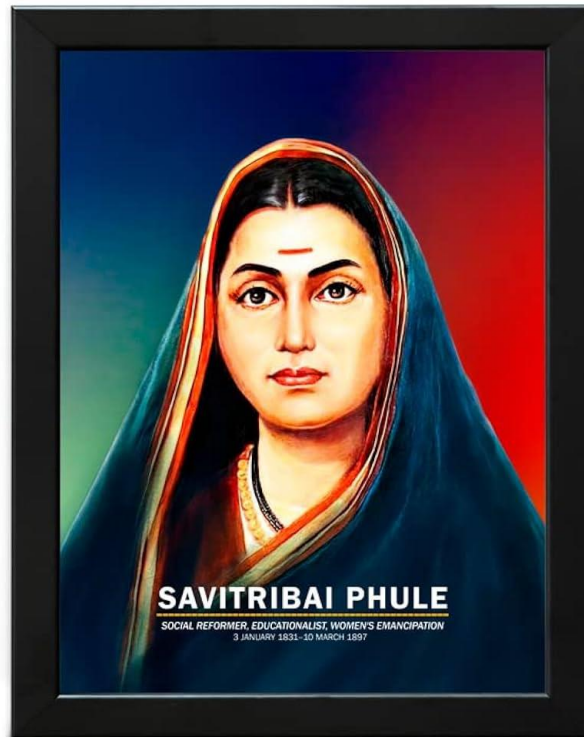




1196, Sadashiv Peth, Limayewadi Road, pune - 411030.  
contact- 020-29526979/ 9699644930 E-Mail- [ssf@ssfoffice.co.in](mailto:ssf@ssfoffice.co.in)

# Savitribai Jyotirao Phule

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule is remembered with utmost respect and honor for his revolutionary steps, social reforms, and contributions to the field of education. His wife, Savitribai, was equally involved and participative in every social reform and change initiated by Jyotirao. It is extremely important and necessary to recognize and acknowledge Savitribai's contribution, knowing that she was not just the wife of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, but also a woman who was ahead of her time in her thoughts and actions. Not only did she support her husband, but she also emerged as a woman who was progressive in her own right, standing against the societal norms. Her courage and compassion introduced a new dimension to history, thereby securing Savitribai's distinct place in history.



The name of Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule should be placed at the forefront among those who understand the importance of educating the underprivileged in India. An illiterate woman who herself becomes educated and a teacher, guiding women, Dalits, and the underprivileged out of years of ignorance, this event could be considered a remarkable occurrence in the history of India, especially during a time when there was profound darkness prevailing in the Indian social landscape.

Savitribai Phule was born into a simple, impoverished family in a small village. Famine struck their village every year. With no culture of education in the village, Savitribai, born into such a family,

obtained education after marriage to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and took a vow of imparting knowledge, becoming a beacon of enlightenment. Savitribai Phule's self-motivation played a crucial role in this. Mahatma Jyotirao and Savitribai, this couple, started the first school for girls on January 1, 1948. Their belief was that only through education could societal transformation occur. The Phule couple didn't aim merely to make people literate; they believed that society needed to be educated to eradicate old customs, traditions, and superstitions.

At that time, the situation of widowed women was very dire. Women who became widowed at a young age was blaming their fate and remain secluded in the corners of their homes. Child marriage and marriage with elder men were common against this backdrop. Fathers who were unable to provide dowries would marry off their seven or eight-year-old daughters to men sixty or seventy years old. As a result, by the time these young women reached fifteen or sixteen years, they would become widows, deprived of the right to remarry. Despite such circumstances, the Phule couple, without worrying about their personal lives, took responsibility for the women, the marginalized, and the Dalits. They established orphanages for widowed women. Due to exploitation or mental abuse, some widowed women would become pregnant, only to kill their newborns upon birth. For such newborns, they established a home to prevent infanticide. One boy admitted to this facility was legally adopted by them and provided with education to become a doctor.

After the death of Mahatma Phule in 1890, Savitribai efficiently carried out the responsibilities of the Satyashodhak Samaj. By abandoning traditional customs and rituals, Savitribai Phule engaged in social work. At that time, it was a conventional limit for women of the upper caste to engage in activities promoting awareness. They were not supposed to cross the boundaries of their homes. However, Savitribai Phule went to Pune and surrounding villages, delivering speeches in gatherings. Her fearlessness, dedication to her work, and her staunch commitment to endure the disrespect she faced from society can be considered qualities of Savitribai Phule's personality. The self-confidence she had in her work was extraordinary.

Savitribai Phule emerged in the social sphere through education. She organized the nourishment of famine-stricken minds, took up writing for social reform, and became a poet and writer. Transforming the entire village into an educated and cultured community, she taught women, Dalits, and the underprivileged to fight for their rights. After the death of her husband Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, without succumbing to grief, tirelessly continued the propagation of the principles of the Satyashodhak Samaj. She provided service to people of all sections of society, including Dalits, during times of epidemics. She would personally carry patients in her arms to her son Dr. Yashwant's clinic. Despite facing the fear of contracting the disease and death while providing medical care, Savitribai Phule did not retreat. She believed that if society needed her, she couldn't sit at home. Even if it meant sacrificing her life in the service of the societal deity, she did not worry. With this thought, Savitribai continued her service. Consequently, she herself fell victim to the epidemic and died due to the same disease. Such a life can only be termed as extraordinary.

Vijendra Sonawane ([Vijendra.Sonawane@ssfoffice.in](mailto:Vijendra.Sonawane@ssfoffice.in))

Reference: Savitribai Phule Samagra vagmay – Dr. M. G. Mali