



## **RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATAMA JYOTI RAO PHULE IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT**

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### **Abstract**

*This study was philosophical and historical in nature. The investigator used the primary as well as secondary sources concerning the educational ideas of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule. The ideas of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule were organized, critically analyzed and evaluated by consulting the relevant literature published by Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule and his close associates and his followers. The objectives of the study were as follows: To highlight the importance given to education by Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule; To study the educational and social scene in the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; To study and analyse the general philosophy of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule; To study and analyse the educational philosophy of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule; To evaluate and assess the contribution of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule in social and educational fields; To evaluate the contribution of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule in creating a new social system; To find out the changes occurred in the educational and social scenario of India with the efforts of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule; To study the impact of educational ideas of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule on different aspects of modern system of Education; To find out the relevance of educational ideas of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule in the present context.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to **Dr. B.R.Ambedkar**, "Education stands for social change. Education that does not bring change in the society is meaningless".

The advent of the British rule in India produced many great social reformists who tried to change the old social structure which was knowingly or unknowingly based on certain unjust traditions which were wrongly mistaken to be a part of Indian culture though the great Hindu Philosophy which advocated the noblest of humanity had nothing to do with them. These reformists had to fight their way out against the privileged classes who were against anything and everything that was going to reduce their ill-gotten privileges and there by wanted to perpetuate their supremacy. The first movement of reformists started in Bengal under the able leadership of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and laid the foundation of new social structure in Bengal. A similar reformists movement was started in Maharashtra under the leadership of Jotiba Phule who tried his best to reform the Hindu Society, in Maharashtra by revolting against the priest class and the caste system. He started a social movement for the liberation of

the owner and the underprivileged down trodden classes and the Indian woman. He agitated for the welfare of Indian peasants and workers and the Indian Labour movement is an offshoot of his social movement. Above all he was the first leader to use the axiom "Truth alone triumphs" on his letterheads and to found an institution called "Truth Seeking Society (Satyashodhak Samaj). Mahatma fought for liberty, equality and social justice and upheld the cause of weaker section. The entire philosophy of education he advocated has become the preamble of Indian

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

**Relevance of Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule in the present context**

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To highlight the importance given to education by Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule.
2. To study the educational and social scene in the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
3. To study and analyse the general philosophy of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule.
4. To study and analyse the educational philosophy of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule
5. To evaluate and assess the contribution of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule in social and educational fields.
6. To evaluate the contribution of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule in creating a new social system.
7. To find out the changes occurred in the educational and social scenario of India with the efforts of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule.
8. To study the impact of educational ideas of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule on different aspects of modern system of Education.
9. To find out the relevance of educational ideas of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule in the present context

### **JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM**

*Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule stated that 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 lack of oppression of the lower classes. This was the reason Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule thought of giving education to all. Shudras, atishudras and women had been suffering discrimination for the centuries. They were not allowed to get education. They were treated like animals. Condition of women was even more pathetic. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule also belonged to the*

lower caste. He also had to suffer various discriminations. Like other revolutionaries he also continued with the movement to attain the rights for peasants, shudras, atishudras and women. He made a remarkable contribution in the field of education. He thought that only education can break the chains of slavery of the downtrodden of India because the ignorance was the main cause of the slavery of the downtrodden. Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule formed Satya Shodhak Samaj to liberate the shudras, atishudras and women and to prevent their exploitation by the upper castes. He is regarded as the most important figure of social reform movement in India. He is regarded as the father of Indian social revolution. He wanted to create new social system based upon justice, equality, liberty and fraternity. He compelled British govt to make arrangement of the education for masses. He did not wait for govt to open school for the downtrodden and women. He was the first man who started schools for girls in 1848 at the age of 21. His wife Mata Sawitri Rao Phule also worked tirelessly as a school teacher for girls. She was the first trained lady teacher of India. He also opened two more schools for the downtrodden. He was the pioneer of women education in India. He is known for his efforts to educate masses including shudras, atishudras and women. He was the first Indian to open an orphanage to protect upper caste pregnant widows and he and his wife also assured them that the orphanage would take care of their children. He was the prominent social reformer of 19<sup>th</sup> century of India. Orthodox elements also tried to kill him and his wife for what they were doing for the upliftment and education of the downtrodden and women. It was against the religion of the upper caste people to educate women and the downtrodden. But both husband and wife continued their mission with courage. His contribution to uplift the downtrodden and women has made Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule a cult figure among the depressed classes. Ideology of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule always encourages us to have a will to work in the interest of the people. It is the force which energizes man especially the weaker section of our society to rise and move on the right road leading towards progress, peace and prosperity. His philosophy became the basis of the principles on which our constitution is based i.e. justice, equality, liberty and fraternity. Dr B.R. Ambedkar was so impressed by his efforts of educating the downtrodden, women and mass, he made provision of right to education in our constitution. Now which has been made a fundamental right on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2010. Unless the target of education of all is achieved the philosophy of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule will remain relevant. Due to the efforts of whom the

