

# **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

## **Role in Social Science**

### **Chief Editor**

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## ***PORTRAYAL OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKS OF MAHATMA PHULE***

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### **Abstract:**

Jotirao Govindrao Phule was a well-known social activist and thinker from Maharashtra. He was a versatile person. He was an active social reformer, social thinker, poet, dramatist, essayist, prose writer and teacher. In 1873 he wrote book entitled "Slavery". The title of the book is self-explanatory, as he expanded the title to say: "In this civilized British Government under the Cloak of Brahmanism." He wrote this book for the benefit of common people. In this booklet he discusses his views on Slavery. Phule knew the landmarks of world history, he also knew the problem of slavery that was similar in the United States and fortunately the President of the United States Abraham Lincoln stopped that cruel inhumane practice called slavery. Phule therefore dedicated this book as a sign of admiration to the good people of the United States for their noble, dispassionate and unselfish devotion to the cause of Negro slavery; and sincerely hoping that my natives will take his Nobel example as a guide to liberate their Sudra brothers from Brahmin rule.

**Keywords: Slavery, Religion, Chaturvarna, Oppressed etc.**

### **Introduction:**

As a social scientist, Phule researched and studied the hierarchical caste system in his contemporary society. The Chaturvarna system divided people of the society into four important groups namely Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudras. The socio-economic status of the upper classes was better than

the oppressed lower class called Shudras and Ati-Sudras. Phule tried to find the roots, the origin of that Chaturvarnya system introduced during Vedic times. At first people were classified according to the work they did in society. Later, this classification was modified to form rigid social groups. Such groups gave rise to the caste system. Upper castes started looking down on lower castes. Such upper caste people, preferably the Brahmin class, make known to their religion and culture to the society. They thought they were greater, so they treated others like beasts. Phule scrutinized the origins of the Chaturvarnya system, the caste system, particularly the upper class Brahmins and the lower class Shudras and Ati-Shudras of that country.

In the mythical story, the authors overstated their shape and size. But the fact is that the native people were taller and barely managed. The Aryans managed to institute their own domain. Their leaders Brahma, Parshurama fought long wars against the original inhabitants. It is said that Parshurama ended the race of Kshatriyas seven times. It was simply genocide. The Brahmanical books contain so many fictitious stories of encounters and conquests. Phule compares Aryans conquest in Balisthan with Europeas migratory people's conquest of the land of American Indians which were also called red-Indians. The European people too went in search of new land and landed on the area belonging to red-Indians. There they fought battles and defeated the aboriginal people and settled their colonies. The conflict is inevitable part of human life. Such a conflict lasted for a long time in India too. The weaker tribe gets defeated by the powerful opponents. The losers not only lose the battle but also lose their right to live, traditions, cultures and language land too. The colonized adopt the colonizers culture, traditions and ways of life, setting aside their own ways of life. Phule discusses mythological character of Parshurama. According to Phule, "The cruelties and inhuman atrocities which Parshurama committed on the Kshatriyas, the

people of this land, if we are to believe even one tenth of what the legends say regarding him, surpass our belief and show that he was more a fiend than a God. "Waging battles continually Aryans settled on the banks of Sapta Sindhu i.e. seven tributaries of Sindhu and the Ganges, and they gradually spreaded all over this country. In order to rule on the native people they invented weird system of mythology. Also they wrote cruel and inhuman laws.

They introduced caste system. They secured for themselves the highest rights, the highest privileges and gifts while they treated Shudras and Ati-Shudras with hatred and contempt. Their touch was deemed pollution. Brahmins have succeeded in their efforts to enslave the mind of Shudras and Ati-Shudras.

The ever fighting Aryas settled on the banks of the Sapta Sindhu, or seven tributaries of the Sindhu and the Ganges, and gradually spread over the whole of this country. To control the natives, they invented a strange mythological system. They also wrote cruel and inhumane laws. They make known to the caste system. They secured for themselves the highest rights, the highest honours and gifts, treating the Shudras and Ati-shudras with hatred and contempt. Their touch was considered contamination. Brahmins succeeded in enslaving the mind of Shudra and Ati-Shudra. For generations, these non-Brahmins were bound in the chains of slavery.

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