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SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORMS OF JYOTIRAO PHULE IN INDIA BHUP SINGH GAUR

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Abstract

In this paper, we are going to study the abundant social, economic, and political challenges that India faced. How the British colonial government ruled the people of India, we are briefing the Indian national movement by predominant freedom fighters and the background of the national movement's reforms. Dalit Movement is famously known as the movement of Ambedkarite. The oppressed class struggles and their social stigma eventually leads to their emancipation. We are also trying to put the spotlight on the feminist movement, or women's liberation movement. The paper also says about the farmer movement and the environment the article mainly focuses on the reforms of Jyotiba Phule on the educational system. Jyotiba, the founder of Satya Shodhak Samaj, was a pioneering figure in the field of education reform in India. He advocated for the rights of farmers and encouraged them to assert their worth and dignity. He also encouraged them to form cooperatives and work together to improve their economic status movement. Jyotiba Phule believed that education was a key tool in the fight against the oppressive caste system and that it was necessary to provide education to all people, regardless of their caste or social status, to bring about true progress and modernization. Phule was a strong advocate for women's rights and equality, believed that women were equal to men and deserved the same rights and opportunities.

Keywords

Emancipation, Women's rights, Indian National Movement, Environmental Movement, Abolition of Caste System, Farmer's Movement, Agricultural Reforms.

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Introduction:

India is a vast country with diverse cultural, social, and political backgrounds. India has experienced a long and vibrant tradition of social and political movements, aimed at empowering people, protecting the rights of marginalized communities, and fighting against oppressive systems. The Indian social and political movements can be traced back to the colonial period when people started raising their voices against British colonial rule. Post-independence, India faced numerous social, economic, and political challenges, and this has given rise to several socio-political movements. These movements are driven by a range of motivations, including economic inequality, social injustice, environmental degradation, and political oppression. In this research paper, we will examine the various socio-political movements in India and their impact on Indian society and politics. India has experienced good fortune throughout its long history of producing many outstanding people who devoted their entire life to uplifting the underprivileged and improving society. Some of them include Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule, Anne Besant, Mother Teresa, Vinoba Behave, Dr. B.R Ambedkar etc. We will studying the famous socio-political reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule life and we acknowledge his contributions to the development of contemporary India. Jyotiba Phule was a visionary reformer who played a crucial role in bringing about sociopolitical reforms in India.

Early Life:

Jyotiba Phule was an Indian social activist and reformer who fought against caste discrimination and advocated for the rights of women and lower-caste people during the British colonial rule in India in the 19th century. Some of the major socio-political reforms initiated by Jyotiba Phule (Begari, 2010) Before learning about his reforms we see his birth and childhood.

Jyotiba Phule was born on April 11, 1827, in a small village in the present-day state of Maharashtra, India. He was born into a family of farmers belonging to the lower-caste Mali

community. Despite facing significant social and economic obstacles, Phule received some formal education as a child and went on to become a pioneering figure in the Indian social reform movement. Phule was married at a young age, as was common in India at the time, to a girl named Savitri. Later this husband-wife duo was influential social reformers in India during the 19th century. Together, Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule (Raj, 2018) worked towards breaking down the barriers of caste and gender-based discrimination in India and advocating for the rights and empowerment of marginalized communities, including women, Dalits, and the poor. They established the first school for girls in India and worked to promote women's education and empowerment.

Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule's legacy has been significant and enduring, and their work continues to inspire social activists and reformers in India today. They are remembered as pioneers of the social reform movement in India, and their efforts to promote equality, justice and human rights remain an important part of India's cultural heritage. Throughout his life, Phule remained deeply committed to his beliefs and the cause of social justice. He was a vocal critic of the caste system and its associated inequalities, and he worked tirelessly to promote the rights of the lower castes and to challenge the status quo.

He led the effort to end the pervasive caste system in India. He stood up in rebellion against the Brahmins' dominance and battled for the liberties of peasants and other members of lower castes. His most socio-political reforms (Omvedt, 1971) are discussed below.

