhak Samaj for attain kiii rights for peasants and people from lower castes
- 1888 honored with the title of Mahatma
- 1890 died [aged 63] in Pune, Maharashtra.

SOME IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT JYOTIBA PHULE-

There are certain crucial details regarding this outstanding personality to remember:

1. George Washington and Chhatrapati Shivaji's biographies had both been read by Phule. They served as his main source of inspiration.

2. Thomas Paine's ideas and book "The Rights of Man" had an impact on Phule. Phule sought to replace the exploitative Indian social order with one based on the ideals of personal freedom and equality, and he intended to replace Hinduism with a universal religion.

3. Phule was the first person to advocate for human rights and equality. We should comprehend and recognise the great significance of his unwavering support for human rights.

SOME LITERARY WORKS DONE BY JYOTIBA PHULE -

The following books by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule contain his philosophy:

1. Brahmanacha Kasab (1969), in which Phule exposes the Brahmin priests' exploitation of the oppressed.

2. Gulamgiri (1873): He provided historical proof of the enslavement of lower castes in this book. Tell the story of Brahmin dominance in India's past. He warned the populace against exploitation in the guise of religion because religious epics are written by men.

3. Shetkaryancha Asud (1883): He wrote about the exploitation of peasants in this book.

He has examined the historical exploitation of peasants.

4. Sarvajanik Satyadharm Pustak (1891): He introduced the idea of a universal religion in this book and discussed blind faiths.

HIS VIEWS ON EDUCATION-

Phule advocated for universal, obligatory, and innovative education. He thought that education for women and members of lower castes should take precedence. As a result, he started educating his wife Savitribai at home and inaugurated the first girls' school in India in August 1848. On the first day, only eight girls were admitted. The number of students grew steadily. In 1851 and 1852, Jyotirao opened two further girl's schools. Phule was the first social reformer from India who focused in the situation of basic education system. He was constantly spreading awareness about education and pressuring the British government to develop plans for the education of all Indians. He advocated for everyone's right to an equal education, regardless of caste or socioeconomic status. He was aware that after educating the populace, they would stand up for their rights without assistance from others. He gave new meaning to the word "education." Real education equips a person to stand on their own two feet. Preliminary understanding of agriculture and health ought to be covered in the basic curriculum. Primary school curricula should be revised to better meet the needs of rural communities. The curriculum for rural and urban areas should be clearly separated. To meet the demands of society, education should be practical and utilitarian.

Whatever the lower castes' history of oppression, education is the key to their liberation. He strongly disagreed with schooling. He firmly asserted that, as previously indicated, the fundamental reason for the

degeneration of lower castes is a lack of knowledge. "Mahatma Jyotiba Phule highlighted the importance of education for all people. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule spent much of his life working to change society and promote equality. In accordance with his principles, Dr. Ambedkar drafted the constitution, which includes provisions for universal access to free and compulsory education. However, the goal of this article, which was to be accomplished within 10 years of the constitution's inception, has not yet been met. Thus, it is crucial to discuss and put into practise Mahatma Jyotirao's opinions on education.

HIS VIEWS ON EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE-

Mahatma Phule claimed that the inequalities between men and women and the Brahmins' clever exploitation of the gullible people were the foundation of Indian society. Phule held that all men and women were made free and capable of exercising their rights by the same God who created the universe. All men and women were created by the creator to be the guardians of all human rights, preventing any one man or group of men from repressing an individual. All men and women have been given the right to freedom of religion and government by the Creator.

HIS VIEWS ON MEN AND WOMEN-

In Indian society, women were another group that was subjected to oppression. Phule consistently references both men and women. He didn't take it for granted that if men were addressed, women were immediately categorized in the same category. He specifically mentions women while talking about human rights. Phule's main issue at the time was the marriage system. He denounced taboos and conventions such child marriage, young girl marriages to older men, polygamy, opposition to women getting remarried, prostitution, harassing widows, etc. He counselled the Shudra peasants against taking on additional wives and against marrying their young children. He had carefully considered the concept of marriage and created a straightforward, contemporary rite in the form of a contract for the Satya Shodhak Samaj members' weddings (Truth Seeking Society). It's significant to note that Phule asserted that women were superior to males in many ways and did not only envision equal position for women in marriage, family life, education, and religion.

