



## Savitribai Phule -A Beacon of Change in the Landscape of Education During the 19 Century in India

Maneesha<sup>1</sup> & DR. Santanu Biswas<sup>2</sup>

1. Research Scholar, Department of Education, RKDF University, Ranchi
2. HOD&Associate Professor, Department of Education, RKDF University, Ranchi, Mail Id - santanubb@gmail.com

### Abstract:

*During the nineteenth century, Savitribai Jyotirao Phule was a well-known Indian educator and social reformer who made significant contributions to education, particularly in the area of women's education. She was born on January 3, 1831, and is regarded as one of India's earliest contemporary feminists. She is recognised for being India's first female teacher and working to advance women and untouchables in the realm of education, among her other achievements. She spent her whole life—along with her husband Jyotirao Phule—to demand dignity for all women. She placed a high value on the ideals of justice, equality, liberty, and humanity. She created a flame that led to equality in education, which was previously unachievable during a period when women were only things. According to Hari Narke, "Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule stand out as an extraordinary couple in the social and educational history of India. They were engaged in a passionate struggle to build a movement for equality between men and women as well as for social justice." She is regarded as one of the "Crusaders of gender justice" as well. She established her own girls' school in Pune in 1848, and in 1852, she took on a particularly difficult issue by opening a school for Untouchable girls. She spoke out vehemently against the limitations placed on women that contributed to their subjugation. The distinguishing characteristic of her prominent personality is her focus on secular education for social liberation in India. By getting to know her better and comprehending her challenges, we would be able to examine a life that not only transformed Indian education but also awakened mankind to its true nature. The goal of the current study piece is to determine Savitribai Jyotirao Phule's significance from the perspective of Indian women's education.*

**Keywords:** Savitribai Phule, Jyotirao Phule, Gender Equality, Women Education, Social Reformer.

### 1. Introduction:

Phule was born in Naigaon, Maharashtra in 1831 and wed social leader and reformer Jyotirao Phule at the tender age of nine. Phule's husband encouraged her to continue her education when they were married, and she and her husband finally opened Bhide Wada, India's first school for females, in Pune in 1848. Prior to it, in 1847, she and Jyotirao's cousin Sagan Bai opened a school in Maharwada. People would frequently throw excrement and stones at her on the way to school since the concept of educating females was seen as revolutionary at the time.

Savitribai Phule, one of India's first contemporary feminists and a social reformer. She is most known as India's first female teacher, and for her efforts to improve the educational opportunities available to women and members of the untouchable caste. She worked tirelessly to improve the lives of the underprivileged while fighting against the dominating caste system. She and her husband, Jyotirao Phule, spent their whole lives fighting for women's rights and demanding that they be treated with respect. Humanity, equality, freedom, and justice were fundamental values for her. At a period when women were treated as chattel, she sparked a movement that ultimately led to parity in the classroom.

She made it clear that she did not approve of the sexist constraints that contributed to the subjugation of women. The hallmark of her greatness is the importance she placed on secular education as a means of social liberation in India. Getting to know her, learning from her trials and tribulations, is like gaining insight into a life that not only revolutionized teaching methods in India, but also shed light on the true nature of people.