Education Reforms

Phule's foremost contribution was to the field of education. He established schools for girls and for the lower castes, which aimed to provide equal educational opportunities to all (Mathur). He also opened a night school for the lower castes, who were unable to attend regular school because of their work obligations. Phule's efforts to educate the lower castes and women helped to challenge caste-based discrimination and break down the barriers to equality. Jyotiba, the founder of Satya Shodhak Samaj, was a pioneering figure in the field of education reform in India. He believed that education was a key tool in the fight against the oppressive caste system and that it was necessary to provide education to all people, regardless of their caste or social status, to bring about true progress and modernization.

Phule's educational philosophy was rooted in his belief that all individuals, regardless of their caste or social status, were entitled to an equal opportunity to learn and develop their full potential. He was a strong advocate for girls' education, and his school for girls in Pune, established in 1848, was one of the first in India to admit girls from all castes. He was also an advocate for education in the local language, and his schools taught in Marathi instead of traditional Sanskrit or English. He believed that education in the local language was more accessible and relevant to the needs of the people and that it would help to bridge the gap between the educated and uneducated classes. In addition to his work in establishing schools, Phule also wrote extensively on education and social reform. He saw education as a means of challenging the caste system, and as a way of empowering the lower castes and promoting equality. His writings, which include essays, poems, and speeches, continue to be influential in the field of education reform in India.

Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, and Fatima Sheikh (Desai, 2022) played a significant role in advocating for the rights of women and lower castes in India. As well as they established the need for education.

Fatima Sheikh:

Fatima Sheikh was a social reformer and educator who worked closely with Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule. She was one of the first Muslim women in India to receive an education and was a strong advocate of women's rights. She was a key figure in the Satyashodak Samaj, a social reform organization founded by Phule, and worked towards the education and empowerment of women and lower castes. Together, this trio was a powerful force for social and political reform in India. They worked towards the education and empowerment of women and lower castes.

He also started the *Jyotiba Phule Backward Class Welfare Scheme*, a scholarship program in India established in memory of the social reformer Jyotiba Phule. The scholarship is designed to provide financial assistance to students from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly students from lower castes, to help them pursue higher education.

The scholarship is open to students from lower castes, including Dalits (formerly known as "Untouchables"), who are pursuing higher education in recognized institutions in India. The scholarship provides financial assistance to cover tuition fees, books, and other education-related expenses. His Scholarship is also aimed at promoting the ideals of equality and justice that Phule advocated for during his lifetime. It is seen as a way to honor Phule's legacy and continue his work toward the empowerment and education of lower castes.

In this context, the Jyotiba Phule Scholarship is also seen as an important tool in promoting the ideals of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who was also a social reformer and advocate for the rights of lower castes in India. The scholarship provides financial support to students from lower castes, including Dalits, and helps them pursue higher education, which was a key goal of both Phule and Ambedkar.

Today, the legacy of Jyotiba Phule's educational reforms remains important in India, where efforts to provide education to all people and to promote equality continues. Phule is remembered as a pioneering figure in the field of education reform, and his ideas continue to inspire activists and educators working towards a more just and equitable society.

Abolition of Caste System

Phule's Satya Shodhak Samaj (Rosenthal, 1973), (Sengupta, 2017) aimed to abolish the caste system, which he saw as a source of oppression and inequality. He advocated for the rights of the lower castes and encouraged them to assert their dignity and worth. He also encouraged inter-caste marriages to break down the barriers of caste-based discrimination. Phule's efforts to abolish the caste system helped to challenge the age-old traditions and customs that perpetuated caste-based oppression. He started Satya Shodhak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth)

Satyashodak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth)

Satyashodak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth) was a social reform organization founded by Jyotiba Phule in 1873 in the state of Maharashtra, India. The organization was founded with the goal of promoting equality and justice for all castes, including the lower castes, and was a response to the oppressive caste system and discrimination faced by lower castes in India.

