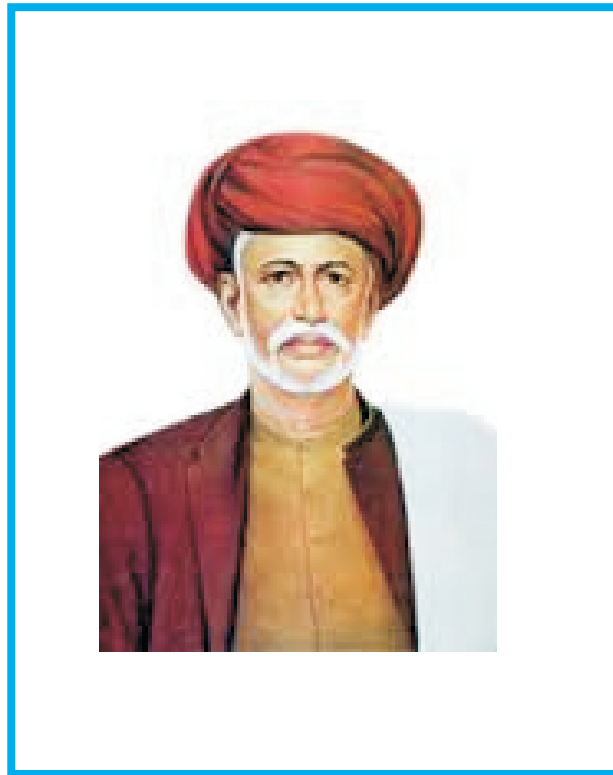


JYOTIBA PHULE : SOCIAL REFORMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



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Abstract:-The human rights issue is ever concern of mankind as so it is gathering a momentum. Dignity and self respect are the essence of human rights. Common threat to dignity and self respect is violation of human rights. Human rights are integral part of human beings. They are born with men, in the sense human beings get them by birth. Human rights as an expression may have a modern right to it, but as a concern it is as ancient as Plato and Aristotle when 'humanity' literally gaining grounds.

Keywords:human rights ,humanity, socio-political .

INTRODUCTION

One of the remarkable contributions of classical, medieval, modern and contemporary social and poetical thought to the culture and divination of mankind should be traced in the reiteration of human rights. Today human rights have assumed significance of their own for the realization of the wholesome life. Jyotiba Phule was a great socio-political thinker, a social reformer and above all a great humanist. Jyotiba Phule started a movement for liberty, equality and fraternity which laid down the foundation for the human rights movement. His teaching speaks about liberty, equality and fraternity which ensure human rights. In this work an attempt will be made to analyses phule's concept of human rights.

Phule is remembered for his contribution to various field like education. Caste equality agricultural reforms, economics, women and widow right human rights and social equality. He occupies a imique position among the, 19* century social reformers of India. The line of thought of Jotirao Phule was revolutionary: It gave a clear goal for individual freedom and self fulfillment. Complete equality and social unity than many other "Reformist" thinkers of the time. People called him a revolutionary because of his uncompromising attack. On the in justice of the old society when he stressed about participatory development. He clearly emphasized economic development of peasants Shudras and women but other reformers. Concentrated more on reforming the social institutions of family and marriage with special emphasis on the status and rights of women. He emphasized more on classless/casteless society. Inspired by his ideology, several parties organizations dalit intellectuals started working. They have to pus forward Phule's revolutionary ideology. pitied parties emerged for this cause they did not make qualitative difference. But all these parties are striving political strength to scheduled castes/tribes/minorities and OBCs and encouraging dates to become leaders to sum up. Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule's a revolutionary social Teachings of Mahatama Phule can provide satisfactory remedies to the ptesrait study state of affairs and miserable condition of women and untouchables in Indian society. The researcher would like to approach the problem from historical cum-analytical point to approach the problem from historical cum-analytical point of view and interview method wherever necessary. The study also involves descriptive one.

After founding educational institutions, Jotirao turned his attention to social reforms by striking at age-old social traditions. Earlier, Rammohun Roy had fought against the practice of sati in Bengal which was subsequently abolished in 1829. The issue of widow remarriage was extremely sensitive and Jotirao was deeply moved by the plight of Hindu widows, in 1864 he got a widower of the Shensi caste remarried. He founded an anti-abortion centre where widows could deliver their babies and have them cared for. This was the first institution of its kind. It saved the widows from loneliness and from the killing of their infants.