### **1.1. Background of the Study:**

The 19th century in India was a period of profound socio-cultural and political changes. It was characterized by rigid social hierarchies, oppressive caste-based discrimination, and gender disparities in various aspects of life, including education. Women, in particular, faced severe restrictions on their access to education, and societal norms perpetuated their subordination. In this context, the emergence of Savitribai Phule as a prominent figure in 19th-century India is of significant historical importance. She was born in 1831 in Maharashtra, India, into a society where women were often denied access to formal education and were confined to traditional domestic roles. However, her upbringing was unique, as her parents recognized the value of education and encouraged her to learn. Savitribai's life took a transformative turn when she married Jyotirao Phule, a social reformer who shared her passion for education and social justice. Together, they embarked on a mission to challenge the prevailing norms and bring about social change. The caste system was deeply entrenched in Indian society, leading to systemic discrimination and untouchability practices. Education was largely restricted to the upper castes, and lower-caste individuals, particularly Dalit's, were denied access to knowledge. Gender norms were highly patriarchal, relegating women to subordinate roles within families and society. Women's education was often considered unnecessary or even harmful to their prescribed domestic duties. The 19th century witnessed the emergence of several social reform movements aimed at challenging regressive customs and advocating for social justice. Leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Jyotirao Phule were at the forefront of these movements. Savitribai Phule's work in education and social reform was groundbreaking. She and her husband established the first school for girls in Pune in 1848, challenging centuries-old traditions. Through this institution and their advocacy, they sought to empower women with education, enabling them to break free from the shackles of ignorance and oppression. This research study aims to delve into the life, contributions, and legacy of Savitribai Phule as a beacon of change in the 19th-century Indian educational landscape. It will explore the historical context, her role as an educational reformer, the impact of her work on gender equality and education, and the relevance of her legacy in contemporary India. Understanding her transformative influence is essential not only for acknowledging her historical significance but also for drawing inspiration from her pioneering efforts in the ongoing pursuit of social justice and educational equity in India and beyond.

### **1.2. Need and Significance of the Study:**

Modern India's educational system is founded on the principle of universal access to a quality education as one of the government's primary responsibilities. However, because to concerns of caste, gender, and religion, women are underprivileged. On January 3, 1831, Savitribai Phule was born, and she would go on to become a social reformer and one of India's first modern feminists. She is most known as India's first female teacher, and for her efforts to improve the educational opportunities available to women and members of the untouchable caste. Therefore, this article will discuss Savitribai Phule's impact on empowering women via education and society.

### 1.3. Statement of the Problem:

The 19th century in India was marked by deeply entrenched social norms and gender disparities in education. During this period, Savitribai Phule emerged as a significant figure, challenging these norms and advocating for educational reform, particularly for women and marginalized communities. This research aims to investigate and analyze the extent of Savitribai Phule's influence as a beacon of change in the landscape of education during the 19th century in India. By addressing these problem areas, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Savitribai Phule's role as a beacon of change in the 19th-century Indian educational landscape and assess the enduring impact of her contributions in the context of contemporary educational and social reform. Thus the study entitled as “**Savitribai Phule-A Beacon of Change in the Landscape of Education During the 19th Century in India.**”

### 1.4. Objectives of the Study:

1. To gain familiarity about Savitribai Phule's feminist philosophical ideas.
2. To evaluate Savitribai Phule's impact on women's rights in India, specifically with regards to gender equality
3. To analyse the role of Savitribai Phule in the field of educational opportunities.
4. The role Savitribai Phule as a social reformer in India.

## 2. The Review of Related Literature:

**Desai, M., & Roy, R. (2022).** Intersectional Coloniality in 19th Century India: The Sociological Praxis of Savitribai Phule and the Women Activists of Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seeker Society). *The American Sociologist*, 53(3), 395-413. Beyond conceptualizing intersectional coloniality, through the praxis of personal reflections and writing (foreshadowing the current focus in sociological research and teaching on personal narratives) they also fostered a critique of it to enable social transformation. Thus, their work is sociological and relevant to broadening the history of sociology and the discourse of global sociology today. Moreover, their work today inspires social justice activism by Dalit and non-Dalit movements today in India and the U.S.

**Sultana, S. (2021).** Contribution of Savitribai Phule And Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain In Women-Education Reform. This study is about the two pioneers of women education of two countries who have struggled for whole life to establish the existence and right of a woman. Savitribai Phule and Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain are the main focuses of the present study. Their contributions in women education reform have been discussed in a comparable view. Contemporary issues related women education and the significance of these two women have been shown in the study.

Das, A., & Das, A. C. (2021). Educational Contribution of Savitribai Phule in 21st Century India. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)*, 5(4), 1281-1286.

