CHAPTER IV

JOTIRAO PHULE
(1827 – 1890)

The intellectual stance of Dalit movement in India first articulated itself in the writings by its powerful outburst of Jotirao Phule. With Jotirao Phule modern Maharashtra came to a real awareness of the intellectual and moral values of universal humanism that saw Shudras, the downtrodden and out-castes as members of one human family, endowed with equal rights by the one creator of all, and destined to live as brothers in equality, liberty and happiness. Phule lifted the liberal and rationalist tradition to a heightened level of an organised protest movement by founding the Satya Shodhak Samaj. Phule saw the whole Brahmanic class as an army of foreign invaders who were less enlightened than the British.

The printed works of Phule are: Tritiya Ratna, 1855, Jotibheda, Viveksaar, Bombay, 1865, Brahmaneche Kasab (Priest-craft Exposed), Bombay, 1869, Chhatrapati Shivaji Raje Bhosale Yancha Powada, Bombay, 1869, Gulamgiri, 1873, Memorial Address to the Education commission, 1882, Shetyracha Asud, Pune, 1883, Satsar (The Essence of Truth), Pune, 1885, Ishara, 1885, Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak, 1891, Published by Yeshwant Jotirao Phule, Akhand etc., Poetry, Asprushyanchi Kaifiyat and other writings and letters.
Phule was interested in religion not for its own sake, but in its relation to the downtrodden masses. The dignity of man, as an animal who transgresses his bestial instinct by virtue of his reasoning capacity and rationalist approach, is the central point in Phule's analysis of Brahmin led Hindu society hence he viewed the british rule, the providential instrument of liberalising the non-Brahmin classes.

Phule's seminal work Gulamgiri (1873) and Memorial Addresses to the Hunter Commission (1882) have been selected for a critical documentation in the Chapter of this thesis.

**JOTIRAO PHULE – A PROFILE**

Jotirao was born in a Mali-vegetable vendor's family in Poona in 1827. Originally his family was known as Gorhay. The Gorhay family had come to Poona from Katgun, a village in the Satara district. Jotirao's grandfather Shetiba had settled down in Poona. Shetiba and his sons had served as florists
under the last Peshwa, the Gorhays began to be known as Phule. Jotirao lost his mother when he was hardly one year old. After completing his primary education Jotirao discontinued his education as he had to help his father by working on the family's farm. Jotirao was married to a girl from a Mali family when he was not even thirteen.

A Muslim friend and a Christian acquaintance of Jotirao's father prevailed on him to rejoin school. In 1861 Jotirao was admitted to the Scottish Mission High School at Poona. In this school Jotirao cultivated the friendship of three Brahmin mates — Sadashiv Ballal Govande, Moro Vithal Valvekar, and Sakharam Yeshwant Paranjape. They together read Tom Paine's famous book "The Rights of Man". All of them remained life-long friends in private and public life, and stood by each other in all the social activities.

When he was twenty one year's old he was terribly insulted by the upper class Brahmins when he was participating in a marriage procession of his friend. He could never forgive and forget his humiliation at the hands of Brahmin who had asked him to leave the marriage procession because of his
being a non-Brahmin. This event of his humiliation marked a turning point in Phule's life. His mind resolved to defy the caste system and the Brahmin dominance. He had already decided not to accept a government job. For his livelihood he opted for a professional career. He became a contractor and took up assignments with public works department. Independent professional career gave him freedom to pursue activities that were closer to his heart.

He educated his wife Savitribai and with her help opened a girls' school in 1848. The orthodox men from his own caste started a vicious campaign against him. He could not find caste Hindu teachers for his school, he himself and his wife single-handedly continued his school, wherein he admitted even untouchables. His Brahmin friends stood by him.

Once the school was firmly established Phule opened an orphanage for pregnant women. It was in this orphanage that a Brahmin widow gave birth to a boy in 1873 and Jotirao who had no issue of his own, adopted this boy as his son.

This was followed by his literary career.
In the same year he founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj. In 1876, the British Government awarded him with
his nomination as a member of the Poona Municipal Committee.

In 1879 Phule's mission was joined by Krishnarao Bhalekar who edited a weekly called Beenbandhu. The next important man to join Phule's public work was Narayan Meghajee Lokhande who founded the Trade Union Movement in Bombay, Lokhande in 1880 took up the editorship of Beenbandhu.