Jotirao himself had no children. Although even his father-in-law advised him to remarry but Jotirao remained firm. He said, "If a woman carmot beget a child from her first husband, will she be justified in getting a second husband? This male practice of a second marriage because there is no issue from the first is an extremely cruel one." On the death of his father, Jotirao performed the last rites, but not according to tradition. He fed orphans and invalids. On his father's first death anniversary, he distributed food among the poor and books among students. His wife who was herself childless served the children in the anti-abortion centre with tender affection.

Had Jotirao opted for government service, he would have prospered but he chose public service as he considered it his moral duty towards society. He engaged in private business to support his family. When the government drew up a plan for the construction of the Khadakvasala dam, Jotirao along with his friend Sakharam Paranjape, acquired the contract for the supply of stone. In this line of business, Jotirao came into contact with workers and government officials, especially engineers. Concerned about the welfare of the workers, Jotirao fought for their rights. He impressed upon them the value of education for their children. He became a staunch critic of corrupt practices in such business enterprises. By and by, he undertook other jobs, like supplying lime for the construction of the Yerwada Bridge. His spare time he devoted to reading, especially poetry and books on history written by Christian missionaries.

In 1865, Jotirao published a book which created a stir. Called Jatibhedviveksar, it was written by his friend, Tukaram Tatya Podwal. In the preface to its second edition, the author says.

In the delineation of caste distinction in Hindu scriptures, one finds a corrupt form of caste distinction which has shackled the minds of the Hindus. There is no task more important than liberating them from the isolation resulting from such caste distinctions.

The Brahmins according to the author acquired superiority merely on the strength of their birth, even when they did not have a trace of learning or knowledge or righteous behaviour. Podwal says in his book that the Puranas, by promising happiness in the next world, subjected the masses to performing all kinds of services for the Brahmins. Caste distinctions were founded on the Brahminical notion that a Sudra can never be superior even if he is virtuous or has conquered his pasions.

The whole world is under the control of the gods, the gods are under the control of mantras, the

mantras are under the control of Brahmins and the Brahmins are my deity.

All the holy waters of the earth are contained in the sea and all the holy water in the sea is contained in the right foot of the Brahmin—such was the belief which formed the basis for the caste system. The first edition of this analytical book had earlier been published in August 1861 by Vasudeo Navarange, a progressive individual. He was a Sheriff. In England, when his business failed he paid off all the money he owed to the merchants abroad and came to Bombay. Here, he participated enthusiastically in the activities of the Prarthana Samaj. In 1870 he married a widow.

In 1873, a Brahmin widow named Kashibai gave birth to a baby boy in the anti-abortion centre. The boy was named Yashwant. Jotirao's wife, Savitribai, brought up the boy like her own son. Reformers such as Lokhitavadi, Bhandarkar, Madan Shrikrishna, Mama Paramananda and Tukaram Fodwal, specially commended this act.

Earlier in 1871, Madhavrao Ranade-liad become a follower of Jotirao. Impressed by Jotirao's success in running the home for babies, Ranade and a friend opened a similar home in Pandharpur in 1875. Meanwhile, Jotirao began to think of giving momentum to the issue of widow remarriage. Vishnushastri Pandit, who was a member of the educational institution, gave a helping hand in the work. He wrote articles on the issue of widow remarriage and had them published in the Induprakash. On 28 January 1866, Vishnushastri opened an institution to promote widow remarriage. Soon there were many branches of the institution. Invitations to the wedding of Pandurang Vinayak Kzirmarkar and Venubai were sent out, signed by seven rishis^ including social reformers and supporters such as Gopal Hari Deshmukh, M.CRanade, Vishnu Parshuram, and Vishnushastri Pandit (known as the Ishwarehandra Vidyasagar of Maharashtra). The social reaction to the marriage of Karmarkar and Venubai created a division in Maharashtrian society and set in motion a furious debate. Jotirao had set a personal example of his belief in the eradication of untouchability. Paying no heed to the orthodox dictates of Hindu society, Jotirao threw open the water tank near his house to untouchables, for whom the municipality had not made any arrangements for providing water. During summer, they had to walk long distances to fetch water. Jotirao's caste-fellows threatened to ostracise him. It was rumoured that he had converted to Christianity, because only Christian missionaries did not believe in being polluted by the untouchables. Jotirao showed exemplary courage in the face of strong social pressure. He believed that right was on his side

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