**Das, A., & Das, A. C. (2021).** Educational Contribution of Savitribai Phule in 21st Century India. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)*, 5(4), 1281-1286. This study is a qualitative approach associated with the historical study method. The method of historical study is adopted by the researcher to conduct his study. In this study, both primary and secondary data have been used. Her principles and values are acceptable in the general education system. These views should be incorporated into the present education system. This will enrich the knowledge of the Indian education system. Teachers and Students will follow the way shown by Savitribai Phule and make the education system acceptable for all strata of the society and aware everyone to rise above discrimination. In

this way, present education will be more fruitful and will also help to keep the value and relevance at various levels.

**Pandey, R. (2019).** Locating Savitribai Phule's feminism in the trajectory of global feminist thought. *Indian Historical Review*, 46(1), 86-105. The present article endeavoured to bring out the salient points in the feminist ideology of Savitribai Phule as a crusader for gender justice and will try to locate her feminist ideology in the overall trajectory of global feminist thought. The article suggests that Savitribai's feminism shows characteristics of all the three waves of feminism.

**Wolf, T. (2011).** Comenius and Savitribai Phule. *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 5(2), 78-104. Phule (1831-1897), widely designated as father of modern education and mother of modern India education, are presented as world voice, worldview, and world venue colleagues. Informed by historians Arend van Leeuwen and David Freedman, philosopher Stephen Pepper, and economist Samir Amin, the cultural matrix of Comenius and Savitribai is delineated through their "Wv3": their common world voice (individual virtuous, prototype person), who elicited their common worldview (holistic intellectual mindset), which informed their resultant world venue (social and behavioral maze way) in education.

### **2.1. Research Gap:**

There is a dearth of research related to "Savitribai Phule-A Beacon of Change in the Landscape of Education During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in India." Therefore researcher conducted investigation related to such statement of problem.

### **3. Methodology of the Study:**

It is a documentary study. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study is based on Primary and Secondary sources. The Primary sources are Government Report and Books. The Secondary sources data are gathered from the journals, articles, newspapers, etc. Some related information's were extracted from various websites. It is a Descriptive Research.

### **4. Analysis and Discussion:**

The analysis and interpretation of the study were conducted based on the objectives of the study.

#### **4.1. Pertaining to Objective 1:**

**O<sub>1</sub>: To gain familiarity about Savitribai Phule's feminist philosophical ideas.**

Savitribai Phule was a pioneering Indian social reformer and feminist who lived in the 19th century. Her feminist philosophical ideas were deeply rooted in her experiences, observations, and commitment to addressing the systemic oppression and discrimination faced by women in India during her time. In colonial India, Savitribai Phule was the first prominent female philosopher. She was not the stereotypical Indian housewife who did nothing except obey her husband. She is the Matriarch of females. Her ideas and education aim to liberate women from so-called Indian tradition. Bravely, she backed her unconventional husband in all of his endeavours. She was a revolutionary in her own way and a notable personality in her day. The anguish, aspiration, and emotion of the contemporary, free Indian woman are all there in Savitribai's writing. The legendary pativrata (loyal to spouse) women like Sita-Savitri module were the focus of her contemporaries, but she instead gave voice to the fervor of contemporary Indian writing. She found her own voice and agency during a period when women of all social strata were brutally subjugated and treated as less than human. Jyotiba Phule, her spouse and mentor, enthusiastically supported and encouraged her in her endeavour. She served as an inspiration to Indian women throughout her lifetime, and she continues to do so now and into the future. She was called "the mother of modern Marathi poetry" by her biographer, M.G. Mali. (Mali, 2008, 56) Poems of Savitribai Phule convey both types of ethics. She writes

about overcoming caste and gender prejudice and the untouchability problem in addition to gaining an English education.

Here, researcher will analyze some of the key aspects of Savitribai Phule's feminist philosophical ideas:

**Education as Liberation:** Savitribai Phule firmly believed that education was the key to women's liberation. She recognized that women's lack of access to education was a tool used by the patriarchal society to subjugate them. Phule, along with her husband Jyotirao Phule, established the first school for girls in Pune in 1848. She saw education as a means for women to gain knowledge, confidence, and the ability to challenge societal norms.