In 1888 Phule drew the public attention by virtue of his bold and brave behaviour on the occasion of the visit of Duke and Duchess of Cannought to Poona. Dressed like a peasant, Phule attended the function and made a speech wherein he ridiculed the diamond-studded jewellery wearing rich invitees and warned the Duke that the visiting dignitaries that had come there to greet did not represent India. If the Duke was really interested in finding out the condition of Indian subjects, Jotirao suggested that he ought to visit some nearby villages as well as the areas in the city occupied by the untouchables. Phule's speech created quite a stir.
As Y.D. Phadke tells us Jotirao boldly attacked the stranglehold of the Brahmins, who prevented others from having access to all the avenues of knowledge and influence. He denounced them as cheats and hypocrites. He asked the masses to resist the tyranny of the Brahmins. All his writings were variations on this theme. To quote Phadke further: "His critics made fun of his ignorance of grammar and philology, his inelegant language and far-fetched interpretations of Indian history and ancient texts...."

Earlier Phadke had pointed out: "While other reformers concentrated on reforming the social institutions family and marriage with special emphasis on the status of women, Jotirao Phule revolted against the unjust caste system."


Jotirao Phule opened his salvos against Brahmanical dominance with the publication of his Marathi booklet "Gulamgiri" in 1873. The booklet carries an English Title "Slavery" (in the Civilized British Government under the cloak of Brahmanism exposed by Jotirao Govindrao Phule). The booklet
was dedicated to the good people of the United States as a token of admiration for the sublime disinterested and self-sacrificing devotion in the cause of Negro Slavery, and with an earnest desire, that my countrymen may take their noble example as their guide in the emancipation of their Sudra Brotheren from the trammels of Brahmin thraldom. This dedicatory fragment underlines Phule's perception of the cause of human liberation as a global phenomena with continental ramifications. Phule wrote a preface to this book in English. This preface begins with a quotation from Homer. "The day that reduces a man to slavery takes from him the half of his virtue." This is followed by two more quotations. The one is from Col. G.J. Haly who writing about Indian fisheries had stated. Our system of Government is not calculated to raise the character of those subject to it, nor is the present system of education one to do more than over-educate the few, leaving the mass of the people as a ignorant as ever and still more at the mercy of the few learned, in fact, it is an extension of the demoralizing Brahmin-ridden policy, which, perhaps, has more retarded the progress of civilization and improvement in India generally
than anything else." Mead's writing on sepoy mutiny, wherein he had stated:

"Many ages have elapsed since peculiar resources were afforded to the Brahmins. But the most considerate cosmopolite would hesitate to enroll them amongst the benefactors of the world. They boast of vast stores of ancient learning, they have amassed great riches, and been invested with unbounded power, but to what good end? They have cherished the most degrading superstitions and practised the most shameless impostures. They have arrogated to themselves the possession and enjoyment of the rarest gifts of fortune and perpetuated the most revolting system known to the world. It is only from a diminution of their abused power that we can hope to accomplish the great work of national regeneration."

Phule's "Gulamgiri" is an elaborate restatement of these three quotes which has been critically documented in this thesis.
The saint patron of Maharashtrian Dalit movement that he was, Jotirao Phule had presented a very scintillatingly though provoking memorial to the Hunter Education Commission on 19th October, 1882. Phule's Memorandum to Hunter Commission is a very significant and memorable document of Dalit perception of educational matters of the nineteenth Century. Phule's memorandum is mainly concerned with the affairs of primary education, indigenous schools and higher education. The three-point thrust of his memorial is preceded by a long preamble wherein Phule has explained his own personal involvement in the educational sphere and his object of writing the memorandum in the list of his own experience about the prevailing educational system. This memorial of Phule has been elaborately and critically documented in the thesis.

7) **SHAHU MAHARAJ (1874 - 1922)**:

After Phule, Shahu Maharaj took up the leadership of Non-Brahmin Movement. The first quarter of the present century, the Centre of Non-Brahmin Movement shifted from Pune to Kolhapur where Shahu Maharaj, the ruler of the Kolhapur State took active part in the Non-Brahmin Movement.
Phule was a prolific writer. He wrote millions of words in Marathi. The English readers are, however, lucky to read the quintessence of Phule's life and mission in a dozen of his own written pages in English language that adds his own flavour to English literature and language which is duly documented in the following words:

"The day that reduces a man to slavery takes from him half of his virtue," — Homer.

"Our system of Government in India is not calculated to raise the character of those subject to it, nor is the present system of education one to do more than over-educate the few, leaving the mass of the people as ignorant as ever and still mere at the mercy of the few learned; in fact, it is an extension of the demoralizing Brahmin-ridden policy, which, perhaps, has more retarded the progress of civilization and improvement in India generally than anything else."