*education has been made fundamental right today and who sacrificed his life and the life of his wife for the education of women, downtroddens and mass. He was the person who did not give only theory like other most educated people but he brought improvements by sacrificing his and his wife's life. Various studies have been conducted in the field of educational philosophy But no study has been undertaken yet to study the educational philosophy of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule and its relevance in the present context. So this made the investigator to carry out this study.*

#### **METHODS AND PROCEDURE**

This study was philosophical and historical in nature. The investigator used the primary as well as secondary sources concerning the educational ideas of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule. The ideas of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule were organized, critically analyzed and evaluated by consulting the relevant literature published by Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule and his close associates and his followers

#### **LIFE AND WORKS OF MAHATAMA JYOTI RAO PHULE**

##### **Life of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule.**

The British brought with them a new education system. This was social conditions when Jotiba Phule was born. His father was progressive and sent him to school. But withdrew him because he was misguided by his Brahmin Munashi. Perhaps we would have lost a great person in Jotiba Phule. But with the guidance of a Urdu teacher Gafarkhan Muashi and Ligit Saheb Jotiba rejoined the school. However, all these events shaped him as the great social reformer. Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule was an activist, thinker, social, reformer, writer, philosopher, theologian, scholar, editor and revolutionary from Maharashtra, India in the nineteenth century. He was born on April 11, 1827 in Satara district of Maharashtra. His family belonged to a Mali caste. His father and uncle served as florists. His family came to be known as Phule. His mother passed away when he was nine months old. His caste perceived to be inferior caste by certain sections of the society. His mother's name was Mata Bimla Bai Phule. When Jotiba became five years old, his father sent him to a neighbouring school till then education was hardly existed as schools were run by private persons who taught them three 'R's. People belonging to lower caste were not supposed to take education. Jotiba made an extra ordinary progress in the school. His tiny career in the school came to a temporary and because of a misleading advice by a Brahmin clerk of his father. Jotiba was too young to understand the reason of his withdrawal from his school. His tiny career in the school came to a temporary and because of a misleading advice by a Brahmin clerk of his father. Jotiba was

too young to understand the reason of his withdrawal from his school. He started his work on the farm with all the zeal. But continued to read books by the light of metal lamp in the night. An Angalis advice from a Urdu teacher, and Legit Saheb he started his school career. He made the most of the opportunity and studied with all the zeal. At the time when he was born India was divided into different castes. Chatur Varna system (Caste System) was prevalent in India. Original inhabitants of India belonged to lower castes. They were called Shudras, Untouchables etc. They were treated like animals. This had been prevalent for the centuries. They were not allowed to get education. They were to serve the upper Castes i.e. Brahmins, Kshatryas and Vashyas. They were badly treated by the upper castes. They were deprived of every kind of right. They were even deprived of human rights and when anyone of them tried to get education he was mercilessly punished. The condition of women belonging to any caste was very pathetic and miserable in this respect.

### **Works of Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule**

He wanted to disclose the true history of India. He said that every one should be eager to search for the truth. Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule also continued with this movement. The turning point in Jyotiba's life was in 1848 when he was insulted by the family members of his Brahmin friend. Members of the Brahmin family threatened him against attending the function of Brahmins. Influenced by Thomas Paine's book Right of Man 1791 Phule developed a keen sense of social justice.

On 24 Sep, 1873 Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule formed a Satya Shodhak Samaj with himself as its first president and treasurer. The main objectives of this were to liberate the Shudras and atishudras and to prevent their exploitation by the upper castes like Brahmins. He revolted against the tyranny of the upper castes. Under caste system millions of people had suffered for centuries. He criticized predominant position of Brahmins. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule was the prominent social reformer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian. He led the movement against the prevailing caste restrictions in India. He revolted against the domination of the Brahmins and for the rights of peasants and low caste sections and women. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule's family believed that if he wanted to create a new social system based on freedom, equality, brotherhood, human dignity, economic justice, values devoid of exploitation, he would have to overthrow the old, unequal and exploitative social system and the values on which it is based. He was assisted in his work by his wife Mata Savitri Rao Phule and together they started the first school for girls in India in 1848. He later on opened two more schools (1851-52).