**Women's Education as Empowerment:** Savitribai Phule firmly believed that education was the most potent tool for women's empowerment. She established the first school for girls in Pune in 1848, challenging the prevailing societal norms that restricted women's access to education. Her belief was that education could free women from the shackles of ignorance and help them assert their rights.

**Equality and Social Justice:** Phule's feminism was not limited to women's issues alone; she understood the interconnectedness of gender, caste, and class oppression. She advocated for the rights of the oppressed castes and lower socio-economic groups, emphasizing the need for social justice and equality. She recognized that women from marginalized communities faced compounded discrimination and sought to address this through her work.

**Critique of Patriarchy:** Savitribai Phule was a vocal critic of the patriarchal structures prevalent in Indian society. She highlighted how patriarchy oppressed women, limiting their freedom and autonomy. Her writings and speeches condemned the mistreatment of women within the family and society at large, challenging traditional gender roles and norms.

**Women's Liberation:** Phule envisioned a society where women could not only access education but also actively participate in social and political spheres. She encouraged women to take leadership roles and be part of the reform movements of her time. Her work laid the foundation for women's participation in social and political activism in India.

**Caste and Gender Intersectionality:** Phule's feminism was inclusive and intersectional. She recognized that the struggles of women were deeply intertwined with the caste system. Her efforts were directed towards dismantling both caste-based discrimination and gender-based oppression, advocating for the rights of Dalit women in particular.

**Literature and Activism:** Phule used literature and her writings as a powerful tool for advocacy. She composed poems, essays, and speeches that highlighted the injustices faced by women and marginalized communities. Her literary work served as a means to inspire and mobilize people for social reform.

**Solidarity and Collaboration:** Savitribai Phule believed in the importance of solidarity among women and marginalized groups. She actively collaborated with her husband, Jyotirao Phule, in their social reform efforts. This partnership was instrumental in challenging oppressive systems.

In conclusion, Savitribai Phule's feminist philosophical ideas were ahead of her time. She championed women's education, gender equality, and social justice in a society marked by deeply entrenched patriarchy and caste-based discrimination. Her holistic approach to feminism, coupled with her commitment to the betterment of society as a whole, has left a lasting legacy and continues to inspire feminist movements in India and beyond. She remains a symbol of resilience and courage in the fight for gender and social equality.

#### **4.2. Pertaining to Objective 2:**

**O<sub>2</sub>:** *To evaluate Savitribai Phule's impact on women's rights in India, specifically with regards to gender equality.*

Savitribai Phule and her husband, Jyotirao Phule, are widely recognised as pioneers in the contemporary feminist movement in India. Both were instrumental in the fight to improve conditions for Indian citizens under British rule. At a period when women's offended modesty was a widespread problem in India. For those people who were enslaved, she was the Messiah. At a period when women were treated as property, she sparked a movement that eventually led to educational parity for the sexes. She pioneered education for women in India as its first female educator. In 1852, she provided education to hitherto unreachable females by establishing a school. She was a notable Indian poet, educator, and social reformer who wrote in the 19th century to advance women's education and independence. Savitribai campaigned against gender and caste inequality, as well as child marriage, sati-pratha, untouchability, and remarriage for widows. She made it clear that she did not approve of the limits placed on women, which she said contributed to their subjugation. One indicator of her importance is the importance she placed on secular education as a means of social liberation for the people of India. Savitribai Phule, who went into the 'Dark Age' with the intention of educating. She dared to speak up against the unforgivable restrictions set on women in Indian culture at a time when women were only things to be utilized and education for women was regarded no less than a punished crime. Today's ladies and everyone should be eternally thankful to her for lighting the spark that lighted a million lives. Savitribai Phule made significant contributions to the advancement of women's rights in India, particularly in the context of gender equality. Her impact on this front can be assessed through the following key points:

**Pioneering Women's Education:** Savitribai Phule, along with her husband Jyotirao Phule, established the first school for girls in Pune in 1848. This was a groundbreaking step in a society where women's education was largely neglected and considered taboo. By providing access to education for girls, she challenged traditional gender norms and paved the way for the empowerment of women through knowledge and learning.