Col. G. J. Haly-on Fisheries in India.
"Many ages have elapsed since peculiar resources were afforded to the Brahmins; but the most considerate cosmopolite would hesitate to enroll them amongst the benefactors of the world. They boast of vast stores of ancient learning. They have amassed great riches, and been invested with unbounded power, but to what good end? They have cherished power, but to what good end? They have cherished the most degrading superstitions and practised the most shameless impostures. They have arrogated to themselves the possession and enjoyment of the rarest gifts of fortune and perpetuated the most revolting system known to the world. It is only from a diminution of their abused power that we can hope to accomplish the great work of national regeneration."

—Mead's Sepoy Revolt.

Recent researches have demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that the Brahmins were not the aborigines of India. At some remote period of antiquity, probably more than 3000 years ago, the Aryan progenitors of the present Brahmin Race descended upon the plains of Hindoostan from regions
lying beyond the Indus, the Hindoo Koosh, and other adjoining tracts. According to Dr. Pritchard, the Ethnologist, they were an off-shoot of the Great Indo-European race, from whom the Persians, Medes, and other Iranian nations in Asia and the principal nations in Europe like-wise are descended. The Affinity existing between the Zend, the Persian and Sanscrit languages, as also between all the European languages, unmistakably points to a common source of origin. It appears also more than probably that the original cradle of this race being an arid, sandy and mountainous region, and one ill calculated to afford them the sustenance which their growing wants required, they branched off into colonies, East and West. The extreme fertility of the soil in India, its rich productions, the proverbial wealth of its people, and the other innumerable gifts which this favoured land enjoys, and which have more recently tempted the cupidity of the Western nations, no doubt, attracted the Aryans, who came to India, not as simple emigrants with peaceful intentions of colonization, but as conquerors. They appear to have been a race imbued with very high notions of self, extremely cunning, arrogant and bigoted. Such selfgratulatory, pride-flattering
epithets as etc., with which they designated themselves, confirm us in our opinion of their primitive character, which they have preserved up to the present time, with, perhaps, little change for the better. The aborigines whom the Aryans subjugated, or displaced, appear to have been a hardy and brave people from the determined front which they offered to these interlopers. Such opprobrious terms, as Sudra 'insignificant,' 'the great foe' etc., with which they designated them, undoubtedly show that originally they offered the greatest resistance in their power to their establishing themselves in the country, and hence the great aversion and hatred in which they are held. From many customs* traditionally handed down to us, as well as from the mythological

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* A most remarkable and striking corroboration of these views is to be found in the religious rites observed on some of the grand festivals which have a reference to Bali Raja, the great king who appears to have reigned once in the hearts and affections of the Sudras and whom the Brahmin rulers displaced. On the day of Dushara, the wife and sisters of a Sudra, when he returns from his worship of the Shuni Tree and after the distribution of its leaves, which are regarded on that day as equivalent to gold, amongst his friends, relatives, and acquaintances, he is greeted, at home with a welcome "Let all troubles and misery go, and the kingdom of Bali come." Whereas the wife and sisters of
legends contained in the sacred books of the Brahmins, it is evident that there had been a hard struggle for ascendancy between the two races. The wars of Dev and Daitya, or the Rakshas, about which so many fictions are found scattered over the sacred books of the Brahmins, have certainly a reference to this primeval struggle. The original inhabitants with whom these earthborn Gods, the Brahmins, fought, were not inappropriately termed Rakshas, that is the protectors of the land. The incredible and foolish legends regarding their form and shape are no doubt mere chimeras, the fact being that these people were of superior stature and hardy make. Under such leaders as Brahma, Purshram and others, the Brahmins waged very protracted wars against the original inhabitants.

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a Brahmin place on that day in the foreground of the house an image of Bali, made generally of wheaten or other flour, and when the Brahmin returns from his worship of the Shumi Three he takes the stalk of it, pokes with it the belly of the image and then passes into the house. This contrariety, in the religious customs and usages obtaining amongst the Sudras and the Brahmins and of which many more examples might be adduced, can be explained on no other supposition but that which I have tried to confirm and elucidate in these pages.
They eventually succeeded in establishing their supremacy and subjugating the aborigines to their entire control. Accounts of these conquests, enveloped with a mass of incredible fiction, are found in the books of the Brahmins. In some instances, they were compelled to emigrate, and in others wholesale extermination was resorted to. The cruelties which the European settlers practised on the American Indians on their first settlements in the new world, had certainly their parallel in India on the advent of the Aryans and their subjugation of the aborigines. The Cruelties and inhuman atrocities which Purshram committed on the Kshetrias, 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, Perhaps in the whole range of history it is scarcely possible to meet with such another character as that of Purshram, so selfish, infamous, cruel and inhuman. The deeds of Nero, Alaric or Machiavelli sink into insignificance before the ferocity of Purshram. The myriads of men and defenceless children whom he butchered, simply with a view to the establishment of his coreligionists on a secure and permanent basis in this land, is a
fact for which generations ought to execrate his name, rather than deify it.

