

Savitribai Phule's Influence on Education in Modern India

Prakash Chandra Kasera

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Bayalasi P.G. College,
Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, UP, India

Abstract

The goal of the current study is to understand how activist Savitribai Phule has influenced female education in the modern India. Savitribai Phule started a wave of change in the modern era of numerous sectors of education, hence her ideas and principles should be implemented into education. She made an effort to overthrow the society's predominately usual educational system and aspired to rebuild it as a free and open system for everyone. This investigation uses a qualitative methodology based on historical research. The researcher chooses to conduct his investigation using the historical study methodology. Secondary data as well as primary data have both been utilised in this study. Within the system of public education, her ideals and principles are acceptable. The current educational system has to take these viewpoints into account. The Indian educational system will benefit from this increased knowledge. Both educators and students will proceed Savitribai Phule's example and uphold the integrity of the educational system to all social classes while educating everyone to transcend bigotry. The current educational system will be more effective as a result and contribute to maintaining its multiple levels of worth and usefulness.

Keywords: Savitribai Phule, Modern India, Female education, Feminism, Realistic viewpoint

Introduction

Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. —

Buddha

In the last three thousand years, the illustrious history of India has transgressed and shifted toward a more conservative civilization. This remarkable transition unquestionably started within the family and has been sustained by a sophisticated mix of tradition, utility, and religious belief. Every element of life experienced

a surge of euphoria and gloomy predictions in those bygone years, but the history of mighty India's education of women was one of silent subjugation. Indian society demonstrates servile conduct, a lack of social awareness, an inhumane approach to casteism, the ability to remain untouchable, child abuse, corruption, and problems with reservation regulations, religion disagreement, and power imbalances that result in societal prejudice. Because of the oppression that permeates Indian society, there is a need to raise people's consciousness in order to address societal issues and promote equality through social transformation. Such barbarism has been identified by many renounce historians as a significant disadvantage of India's sluggishness. Indian women now are equal to males in every way. Owing to their knowledge and education, they were well-known throughout history and held sway over many people's hearts. They have demonstrated their abilities in a variety of industries, including governance, social service, sports, medicine, science, and engineering.

A well-known Indian poet, educator, and social reformer named Savitribai Jyotirao Phule was crucial to the nineteenth-century advancement of women's education and empowerment. On January 3, 1831, Savitribai Phule was born in the Maharashtrian village of Naigaon in the Satara District. Her birthplace was 50 kilometres from Pune and five kilometres from Shirval. The eldest child of Mali Community members Lakshmi and Khandoji Neveshe Patil, Savitribai Phule was their elder sister. Savitribai Phule married Jyotirao Phule, who was born on April 11, 1827, at the age of ten. He was thirteen years old when they were married. Although Savitribai and Jotirao were childless, they adopted Yashawantrao, a Brahmin widow's son. Because Brahmins disallowed education for people of her low caste and gender, before she got married, Savitribai Phule did not have a formal education. The first girl's school in Pune was established in Bhide Wada by Savitribai and her husband Jyotirao Phule, who was one of the few literate women in those days. She worked hard to educate and emancipate young widows, lobbied in opposition to sati pratha and child marriage, and supported widow remarriage. She is regarded as a key player in social change initiatives in Maharashtra and a symbol of the Dalit Mang caste, alongside B. R. Ambedkar and Annabhau Sathe. She aggressively sought to remove gender and caste-based prejudice and advocated against untouchability. One of the most significant individuals who made a significant contribution to elevating the mission of the contemporary Indian social scene was Savitribai Phule. She was the first female educator and instructor, inspiring the oppressed people to pursue education and thereby contributing significantly to their emancipation. She also engaged in a variety of social activities. With a few notable exceptions, Savitribai Phule is completely absent from the history of contemporary India. Her life and struggles ought to be known to all Indians, who should be able to appreciate them.

An outline of the problem

The issue is *Savitribai Phule's Influence on Education in Modern India*. Savitribai Phule's educational ideas and their applicability to Indian education today.

Associated studies

Garaian, Sourav & Sen, Subir. (2021). Savitribai Phule the first lady teacher and social reformer in nineteenth century of India. In this study, Savitribai has been presented as a driving force behind women's empowerment and education in the nineteenth century.

K. Dipongpou (2013). Women and Education: Contribution of Savitribai Phule and Pandita Ramabai for Women Education in India. According to the study, Savitribai Phule was a humanist and women's crusader who fought for the equality and freedom of women in both the public and private realms. The gift surely gave the ladies a glimmer of happiness and change, but they have enormous challenges to bring about change in a lasting way, notably in the area of women's education.