**Empowering Women through Education:** Phule firmly believed that education was the primary tool for women's empowerment. She recognized that education could enable women to break free from the chains of ignorance and dependency, granting them the confidence and skills to participate actively in society. Her commitment to women's education was instrumental in changing societal attitudes toward the intellectual and social capabilities of women.

**Gender Equality Advocacy:** Savitribai Phule was a vocal advocate for gender equality. She openly critiqued the patriarchal norms and practices that oppressed women. Her writings and speeches condemned the mistreatment of women within families and society at large. She believed that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men, and she actively worked towards achieving this goal.

**Role Model and Inspiration:** Savitribai Phule's life and work served as an inspiration for countless women in India. Her courage in challenging social norms and her dedication to the cause of women's rights made her a role model for others. Her example encouraged women to strive for gender equality and to assert their rights in a society that often marginalized them.

**Legacy of Women's Education:** The establishment of schools for girls in Pune was just the beginning. The legacy of Savitribai Phule's efforts in women's education can be seen in the subsequent expansion of educational opportunities for girls and women in India. Her pioneering work catalyzed a movement toward gender-inclusive education, which has had a lasting impact on Indian society.

**Intersectional Approach:** While advocating for gender equality, Savitribai Phule also recognized the intersectionality of gender with other forms of oppression, particularly caste. Her advocacy extended to addressing the rights of Dalit women, who faced discrimination based on both gender and caste. This intersectional approach laid the foundation for broader social justice movements in India.

In summary, Savitribai Phule's impact on women's rights in India, particularly in terms of gender equality, was profound. Her advocacy for women's education, her commitment to challenging patriarchal norms, and her status as a role model continue to inspire feminists and activists in India and beyond. Her legacy has contributed to the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the recognition of women's rights as an essential component of social justice in India.

#### **4.3. Pertaining to Objective 3:**

**O<sub>3</sub>: To analyse the role of Savitribai Phule in the field of educational opportunities.**

In 1848, when Savitribai was only a teenager, she and her husband Jyotirao opened the first indigenously operated school for females in Pune (then known as Poona). Savitribai was appointed headmistress of a school for girls founded by Jyotirao Phule the next year (1849) after she had finished her education. She founded the first school for girls in India. The idea of her opening a school for girls was met with opposition because of the low status of women's education at the time. The opposition to Dalit education was especially strong among the higher castes. The Sudra-Antisera were the lowest caste in India, and there were just nine of them in her first class. After six months of operation, the school was forced to close owing to a lack of funding. Rastapeth, in the Pune area, is now home to a second all-girls school. A third all-girls institution, located in Bataalpeth, Pune, was established subsequently. Instead of studying Brahminical classics like the Vedas and the Shashtra's, students studied topics like as grammar, mathematics, geography, and the history of the Maratha people. Savitribai Phule was recognised as the finest educator in India on November 16th, 1852, thanks to the efforts of her family and the Phule family as a whole. By 1858, the three institutions had all shut down. The Indian Rebellion of 1857, the departure of Jyotirao from the school management committee over a curricular dispute, and a lack of financial backing from the government were all factors.

Despite the odds, Fatima Sheikh, Savitri, and Jyotirao took on the responsibility of teaching members of marginalized groups. Savitribai founded 18 schools and educated students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition to verbal harassment, members of the higher caste hurled cow manure and dirt at her as she walked to school in an effort to deter her. Despite suffering such injustices, she persisted on her trek every day, always prepared for the worse by bringing two sarees with her. The goal of the powerful duo Jyotirao and Savitribai was the solidarity of all oppressed peoples. They were the first in modern India to openly challenge the established Brahminical caste system. They eventually grew to include Adivasis and Muslims, and they all battled hard for their freedom, too. She used school attendance incentives to reduce the number of students who stopped going to class. She held parent-teacher conferences to help families see the value in education for their children, and she was a firm believer that communication between educators and parents was essential. The Native Female School in Pune and The Society for advancing the Education of Mahars, Mangs, and Etceteras were both founded in the 1850s by the Phule couple, who went on to build numerous more schools under their respective aegis. Savitri oversaw one of these institutions as its principal. In the year 1855, Fatima Sheikh was entrusted with the administration of a school. In addition, in 1855, the couples opened a night school for farmhands and factory employees. The Phule couple saw a need to provide for the education of the disadvantaged, many of whom could only attend conventional schools at night due to work or family obligations.