This, in short, is the history of Brahmin domination in India. They originally settled on the banks of the Ganges whence they gradually spread over the whole of India. In order, however, to keep a better hold on the people they devised that weird system of mythology, the ordination of caste, and the code of cruel and inhuman laws, to which we can find no parallel amongst other nations. They founded a system of priestcraft so galling in its tendency and operation, the like of which we can hardly find anywhere since the times of the Druids. The institution of Caste, which has been the main object of their laws, had no existence among them originally. That it was an after-creation of their deep cunning is evident from their own writings. The highest rights, the highest privileges and gifts, and everything that would make the life of a Brahmin easy, smoothgoing and happy—everything that would conserve or flatter their self-pride,—were specially inculcated and enjoined, whereas the Sudras and Atisudras were regarded with supreme hatred and contempt, and the commonest rights of humanity were denied them.
Their touch, nay, even their shadow, is deemed a pollution. They are considered as mere chattels, and their life of nor more value than that of meanest reptile; for it is enjoined that if a Brahmin, "kill a cat or an ichneumon, the bird Chasha, or a fowl or a dog, a lizard, an owl, a cow or a Sudra" he is absolved of his sin by performing the fasting penance, perhaps for a few hours or a day and requiring not much labour or trouble. While for a Sudra to kill a Brahmin is considered the most heinous offence he could commit, and the forfeiture of his life is the only punishment his crime is considered to merit.

Happily for our Sudra Brethren of the present day our enlightened British Rulers have not recognized these preposterous, inhuman and unjust penal enactments of the Brahmin legislators. They no doubt regard them more as ridiculous fooleries than as equitable laws. Indeed, no man possessing even a grain of common sense would regard them as otherwise. Any one, who feels disposed to look a little more into the laws and ordinances as embodied in the Manava Dharma Shastra and other works of the same class, would undoubtedly be impressed with the deep cunning underlying them all. If may not perhaps,
be out of place to cite here a few more instances in which the superiority or excellence of the Brahmins is held and enjoined on pain of Divine displeasure:

The Brahmin is styled the Lord of the Universe, even equal to the God himself. He is to be worshipped, served and respected by all.

A Brahmin can do no wrong.

Never shall the King slay a Brahmin, though he has committed all possible crimes.

To save the life of a Brahmin any falsehood may be told. There is no sin in it.

No one is to take away anything belonging to a Brahmin.

A king, though dying with want, must not receive any from a Brahmin, nor suffer him to be afflicted with hunger or the whole kingdom will be afflicted with famine.

The feet of a Brahmin are holy. In his left foot reside all the (holy pilgrimages) and by dipping which into water he makes it as holy as the waters at the holiest of shrines.
A Brahmin may compel a man of the servile class to perform servile duty, because much a man was created by the almighty only for the purpose of serving Brahmins.

A Sudra, though emancipated by his master, is not released from state of servitude; for, being born in a state which is natural to him, by whom can to be divested of his natural attributes?

Let a Brahmin not give temporal advice nor spiritual counsel to a Sudra.

No superfluous accumulation of wealth shall be made by a Sudra, even though he has the power to make it, since a servile man who has amassed riches becomes proud, and by his insolence or neglect he gives pain even to Brahmins.

If a Sudra cohabit with a Brahminee adultress, his life is to be taken. But if a Brahmin goes even unto the lawful wife of a Sudra he is exampted from all corporal punishment.

