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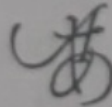
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Cell No. : 9579260877, 9822620877, Ph. No. : (0240) 2400877

E-mail : ajanta6060@gmail.com, www.ajantaprakashan.com

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4. The Father of the Indian Social Revolution – Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

Kudase Udhav Kala

Dept. of History M.S.G. College, Malegaon Camp, Nashik.

Introduction

Considering the social movement in India it comes to our notice that India witnessed a number of social upheavals at various levels. In the 19th century the religious and social movements were aimed to eradicate the defects and shortcomings and to remove the undesirable rituals and practices from the Religions. However, In Hinduism there are many levels and facets of social inequalities and injustices. Hindu society is based on the caste system and every caste has a fixed position in the caste hierarchy. This over emphasis on the caste system gave dominant position and status to certain castes and as a result, special privileges, powers and rights came to be conferred on them. On the other side, some lower castes were regarded so inferior that even basic human rights were denied to them. Thus caste system in India has resulted in dividing society into higher lower or inferior castes.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was born in pune in 1827AD. Due to the good condition of the house, Jyotibas father Govindrao sent him to an English school after his primary education. He completed his education in five six years. From an early age he was extremely annoyed with social inequality. He came in contact with some Christian missionaries. The majority of the people in India are ignorant and illiterate, Jyotiba realized that there is a great need for literacy promotion if there people are to be made aware of their rights. He developed respect for the Christian missionary community, which brought the poor and the Dalits closer together. The dedicated life and work of these missionaries had a profound effect on their lives. Discussions with him could arouse religious curiosity in Jyotiba. All creation is one, and all men are its offspring. He expected all men to treat one another with brotherhood. But at same time dharmamartands in hindu society did not treat their own brothers as human beings. So Jyotiba was upset.

Thomas pens rights of man , Age of Reason played a major role in Jyotibas ideological formation. Although Thomas pen attacked Christianity he did not want to destroy religion.

Superstition, ignorance were to be eradicated. Thomas pen did not believe everything in the Bible to be true, but he gave importance to reason and conscience. He also gave more importance to freedom, equality and justice. Jyotiba accepted things.

His work for women and Untouchability- He dedicated his entire life for lower caste, it was not however aimed towards any particular caste. Mahatma Phule was a humanist. He had genuine affection regarding almost all social factions victimised by the injustice and exploitation. To remove the injustice meted by them was regarded by him as the function of his life.

As women and untouchables were affected by atrocities, Phule decided to begin his campaign at this point. In his time women had a very pitiable position. Women were denied education, so they remained backward. They were also bound by many restrictions in society. First he focussed on women's education. In 1848, He started the first girls school at Rasta Peth and Vetal Peth. For these efforts he was felicitated on 16th November 1852 at Vishrambagwada.

During that period, like the women the lot of untouchables was also a miserable one. In 1852 Phule started two schools for the children of untouchables at Vetal Peth.

Besides starting schools for untouchables, he made significant efforts to improve their social status and to awaken them to know their rights and inculcated in them a love for learning. Seeing their plight in the summer months for some water, he made the well in his house open to them in 1868. He tried to organize them with the help of some colleagues from the untouchables.

Satyashodhak Samaj

In his book entitled *Gulamgiri* he wrote, I am writing this book with the main intention to tell my Shudra brothers that Brahmin people are looting you in every way. Jyotiba felt that all the untouchables should unite and fight for their legitimate right and oppose the dominations of Brahmins. Without united struggle, you cannot get human rights back because the upper castes would not readily surrender the rights, powers and privileges they had been enjoying. With this intention, Mahatma Phule started the Satyashodhak Samaj on 24th September 1873 and became its first president and the treasure.

Main Principles of the Satyashodhak Samaj

1. God is one and he is formless, infinite and without any attributes.
2. All human beings are children of one God.
3. Every human being has a right to worship God.

4. No mediator is necessary to worship God. So there is no need to have a purohit to act as the mediator in worshipping God.
5. Man becomes superior not on the basis of his caste but on his qualities and values.

Elimination of Caste discrimination

Jyotiba was the first great reformer in Maharashtra to eradicate casteism. He made it clear that caste or caste system, which discriminates between human beings and excludes them from human society is unjust. Untouchability was the offspring of casteism. Seeing that a large section of society is not given to right to live as a human being be Hindu Dharmasanstha. Jyotiba launched a vicious attack on the Brahmin class who were trying to oppose and protect it. Caste discrimination could not create widespread social awareness in the society. Because in Hindu Dharma of every caste, the organization determines its field of work and limits. Such limited castes and tribes were living. Violators were excluded from the caste. This created superiority and inequality among the caste and all these were believed to be created by God.

Jyotiba wrote many books like sarvajanic satyadhama, Asprushyanchi kaifiyat, Brahmananche kasab, (slavery) Shetkaryancha Asud (whip of farmers) etc. among them, in the book Gulamgiri Jyotiba incited the Bahujan samaj to revolt against the supremacy of the Brahmin dominated society by launching strong attacks on the hypocrisy of Brahmanical religion the betrayal of the peasant workers and shudras by the Bhat Bhikshuks and purohits Jyotibas sarvajanic satyadhama was based the principles of human freedom, equality and world brotherhood.

Exploitation of Farmers

Jyotiba had done a through study of the farmers who were being exploited in the society. The peasantry was the majority class in the society. He was mired in poverty. Jyotiba has given a realistic picture of how the village bhat bhikshuk, gujrati marwadi, brahmin, money landers in the government department are responsible for the poverty of the farmers. Farmers were being exploited. The farmer was suffering under the burden of the governments revenue and other taxes

The Father of the Indian Social Revolution

In this way, Jyotiba was the first in Maharashtra to launch an all out movement for the salvation of the shudra atishudra Bahujan samaj under the guise of superstitions, ignorance, injustice and oppression. His courage of social revolution is unprecedented. Brought about the

remarriage of widows. Started a child murder prevention home in his home for orphaned widows. He performed the marriage ceremony without a priest. He erected a statue of a farmer at the entrance of the congress leaders that you are ineligible to lead the country unless you have a representative of these farmers. It can not be called a national Assembly unless are representative of 20 crore farmers joins the congress. Jyotirao is the savior of the untouchables. The first Indian to establish a school for girls in the five thousand year history of India. The further of Indian women education, promotes womens freedom and rights. The first leader to set up a movement to alleviate the suffering and poverty of farmers and workers. He was one of rthe first leaders to declare human equality by attacking the caste and caste system. He was the first mahatma of modern India and the first truth seeker louded with divine splendor satyamev Jayte. He can be briefly mentioned as the father of the Indian social revolution and the messenger of a new era for the common people of India. on 19 May 1888, the people of Mumbai, Maharashtra, Spontaneously felicitated him and conferred on him the title of Mahatma.

Objectives

1. Emancipation of women.
2. Removal of caste distinction.
3. Abolition of untouchability.
4. Social inequalities and illiteracy.
5. Education for the underprivileged children.

Hypothesis

1. To remove the restrictions on women and give them a place in the society.
2. To unite the society by destroying the caste system.
3. Untouchability is a sigma to eradicate.
4. Eliminate social inequality.
5. To open the doors of education to the people at the grassroots level.

Conclusion

The social and religious reform movements were strive to sustain the social justice in India and also curbing on the social evils and promote women education in the society. These movements were raised the voice for women education. Mahatma Phule was able to unite the lower castes and awaken their conscience to fight injustice through the Samaj and was able to spread education among the masses through the branches of Satyashodhak Samaj established by

him at various places. He started the mission of public education through them. People from all castes in the society were free to accept the membership of the organization.

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