

# Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

The nineteenth century was an era of social criticism and transformation of the Indian society this century saw many social reformers who worked selflessly and one of them was Jyotiba Phule. He was a leader who fought a battle against inequality and casteism. The casteism was so deep-rooted in the society. There was a belief in the caste system the people just get polluted even if the shadow of an 'untouchable's' fell on them.

In this situation, Mahatma Phule did not hesitate to work for the upliftment of the so-called marginalized community. The following quote said by Jyotiba Phule which showcase his advocacy to bring equality and being against injustice even if it is against the people who considered themselves superior than others or someone else in any form or state,

**"No man should tolerate injustice, whether it be against himself or against another."**

He was one of the first Indians to introduce the values of freedom, equality and fraternity, as proclaimed by the French Revolution into the Indian way of thinking. Mahatma Phule was a firm supporter of universalization of education, believing it was essential for not only the upliftment of marginalized communities but for everyone, he acknowledged that.



**"Education is the primary requirement of man and woman."**

He saw education as a means to empower the oppressed and bring social change but earlier the educational system in India was predominantly controlled by the upper caste community hence educating the marginalized classes was difficult, later British colonial rule brought some changes to the educational landscape in India. The British administration introduced educational reforms. These reforms, however, were limited and often met with resistance

from traditional upper-caste groups.

**"If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family."**

He envisioned an inclusive educational system where everyone, regardless of caste or gender had access to learning opportunities and emphasized the importance of practical knowledge and critical thinking which opposed to rote learning and religious dogma.

In 1848, Mahatma Phule established the first school for girls in India, breaking social taboos of that time. This was a landmark achievement, as it challenged the prevailing norms that denied women access to education. Also, Phule opened schools for lower caste children, providing them with opportunities for learning that had been historically denied.

Phule's focus on women's education was a critical step towards gender equality. He believed that educated women would be empowered enough to challenge patriarchal norms and contribute to societal progress therefore he aimed to dismantle the patriarchal structures that kept them oppressed.

His approach to education was holistic, aiming to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to improve their socio-economic conditions and contribute to societal progress. Phule's wife, Savitribai Phule, played a crucial role in this process, being the first female teacher in India, they together worked selflessly for better society.

Jyotiba Phule played an important role in bringing change to society which was extremely needed. His vision and beliefs were revolutionary at that time, his advocacy for the rights of lower caste communities and women contributed to the emergence of an egalitarian society.

Phule's efforts to promote social justice and equality laid the groundwork for subsequent reform movements in India as well as marked the history of our Nation. His legacy still inspires to this day.

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#### References

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