Braganza, R. (2021). Savitribai Phule: A Great Social Reformer. The current study is a modest attempt to glean lessons from the life of Savitribai Phule, a renowned revolutionary educator whose life's work was to uplift oppressed women.

Pandey, K. (2020). Savitribai Phule: Social reformer and educationist way ahead of her times. The study emphasises on the fact that Savitribai Phule did more than merely advocate for equality and education. She experienced it first-hand. The Phules were attacked by assailants who disdained their pioneering labour, and they almost perished. But they persisted.

Purpose of the study

The goals of this research are to-

- To research Savitribai Phule's liberal feminism and realistic viewpoint.
- To evaluate Savitribai Phule's role as an activist and socialist.
- To be aware of Savitribai Phule's influence on modern education.
- To understand the role Savitribai Phule played in advancing women's education in modern India.

Assessment methodology

This research uses a qualitative methodology based on historical study. The researcher has employed both primary and secondary data in this study. The key sources were Savitribai Phule's poetry, essays, and other publications. The thesis, published journals, articles, periodicals, and books on Savitribai Phule are examples of secondary sources.

Key terms operationally defined

Liberal feminism: Liberal feminism, also called mainstream feminism is a main branch of feminism defined by its focus on achieving gender equality through political and legal reform within the framework of liberal democracy.

Realistic: Having or showing a sensible and practical idea of what can be achieved or expected.

Activist: A person who campaigns to bring about political or social change.

Socialist: A person who advocates or practises socialism.

Modern: Specifically in academic historiography, referring to the modern era (about 1800 to the present).

Examination and explore the goals

Savitribai Phule's liberal feminism and realistic viewpoint.

Liberal feminism: Earlier before the first loyalists adopted social reform as a platform for their campaigns, Savitribai Phule spearheaded various projects for social change. One of the key points of her interventions was the challenge she provided to the entrenched patriarchy and Brahmanical connections, particularly in terms of combatting illiteracy among women and the caste structure. Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule are considered the forerunners of Stree- Shudra- Atishudra because of their numerous initiatives, such as opening their doors to education to "women and lower castes," providing untouchables with access to drinking water wells, and welcoming husbandless women and parentless children into their homes. The bias against reading and writing instruction for girls started to fade as a result of the peons' reliable transportation of the girls to and from school, their parents' indulgent treatment of them, and the teachers' tolerant attention. The girls came to cherish the schools and would literally run there with eagerness and joy. In an era when women were oppressed, Savitribai Phule battled against injustice toward them. She is renowned for her contributions to women's education in India, which include building the country's first school just for female students. She has been dubbed a feminist for all of these

noteworthy efforts. Many even refer to her as the first feminist from modern India. We call this interpretation of her a feminist one. The very earliest feminists in modern India battled for women's rights and opposed widows removing their heads.

Realistic viewpoint: Phule believed that education involved more than just learning the alphabet. It involved more than just learning new things and earning degrees. She believed that everyone should be educated using their own free will and ideas. She used to emphasise that much like food, shelter, and clothing, education is a basic requirement. She came to see that education was the primary cause of people's social backwardness. She therefore takes a practical strategy to the issue of the public education upliftment. She held the opinion that schools should have an industrial division where students could learn practical skills and crafts that would enable them to live indulgently and on your own. Through ensuring the wellbeing of every student at school, she made the decision to lessen childhood famishment. She is also credited with motivating a young pupil to request a school library at an awards ceremony rather than presents for herself. Young girls were encouraged by her to start writing, painting, and other hobbies. She once instructed using basic terms. She mostly taught using active learning strategies and participant engagement.

Role as an activist and socialist

In addition to promoting change in education, Savitribai promoted social reform. India was very underdeveloped in the 19th century, and the caste system had horrible manifestations. Untouchability and the Sati system were continued in use, and there was a significant rate of illiteracy. Women and members of lower castes were not allowed to attend school. They were treated like property and forced to do domestic, economic, and sexual toil in a familial setting. They played no noticeable social role. They were forbidden from speaking out or forming social groups. The severe rules of etiquette in their homes and lack of knowledge were both imposed on them. The widow was shunned by the community and had minor rights, and child marriages were common. Women had second-class treatment in this society that was ruled by men. It is clear that 19th-century India was not the time for women; rather, it is considered to have been the "dark age" for them. Her role as a social activist is absolutely important in that present scenario.