This aimed to bring about social and political reforms by promoting education and empowering lower castes. Phule believed that education was the key to ending the caste system and promoting equality and justice, and the organization worked toward the education and empowerment of lower castes, women, and other marginalized groups. It was also a

platform for Phule to voice his criticisms of the caste system and advocate for the rights of lower castes. He used the organization to organize public gatherings and rallies to spread his message and raise awareness about social and political issues.

In addition to promoting education and empowering lower castes, the Satyashodak Samaj also worked towards improving the status and rights of women in India. Phule was a strong advocate of women's rights and was one of the first voices to raise concerns about their status and discrimination. Overall, the Satyashodak Samaj was an important and influential organization in the field of social and political reform in India. It continues to be remembered as one of the pioneers of social reform in India.

Women's Rights

Jyotiba Phule was a strong advocate for women's rights and equality. He believed that women were equal to men and deserved the same rights and opportunities. He established the first school for girls in India and encouraged women to assert their dignity and worth. He also wrote extensively about the importance of educating women and providing them with equal opportunities. Phule's efforts to promote women's rights helped to challenge the traditional views about gender and lay the foundation for future feminist movements in India (Barathl, 2019). He was a strong advocate for women's rights in India. He believed that the oppression of women was closely tied to the caste system and that it was necessary to promote equality and justice for women to bring about true progress and modernization in Indian society. He was particularly critical of the treatment of women in India, where they were often denied education, property rights, and basic freedoms. He saw women's oppression as a form of enslavement and argued that educating and empowering women was necessary to break the cycle of oppression.

One of Phule's key contributions to the women's rights movement was his establishment of a school for girls in Pune in 1848. This was one of the first schools in India to admit girls from all castes. Phule established the first school for girls in India in 1848 in Pune. This school was a significant milestone in the history of women's education in India, as girls were traditionally excluded from formal education. The school provided education to girls from lower castes, including Dalits, who were often marginalized and discriminated against in society. He believed that education was the key to empowering women and breaking the cycle of oppression. He saw educating girls to empower them to assert their independence and challenge the patriarchal norms of Indian society. His efforts towards promoting women's education inspired many other social reformers and played a significant role in the history of women's education in India. Today, his work continues to inspire efforts toward improving access to education for girls and promoting gender equality.

In addition to his work in education, Phule also wrote extensively on women's rights and social reform (Kesalu). He was a vocal critic of child marriage, sati (the practice of widows being forced to immolate themselves on their husband's funeral pyre), and other forms of oppression faced by women in India. He argued that women's rights were fundamental to the struggle for justice and equality and that they were essential to the progress and modernization of Indian society.

Jyotiba Phule's Thoughts on Religion:

Phule had a critical view of religion and its role in perpetuating inequality and oppression in society. He believed that religion was often used as a tool to justify the oppression of lower castes and marginalized groups, and he was a strong advocate for secularism and religious tolerance. Phule believed that religion should be a personal matter

and should not be used to impose social norms and restrictions. He was a critic of the caste system and the idea that birth determines one's status and believed that all people were equal regardless of their caste or religion. He was a strong advocate for rationalism and humanism and believed that people should seek knowledge and truth through reason and scientific inquiry. He saw religion as a barrier to progress and encouraged people to embrace reason and reject blind faith. His views on religion were ahead of their time and were met with resistance by many in Indian society. Despite this, his ideas continue to inspire efforts toward promoting secularism and equality, and his legacy continues to be an important part of Indian history and culture.

Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha

He was one of the first Indian social reformers to raise the issue of sexual violence against women and worked towards providing support and justice for rape victims.

Phule was a pioneer in establishing a home for rape victims, known as the Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha, in Pune in 1873. This was one of the first institutions in India to provide support and care for rape victims, who were often ostracized by society. The home provided medical care, legal assistance, and shelter to rape victims and aimed to empower them to rebuild their lives.

Phule was also a strong advocate of women's education and believed that education was the key to empowering women and breaking the cycle of oppression. He established several schools for girls, including the first school for girls in India, and worked towards educating women about their rights and encouraging them to assert their independence.