Savitribai Phule played a pioneering and transformative role in the field of educational opportunities, particularly for women and marginalized communities, during the 19th century in India. Her contributions in this area are remarkable and have left a lasting impact. Here's an overview of her role in the realm of educational opportunities:

**Establishing the First School for Girls:** One of Savitribai Phule's most significant achievements was the establishment of the first school for girls in Pune in 1848, along with her husband, Jyotirao Phule. This school was a revolutionary step at a time when the education of girls was largely neglected and considered

taboo. It provided girls, who were previously excluded from formal education, with a platform for learning and personal development.

**Promoting Literacy Among Women:** Beyond establishing the school, Savitribai Phule actively encouraged women, including those from marginalized communities, to become literate. She visited homes to convince parents to send their daughters to school and even faced social ostracism for her efforts. Her commitment to female literacy helped bridge the gender gap in education.

**Training Female Teachers:** Recognizing the importance of female role models in the education of girls, Savitribai Phule also trained women to become teachers. This step not only empowered women with professional opportunities but also ensured a nurturing and supportive environment for female students.

**Advocating for Women's Education:** Savitribai Phule was a vocal advocate for women's education. Through her writings, speeches, and public engagement, she consistently emphasized the significance of educating girls and women. Her advocacy helped change societal attitudes and paved the way for the acceptance of female education.

**Empowering Marginalized Communities:** Savitribai Phule's dedication to education extended to marginalized communities, including Dalits (formerly known as untouchables). She believed in the transformative power of education in breaking the cycle of oppression. Her efforts contributed to empowering marginalized individuals and communities through access to education.

**Inspiration for Educational Reform:** Savitribai Phule's work served as a catalyst for educational reform in India. Her pioneering efforts in women's education inspired others to follow suit, leading to the establishment of more schools for girls and increased efforts to bridge gender disparities in education.

**Legacy in Educational Institutions:** The schools and educational institutions founded by Savitribai Phule continue to exist and thrive today. Her legacy can be seen in the continued presence of these institutions, which serve as a testament to her enduring impact on educational opportunities in India.

In summary, Savitribai Phule's role in the field of educational opportunities was transformative. She broke gender barriers, promoted literacy among women, and advocated for the education of marginalized communities. Her tireless efforts not only provided immediate access to education but also laid the foundation for broader educational reforms and social change in India. Savitribai Phule's legacy remains a source of inspiration for those committed to expanding educational opportunities and promoting social justice.

#### **4.4. Pertaining to Objective 4:**

##### ***O<sub>4</sub>: The role Savitribai Phule as a social reformer in India.***

- Savitribai led several progressive activities in her own right, making her a revolutionary on par with her husband. She founded the Mahila Seva Mandal in 1852, an organisation that promoted equality for women, fought against the stigmatization of widows, and promoted their freedom to remarry. She also campaigned against infanticide and founded a clinic to help unwanted kids. To protest the inhumane custom of shaving the heads of widows, Savitribai also successfully coordinated a strike among Mumbai and Pune barbers. She was likewise not afraid to institute changes at home. Besides being Savitribai's spouse, Jyotirao was also one of her teachers. He had given her a second chance at life, equipped her with an education, and helped set her on solid ground. She gave her husband her full cooperation and endured all they went through with him. The Phules focused mostly on education, although they did other good works as well.