She was the first female teacher from India and the first to open up Indian education to girls and low-caste kids, both of which were revolutionary changes. She was the initial Indian to place ubiquitous, child-

sensitive, intellectually critical, and social reforming education at the forefront of the goals for all children in India. Savitribai Phule collaborated with her husband in the latter's efforts to abolish the untouchability tradition plus the caste system, win equal rights for members of lower castes, and change Hindu family life.

Savitribai established the first facility of its sort in India on January 28, 1853 as a home for these women. Widows were permitted to give birth and abandon their infants in this facility for the prevention of infanticide. Those were the times when women, regardless of caste or class, experienced severe oppression in all spheres of life as a result of the aristocratic social structure. There were numerous patriarchal and Brahminical customs, principles and rituals that were discriminatory toward women.

Influence on modern education

The Phule couple established a night school for agriculturalists and labourers in 1855. In order to meet the requirements of the many oppressed individuals who could not attend regular schools but were only available at night, Phule couples founded the night school.

By providing stipends to youngsters in order to lower the school dropout rate, Savitribai Phule and Jyotiba Phule laid the groundwork for it nearly 170 years ago. By paying attention to each and every student's health in school, they took steps to eliminate childhood malnutrition. In 1850, they created the RTE and Lunchtime Meal Programs.

In order to inform parents about the value of education and to motivate their kids to attend school on a regular basis, parent-teacher conferences were held on a regular basis.

In order to educate the Shudra and Ati-Shudra communities, Savitribai Phule and Jyotiba Phule established a school for adults at Usman Sheikh's Wada in Pune in 1849. Together with Fatima Sheikh, the first female teacher of Islam in India, Savitribai taught in this institution. They both accomplished this with success.

Role in advancing women's education in modern India

In India today, we discovered a woman in every single profession. They are able to move, speak, and engage in social activities freely since Savitribai Phule originally suffered and received harsh criticism in the past. She worked for the dignity of widows, unwed mothers, and women with unintended pregnancies in addition to the right of girls to an education. She recognised the value of English proficiency as well as the necessity of women's education. She persisted in her efforts despite the constant harassment. She

laboured for the women at a time when they were seen as mere things to be utilised and when receiving an education was a crime. She spoke out against all restrictions because she was a modern-day thinker. She lit a lot of lives, and modern ladies ought to be appreciative for that. Women of today are enjoying the fruits of the educational tree that Savitribai Phule planted and nurtured. For her, education meant more than just learning to read and write; it meant kindling everyone's minds and personalities.

The first woman to start educating women in India was Savitribai Phule. At a period when no one in India could have imagined educating a girl, she established the country's first women-only school for females. Social problems were prevalent during the period. Neither widows nor women were permitted to pursue higher education. They were made to live ascetics and had to get their heads shaved. She made the choice to discontinue all of these habits.

It was a horrible existence for women. According to her, the only thing that could truly improve their lives would be education. Together with Jyotiba Phule, she founded the first female-only school in 1848. The first round of admissions only saw 9 girls, all of whom belonged to different castes. She had made radical educational decisions for women that went against the grain of traditional society.

She is one of the fiercely committed individuals who campaigned against caste authoritarianism and other social ills in India. Both caste prejudice and Brahminic caste traditions were judged to be evil by her.

The study's importance

In the current educational system, this study is both crucial and pertinent. Informing everyone about Savitribai Phule's worldview and liberal feminism is a key component of this research. It's funny how she set forth and supported her arguments in the context of the present. For women of today, trying to imagine what the world was like back then is challenging. She made an inestimable contribution to eradicating superstitions and creating a system of education for women.

Savitribai is a national hero in India who understood the actual significance of women's rights, including the right to education guaranteed through the Indian Constitution and the rights to life and individual freedom outlined in Article 21. Women are contributing more and more to the advancement of civilization in this millennium. By providing them with equal educational opportunities, they need to be ready, thus for that position. Today, Savitribai Phule, who is frequently referred to as the "mother of contemporary girls' education," is owed appreciation by each and every literate Indian woman.

Conclusion

In several spheres of education, Savitribai Phule takes on distinct personas. She was young when she got married, but she did not live in the gloom of ignorance. She signed the document and represented the society's literacy trend. Her motivation for all of her actions came from her husband. Her contributions to women's emancipation, education, and socioeconomic standing in all spheres, in addition to the founding of the first female school, are remarkable. Society has undergone a long-term change as a result of her women's education campaign. In the current society, this is leading to a rapid rise in the rate of female education. Accordingly, taking into account all factors, it is possible to conclude that not only the society and educational system of the time, but also the current educational system and her contribution to the twenty-first century, are relevant. As a result, the curriculum must incorporate a variety of subjects linked to her education. She continues to be admired and honoured for her contributions to education today.

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