Today, the legacy of Jyotiba Phule's work on women's rights remains important in India, where efforts to promote equality and challenge the oppression of women continue. Phule is remembered as a pioneering figure in the struggle for women's rights, and his ideas continue to inspire activists and thinkers working towards a more just and equitable society.

Agricultural Reforms

Jyotiba Phule was also a champion of agricultural reforms. (Mallik, 2021) He believed that the lower castes, who were mostly farmers, were exploited by the upper castes. He advocated for the rights of farmers and encouraged them to assert their worth and dignity. He also encouraged them to form cooperatives and work together to improve their economic status. Phule's efforts to promote agricultural reforms helped to challenge the traditional power structures and provide a voice for the lower castes. He was a social reformer in India who believed that the caste system and its associated inequalities were closely tied to the economic structure of India, particularly concerning agriculture. He was a strong advocate for agricultural reforms, which he saw as essential to bringing about progress and modernization in Indian society.

Phule argued that the existing system of land ownership and agriculture in India was unjust and that it was necessary to promote the rights of farmers and promote equality in the distribution of land. He believed that the existing system, which was dominated by the upper castes, was responsible for perpetuating poverty and inequality, and that it was necessary to challenge this system to bring about real change. One of his key contributions to the field of agricultural reform was his advocacy for the rights of farmers, whom he saw as the backbone of Indian society. He argued that farmers were entitled to fair treatment and compensation for their labor and that it was necessary to promote the interests of farmers to promote the progress of Indian society.

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In addition to his advocacy for the rights of farmers, Phule also believed in the importance of promoting agricultural innovation and progress. He encouraged the adoption of new technologies and techniques and believed that this was essential to improving agricultural productivity and promoting economic growth.

He was a predominant writer of his era he penned several scholarly articles and books we are trying to bring some of them into forefront.

Slavery:

This book is considered a seminal work in the field of social and political reform in India. It is a critique of the caste system and the oppression of lower castes by upper castes. The book is seen as a powerful call to action for social and political reforms and continues to be widely read and studied.

Gulamgiri:

This book is a critique of the practice of slavery and the exploitation of lower castes and untouchables by the upper castes. It is a passionate call for social justice and equality and is considered one of Phule's most important works.

Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak:

This book is a collection of Phule's writings and speeches on various social and political issues. It covers topics such as the caste system, women's rights, education, and the rights of farmers and laborers. The book is seen as a testament to Phule's commitment to social and political reform and is widely read and studied.

Jyotirao Phule also started Deenbandhu (Ratnamala, 2012) a Marathi language newspaper in 1881. It was one of the first newspapers in India to be published in the Marathi language and was an important platform for Phule's ideas and activism. The newspaper was an important tool for Phule to reach a wide audience and promote his ideas about social justice and equality. He used the newspaper to raise awareness about issues such as the caste system, the oppression of lower castes and marginalized groups, and the importance of education and progress. It played an important role in promoting the ideas of the Satya Shodhak Samaj, the organization that Phule founded to promote social equality and challenge the caste system. Through the newspaper, Phule was able to reach a wide audience and mobilize support for his cause.

Conclusion

Jyotiba Phule was a visionary reformer who played a pivotal role in bringing about sociopolitical reforms in India. He fought against caste-based discrimination and oppression and advocated for the rights of the lower castes, women, and farmers. He was referred to as "Mahatma" by his followers and admirers in recognition of his status as a great leader and champion of social justice. The term "Mahatma," which means "great soul" in Sanskrit, is a title of respect and honor that is often used to describe leaders and thinkers who have made significant contributions to society.

The ideas that inspired Mahatma Jyotiba Phule in his never-ending battle against social stigma may be regarded as his most important legacy. He campaigned to abolish the caste, class, and race prejudice that people in the nineteenth century were used to accepting as societal standards that had to be kept without question. He was a pioneer of cutting-edge social reform ideas. He started awareness efforts that eventually served as an example for leaders who later took substantial steps to eradicate caste injustice, including Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. His contributions towards education and equality continue to inspire

generations and remain a testament to his legacy. His legacy lives on as a symbol of hope and inspiration.

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