

<b>AREA OF META DATA</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
<b>THEME</b>	<b>SAVITRIBAI PHULE : A LIFE THAT CONTINUES TO INSPIRE</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>HISTORY</b>
<b>LINKAGE OF THEME WITH CHAPTERS(NAME)</b>	Women Caste and Reform
<b>CLASS/LEVEL</b>	CLAS VIII OUR PASTS III PART II
<b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	Students
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To appreciate the role played by Savitribai Phule in her fight against caste rigidities and oppression of women.</li> <li>• To critically analyse the position of women in 19<sup>th</sup> century India.</li> </ul>
<b>ESCRPTION</b>	<p>Indian society in the nineteenth century was characterized by rigid caste distinctions, practice of untouchability, <i>pardah</i>, child marriage, <i>sati</i>, illiteracy and other forms of social inequalities which had a deep impact on the position of women. The impact of western ideas, modern education and need for a rational and scientific approach to life resulted in sharp criticism of existing traditional and hierarchical social institutions. Many social</p>

	<p>reformers were no longer willing to accept rigid beliefs, traditions and practices that had plagued Indian society for long. Their main aim was to uproot social evils that had undermined the position of women .They demanded abolition of sati, infanticide and child marriage, provision of educational facilities for women and promotion of widow remarriage. One such social reformer was Savitribai Phule who fought relentlessly against the dominant caste system and worked towards the upliftment of the marginalized. She demanded dignity for all women, for which she, along with her husband Jyotirao Phule worked their entire lives.</p>
<b>KEY WORDS</b>	Savitribai Phule, dalit, Mukta Salve, caste rigidity, child widow, Satyashodak Samaj
<b>CONTENT DEVELOPER</b>	MILY ROY ANAND
<b>SUBJECT COORDINATOR</b>	MILY ROY ANAND
<b>CIET COORDINATOR</b>	INDU KUMAR



## CHILD BRIDE

- **Married at the age of nine**
- **Taught by her husband to read and write**

## EDUCATION

- **One of India's first woman teachers**
- **Opened the first school for girls in Pune**

## WELFARE OF POOR

- **Formed Satya Shodak Samaj**
- **Opened centre for protection of pregnant women**

## EARLY LIFE



Savitribai Phule was born during a time when girls were married off even before puberty, when education was out of reach for girls and when many became child widows even before attaining adulthood. Savitribai Phule was born in 1831 to a family of poor farmers in Naigaon, near Pune and at the tender age of nine she was married to Jyotirao Phule, who was 13 at the time. She very well knew what it was like to be a child bride. But fortunately Jyotirao was progressive in his thinking and knew the value of girls' education. He took it upon himself to teach Savitribai how to read and write and helped her to become a trained teacher. She obtained formal training in St. Mitchell's school in Pune.

## SPREAD OF EDUCATION AMONG THE MARGINALISED



- The first ever school for girls in Pune was started by Savitribai in January in Bhide Wada in 1848 ,with admission of nine girls from different castes.
- With full support of her husband she opened two more schools for girls in 1851, there were about 150 girls studying in these schools.
- Moved by the plight of dalits she opened another school for the *Mahars* and the *Mangs* in her village in Naigaon in 1852.
- Mukta Salve , an eleven year old girl was inspired by Savitribai to write an essay on Dalit emancipation
- She opened nearly 18 schools for women.

## MUKTA SALVE: A VOICE AGAINST CASTE DISCRIMINATION

*“Oh, the Mahars and Mangs, you are poor and sick. Only the medicine of knowledge will cure and heal you.”*



Belonging to the *Mang* community considered as one of the lowest and ritually impure communities, Mukta Salve was a student of Savitribai Phule. She began her education in 1852 in the school started by Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule at Vetal Peth in Pune. She questioned discriminatory caste practices in her essay '*Mang Maharanchya Dukhavisatha* (About the Grief of Mahar and Mangs) at the age of fourteen. It went on to become one of the first works of Dalit literature. Her essay was first published in a Marathi journal named *Dnyanodaya* in 1855. And was translated into English and published in Susie Tharu and K. Lalita's '*Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to Present*' in 1991.

## A SAVIOUR FOR THE OPPRESSED



- Opened a well inside her house in 1868 for dalits , who were barred from drinking water from wells and ponds meant only for the upper castes.
- Worked hard for emancipation of widows who were not permitted to remarry and had to have their heads shaved off.  
She organized a successful barbers strike in Mumbai and Pune against the prevailing practice of shaving of widows' heads.
- In 1854, they opened an orphanage for the young widows and the unfortunate children.
- Opened a '*Balhatya Pratibandhak Grah*' for protection of pregnant child widows.
- In 1873, they formed '*Satya shodak Samaj*' which worked for the liberation of lower caste people from the oppression of the upper castes.
- Savitribai faced a lot of opposition from orthodox society for her endeavors. She was often threatened, abused and insulted. She never gave up.