He stated,

Nar nari sabhi mehnati bano

Parivar ko pale. Anand le

Nit bacho bachi ko padne bheje

For the orphans he opened an orphanage. This was the first such institution opened by any Indian. He gave protection to pregnant widows and assured them that the orphanage would take care of their children. Another incident also revealed his attachment for the poor peasants and his courage in drawing the attention of members of the British royal family to the sufferings of the farmers of rural areas. It became very difficult for the upper castes to tolerate Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule. They hired two persons Rode and Dhodi Ram in Rs. 1000 to kill mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule but when they came to kill Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule, he woke up and they were very much impressed by the personality of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule. They felt sorry and decided to help Jyotiba in his mission. Eventually Mata Savitri Rao Phule was honoured by the British government for her contribution and educational work. On 16 Nov. 1852 Mahatama Jyoti Rao Phule and Savitri Rao Phule were felicitated by the government for their commendable efforts in the field of education. Principal of the Pune College Mr. Major Cannedy honoured them. Shahuji Maharaj ruler of Kohlapur province was a staunch follower of Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule and devoted life to the upliftment of the society. He emphasized the development and welfare of the lower castes. He always used to contemplate over some serious issues of the society. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule stressed on universalisation of education i.e. education for all irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex and poverty. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule had done a lot in his life to reform society, to fight for establishing equality in society. As he wanted education for all, same is the motto of present education system, to provide education to all. Following his principles Dr. Ambedkar had compiled the constitution in which we have provision for free and compulsory education and universalization of education in the constitution in the art 45 but the target of this article is yet to be achieved which was to be achieved within 10 years from the commencement of the constitution. He wrote many books and his famous published works are as: Tritiya Ratna, 1855, Brahmananche Kasab, 1869, Powada : Chatrapati Shivajiraje Bhosle Yanchara, [English: Life Of Shivaji, In Poetical Metre], June 1869, Powada: Vidyakhatyatil Brahman Pantoji, June 1869, Manav Mahammand (Muhammad) (Abhang), Gulamgiri [full name in English: Slavery: In The Civilized British Government Under The Clock Of Brahmanism], 1873, Shetkarayacha Aasud (Cultivator's Whipcord), July 1881, Satsar Ank 1, June 1885, Satsar Ank 2, October 1885, Ishara, October 1885, Gramjoshya Sambhandi jahir kabhar, (1886), Satyashodhak Samajokt Mangalashthakasaah Sarva Puja-vidhi, 1887, Sarvajanic Satya



Dharma Poostak, April 1889, Sarvajanic Satya Dharmapustak, 1891, Akhandadi Kavyarachana, 1893, Asprashyanchi Kaifiyat , 1893. He was a person with a will. He was first in many things was great Rishi, was a great social reformer. He was the teacher of society. Jotiba took a critical view of the entire philosophy and exposed the fallacy of the mythological stories and even challenged Manusmriti which was quoted and miss quoted to perpetuate the slavery of the Sudras and Atisudras. He was perhaps first to take up historical research and studied the scriptures critically and exposed the falsehood of books. His literature revolutionized the thinking of the masses. He wrote poems and dialogue to remove the superstitions in the book 'Priest Caste Exposed'. Jotiba took inspiration from abolition of slavery in British Empire in 1833 in Russia, and America in 1863. He praised emancipation of slavery in America by Abraham Lincoln and started a struggle against the slavery of Atishudras in Maharashtra. That was an extra ordinary bold step. He wanted his literature to be read by Atisudras so he sold his the books at a concessional rate. He wrote on the title page price 12 Anas for all and 6 Anas for Atisudras. He was strongly criticized in Brahmin press. His arguments may not be fully justified with historical evidences. He made a beginning to study history critically and scientifically and separate it from mythical portion. He believed that what gives a solid structure is religion (Dharma). He believed that a true religion should propagate universal humanistic principles. He believed in universal brother hood. He said all nations, all religions and the entire humanity is the creation of nature. He was a real Mahatama. He was a father of entire community. He was the man of clear vision. He appreciated Lord Buddha as his Guru. His personality surpassed all other men.

### **RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATAMA JYOTI RAO PHULE IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT**

He was first to advocate education for all as he strongly felt that education was everybody's need and every body's right. He pleaded for the education of boys and girls but for adults men and women also. He pleaded that education should create right type of moral and religions values. It must establish social equality, economic progress and spiritual development. Education was creating social awareness, ability to rebel against evil traditions. Jotiba strongly pleaded that education was not merely filling knowledge in the minds of learners but must develop all the faculties of mind. Thinking, reasoning, appreciation and value development for as essential as to liberal education taught for the all round development of child. Education should be based on human values and to develop them among the learners. Education should result in employment and self employment by including vocational aspects and result in eliminating poverty.

Education should be co-related to the life and children should be pragmatic and be able to learn from their everyday life experience. Education in rural area should be suitable to rural conditions and well planned. Education should discover the talents among the learners and help them to progress, according to their abilities. Education of Shudras and lower classes could overthrow their slavery of the upper caste. Education should make the upper class to realize the basic fact that all men are equal and free and boldly plead and practice the humanitarian principles.

The reasons for the causes of illiteracy among the masses – (1) poverty (2) blind faith and (3) wrong concept. Education should plead democratic way of life and the nation should become ‘one nation’ through education. The policy of state education should be free and compulsory up to the age of twelve. This suggestion has been incorporated in Indian Constitution. Education alone could destroy beastly tendencies in human being. Right type of education was needed to those who exploited the masses. Only through education the scientific progress of nation and Green revolution would become truth. Mahatma Jotiba Phule’s concept of education and his policy of education were clear, which was not only those days, but even today is relevant.

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