CONTRIBUTION OF SATYA SODHAK SAMAJ-

Jyotirao founded Satya Shodhak Samaj (society of seekers of truth) on September 24, 1873, with the intention of liberating the Shudras to stop their "exploitation" by Brahmins. He served as the organization's first president and treasurer. Through the group (Satya Shodhak Samaj), Phule rejected the idea of the Vedas being inviolate. He also disagreed with the notion and outright criticised the caste system. This group advocated for the propagation of reason and rejected the need for Brahmin priests to serve as educators and religious authorities. He was an Indian native who formed Satyadharm and never abandoned his

faith. He was also against those particular Brahmins who were exploiting people's faith in religion and mindless obedience to further their own financial interests.

EFFORTS FOR EMPOWERING THE SHUDRAS AND WOMEN-

Jyotirao committed himself to working for educational change. He was of the opinion that the Sudras of the Hindu community, as well as women, should pursue contemporary education. Even the Brahmins at the time opposed teaching their ladies. He made the decision to start a school for girls because, if a woman was educated, her home could serve as a classroom where she could instruct her children. Meanwhile, his friend Sadashivrao Govande drove him to Ahmednagar, a Christian missionaries' educational hub. They went to Madame Farrar's mission school, where she expressed her regret about the terrible state of women's education in India. She believed that every Indian man should educate his wife so that she can assist him in promoting education. As a result, when Jyotirao returned to Pune, he convinced his wife to pursue a degree; she did so and subsequently founded a school for girls from lower castes. Girls from untouchable castes including the Mahars, Mangs, and Chamars were welcome to attend this institution. Jyotirao opened a girls' school in Anna Chiplunkar's residence at Budhwar Peth on July 3, 1851, where he taught for four hours every day without receiving payment. The committee, which was made up of Keshav Shivram Bhavalkar, Anna Sahastrabuddhe, Bapuraoji Mande, Vishnu Bhide, Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, and Vishnushastri Pandit, was established by him and given management of the institution. Later on, Vishnushastri Pandit rose to fame for advocating widow remarriage. Eight females were enrolled when the school originally opened, but soon that number grew to forty-eight. Because of the school's tenuous financial situation, Jyotirao's wife started teaching on a volunteer basis and eventually took over as principal. Jyotirao rose to prominence as a proponent of women's education. On September 17, 1851, he opened a second girls' school in Rasta Peth, and on March 15, 1859, he opened a third in Peth. Reading, grammar, mathematics, geography, history, map reading, and other subjects were included in the curriculum. In a report, the school's manager, Major Candy, stated: "I am glad to notice the intelligence and advancement of the girls." After a public inspection of Jyotirao's school on February 17, 1852, Bhansaheb Mande delivered a speech. It is unfortunate that our nation's citizens have not yet been persuaded of the importance of educating women, he remarked. This time a judge by the name of Brown was present. He cited Milton in his address when he argued that educating women would increase family harmony and the value of the nuclear family. The Mahars and Mangs were beheaded before the British arrived for their offences against members of higher classes.

CONCLUSION-

The personality of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, who made significant contributions to India's social and economic spheres, is also mentioned as a last point. His selfless service to mankind served as an inspiration to Dr. Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the author of the Indian Constitution. He adhered to the Jyotiba Phule school of thought, which stressed justice, equality, liberty, and brotherhood. He complied with all of Jyotiba's recommendations, including the right to education for all people and special consideration for women, minorities, and the oppressed. It is also significant to remember that Mahatma Phule passed away in 1890 still struggling with problems that we have yet to fully resolve. Had he lived, he might have received more respect from society. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule literature should be appropriately available from the government in schools and colleges. To improve society, active introduction of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's educational, human rights, women's empowerment, sociopolitical, and religious ideals is required.

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