In 1863, a couple named Phule opened a shelter for single mothers and their children in an effort to prevent infanticide. They advertised the centre by distributing flyers in Brahmin settlements using language that



some could find offensive. Many pregnant widows' lives were spared thanks to their actions, but they angered many Brahmins in the process. For the simple reason that back before, even the shadow of an untouchable was deemed dirty and people refused to even give thirsty untouchables water, upper-caste Hindu widows were not permitted to remarry and were ostracized by society. In 1868, Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule allowed the untouchables to use the well in their backyard. There was a symbolic fight against the caste system's ideas of purity and contamination. The founding of the Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873 was the pinnacle of their social activity. Consequently, the Samaj sought to assist marginalized groups gain independence from Brahminical society by teaching them about their human rights. This was a radical move since traditionally Brahmins have presided over religious rites. Savitribai Phule played a pivotal role as a social reformer in 19th-century India. Her work was instrumental in challenging oppressive social norms and advocating for the rights and upliftment of marginalized communities. Here's an overview of her significant contributions as a social reformer:

**Promoting Women's Rights:** Savitribai Phule was a trailblazer in the fight for women's rights in India. She established the first school for girls in Pune in 1848, breaking the taboo surrounding women's education. Through her work in education, she sought to empower women with knowledge and skills, enabling them to challenge their subordinate roles in society.

**Advocating for Gender Equality:** Phule was a vocal advocate for gender equality. She critiqued patriarchal norms and practices that oppressed women. Her writings and speeches condemned the mistreatment of women within families and society at large. She believed that women should have equal rights and opportunities, and she worked tirelessly to bring about gender equality.

**Educational Reforms:** Alongside her husband, Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai played a crucial role in educational reforms in India. They not only established schools for girls but also worked to make education accessible to children from lower-caste backgrounds. Their efforts laid the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable education system.

**Empowering Marginalized Communities:** Savitribai Phule's commitment to social reform extended to the empowerment of Dalit's (formerly known as untouchables) and other marginalized groups. She recognized that education was a powerful tool for breaking the chains of caste-based oppression. Her work in this area was pioneering and contributed to social mobility for the marginalized.

**Campaigning Against Social Evils:** Phule was actively involved in campaigns against social evils such as sati (widow burning) and child marriage. She played a crucial role in raising awareness about these practices and advocating for their abolition. Her activism contributed to changes in societal attitudes and eventually led to legal reforms.

**Literary Contributions:** Savitribai Phule was a prolific writer and poet. She used her literary talents to highlight the plight of marginalized communities and to advocate for social justice. Her writings, including poems and essays, served as powerful tools for social reform and raised awareness about the issues she cared deeply about.

**Solidarity and Activism:** Phule was not just a theoretician but an active participant in social reform movements. She worked in tandem with her husband, Jyotirao Phule, to challenge oppressive systems and advocate for the rights of the marginalized. Their partnership was instrumental in their success as social reformers.

In summary, Savitribai Phule's role as a social reformer in India was multifaceted and trailblazing. Her tireless efforts in promoting women's rights, advocating for gender equality, championing education, and empowering marginalized communities have left a lasting legacy. Her work laid the foundation for

subsequent social reform movements and contributed to the broader struggle for justice, equality, and human rights in India. She continues to be celebrated as a symbol of courage and social change.

## 5. Conclusion:

In conclusion, Savitribai Phule's role as a beacon of change in the landscape of education during the 19th century in India was transformative. Her pioneering efforts in promoting women's education, advocating for gender equality, and fostering inclusivity in education have had a lasting impact on Indian society. Savitribai Phule shared her revolutionary husband's struggles and hardships. She was the first female teacher in modern India, as well as a radical proponent of mass and female education, an advocate of women's liberation, a pioneer of engaged poetry, and a bold mass leader who took on the forces of caste and patriarchy. She advocated for education and penned several poems against prejudice. Savitribai was the first woman of the Shudra caste in India, and one of the first women of any caste in the British Empire, to have her poetry published. Her life and achievements have been a beacon for change in Indian society, especially for women. She continues to serve as a role model for many feminist activists today. She is regarded as the pioneering figure in India's feminist movement. She remains a symbol of courage, resilience, and progress in the ongoing struggle for educational equity and social justice. Savitribai Phule indeed stands as a beacon of change in the landscape of education during the 19th century in India. Her remarkable contributions and influence in the realm of education brought about transformative shifts in societal norms and laid the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable educational system.

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