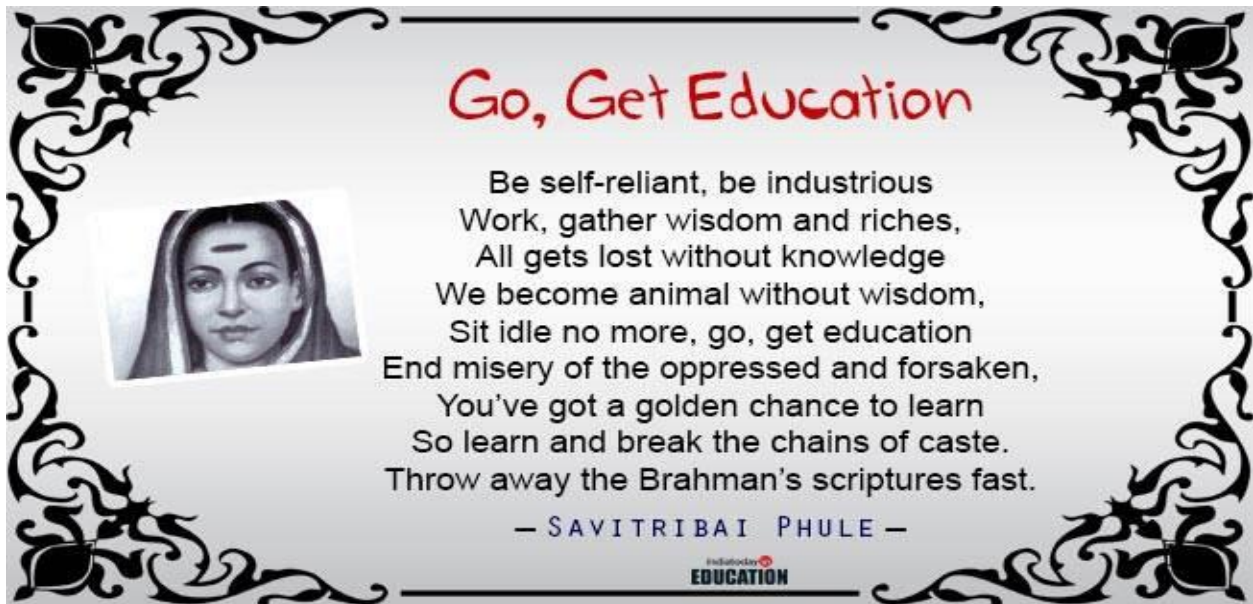
## FINAL YEARS



**After Jyotrao Phule passed away, Savitribai continued the movement for social reform and she led the Satyashodhak movement till the very end. She was the chairperson of the Satyashodhak Conference held in 1893 at Saswad, Pune. When Pune was struck by the bubonic plague in 1897, she opened a shelter for the sick along with her adopted son Yashwantrao. Even though she knew that the disease was contagious, she would herself pick up sick people and bring them to the shelter. She contracted the disease herself while serving the sick and died on 10 March 1897 while serving a plague patient.**



## SAVITRIBAI THE POET AND WRITER



**Go, Get Education**

Be self-reliant, be industrious  
Work, gather wisdom and riches,  
All gets lost without knowledge  
We become animal without wisdom,  
Sit idle no more, go, get education  
End misery of the oppressed and forsaken,  
You've got a golden chance to learn  
So learn and break the chains of caste.  
Throw away the Brahman's scriptures fast.

— SAVITRIBAI PHULE —

Endless Education  
**EDUCATION**

Savitribai along with Jyotirao Phule led a mass movement against caste system and oppression of the dalits. She worked for the upliftment of the poor at a time when society was plagued caste rigidity, patriarchy, subordination of women and social exclusion of the untouchables. Her thoughts and opinions were reflected in her writings as well. Savitribai's works continue to be an inspiration for many. She has put together some very valuable writing; her first collection of poems – *Kavya Phule* – was published in 1854. Some of her pioneering work are: Jyotirao's Speeches, edited by Savitribai Phule (1856) Savitribai's Letters to Jyotirao, Speeches of Matoshree Savitriba (1892) and Bavankashi Subodh Ratnakar(1892).

## HONOURING SAVITRIBAI'S CONTRIBUTION



In honour of Savitribai Phule the Government of India issued a postage stamp in 1998

### ACTIVITY 1

Click on the correct answer

**CIET : THE CORRECT ANSWER SHOULD FLASH IN GREEN**

1. The essay *Mang Maharanchya Dukhavisatha* was written by

- (a) Savitribai Phule (b) Jyotirao Phule (c) Mukta Salve

Key : (c)

2. Savitribai Phule organized a barbers strike in Mumbai and Pune for

- (a) Emancipation of widows (b) education of girls (c)

Key : (a)

3. Savitribai opened a well inside her house for

- (a) Widows (b) dalits (c) orphans

Key : (b)

4. Balhatya Pratibandhak Grah was opened for protection of  
(a) Child widows (b) dalits (c) destitutes

Key: (a)

5. Who inspired Mukta Salve to write her essay on dalit emancipation?  
(a) Jyotirao Phule (b) Yashwant Rao (c) Savitribai Phule

Key: (c)

## ACTIVITY 2

In the box provided below arrange the statements in chronological order.

### CIET: DRAG AND DROP

Box

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Mukta Salve published her essay '*Mang Maharanchya Dukhavisatha*' at the age of fourteen.

Savitribai Phule opened a shelter for the sick with along with her adopted son Yashwantrao.

The first ever school for girls in Pune was started by Savitribai in January in Bhide Wada.

She opened a school for the *Mahars* and the *Mangs* in her village in Naigaon.

The Government of India issued a postage stamp in 1998 in honour of Savitribai Phule.

She organized a successful barbers strike in Mumbai and Pune.

### **CORRECT ORDER**

- 1. The first ever school for girls in Pune was started by Savitribai in January in Bhide Wada.**
- 2. She opened a school for the *Mahars* and the *Mangs* in her village in Naigaon.**
- 3. Mukta Salve published her essay '*Mang Maharanchya Dukhavisatha* at the age of fourteen.**
- 4. She organized a successful barbers strike in Mumbai and Pune.**
- 5. She opened a shelter for the sick with along with her adopted son Yashwantrao.**
- 6. The Government of India issued a postage stamp in 1998 in honour of Savitribai Phule.**

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Mukta Salve: *The First Female Dalit Writer*

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## URL

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