It would be needless to go on multiplying instances such as these. Hundreds of similar ordinances including many more of a worse character than these can be found scattered over their books.
But what can have been the motives and objects of such cruel and inhuman laws? They are, I believe, apparent to all but to the infatuated, the blind and the selfinterested. Anyone who runs may even read them. Their main object in fabricating these falsehoods was to dupe the minds of the ignorant and to rivet firmly on them the chains of perpetual bondage and slavery which their selfishness and cunning had forged. The severity of the laws as effecting the Sudras, and the intense hatred with which they were regarded by the Brahmans can be explained on no other supposition but that there was, originally between the two, a deadly feud, arising as we have shown above, from the advent of the latter into this land. It is surprising to think what a mass of specious fiction these interlopers invented with a view to hold the original occupiers of the soil fast in their clutches, and rule securely for ages yet to come through the means of their credulity. Anyone who will consider well the whole history of Brahmin domination in India, and the thraldom under which it has retained the people even up to the present day, will agree with us in thinking that no language could be too harsh by which to characterise the selfish heartle-
ssness and the consummate cunning of the Brahmin tyranny by which India has been so long governed. How far the Brahmins have succeeded in their endeavours to enslave the minds of the Sudras and Atisudras, those of them who have come to know the true state of matters know well to their cost. For generations past they have borne these chains of slavery and bondage. Innumerable Bhut writers, with the selfsame objects as those of Manu and others of his class, added from time to time to the existing mass of legends, the idle phantasies of their own brains, and palmed them off upon the ignorant masses as of Divine inspiration, or as the acts of the Deity himself. The most immoral, inhuman, unjust actions and deeds have been attributed to that Being who is our Creator, Governor and Protector, and who is all Holiness himself. These blasphemous writings, the products of the distempered brains of these interlopers, were received as gospel truths, for to doubt them was considered as the most unpardonable of sins. This system of slavery, to which the Brahmins reduced the lower classes is in no respects inferior to that which obtained a few years ago in America. In the days of rigid Brahmin dominancy, so lately as that of the time of the
Peshwa, my Sudra bretheen had even greater hardships and oppression practised upon them than what even the slaves in America had to suffer. To this system of selfish superstition and bigotry, we are to attribute the stagnation and all the evils under which India has been groaning for many centuries past. It will, indeed, be difficult to name a single advantage which accrued to the aborigines from the advent of this intensely selfish and tyrannical sect. The Indian Ryot (the Sudra and Atisudra) was been in fact a proverbial Milch cow. He has passed from hand to hand. Those who successively held sway over him cared only to fatten themselves on the sweat of his brow, without caring for his welfare or condition. It was sufficient for their purposes that they held him safe in their clutches for squeezing out of him as much as they possibly could. The Brahmin had at last so contrived to entwine himself round the Sudra in every large or small undertaking, in every large or small undertaking, in every domestif or public business, that the latter is by custom quite unable to transact any concern of moment without his aid.
This is even true at the present time. While the Sudra on the other hand is so far reconciled to the Brahmin yoke, that like the American slave he would resist any attempt that may be made for his deliverance and fight even against his benefactor. Under the guise of religion the Brahmin has his finger in every thing, big or small, which the Sudra undertakes. Go to his house, to his field or to the court to which business may invite him, the Brahmin is there under some specious pretext or other, trying to squeeze out of him as much as his cunning and wily brain can manage. The Brahmin despoils the Sudra not only in his capacity of priest, but does so in a variety of other ways. Having by his superior education and cunning monopolized all the higher places of emolument, the ingenuity of his ways is past finding out, as the reader will find on an attentive perusal of this book. In the most insignificant village as in the largest town, the Brahmin is the all in all; the be all and the end all of the Rāj. He is the master, the ruler. The Patell of a village, the headman, is in fact a nonentity. The Koolkurnee, the hereditary Brahmin Village accountant, the notorious quarrel-
monger, moulds the Patell according to his wishes. He is the temporal and spiritual adviser of the ryots, the Soucar in his necessities and the general referee in all matters. In most instances he plans active mischief by advising opposite parties differently, so that he may feather his own nest well. If we go up higher, to the Court of a Mamludar, we find the same thing. The first anxiety of a Mamludar is to get round him, if not his own relatives, his castemen to fill the various offices under him. These actively foment quarrels and are the media of all corrupt practices prevailing generally round about these Courts. If a Sudra or Atisudra repairs to his Courts, the treatment which he receives is akin to what the meanest reptile gets. Instead of his case receiving a patient and careful hearing, a choice lot of abuse is showered on his devoted head, and his prayer is set aside on some pretext or other. Whereas if one of his own castemen were to repair to the Court on the self-same business, he is received with all courtesy, and there is hardly any time lost in getting the matter right. If we go up still higher to the Collector's and Revenue Commissioner's Courts and to the other Departments
of the Public Service, the Engineer, Educational etc., the same system is carried out on a smaller or greater scale. The higher European officers generally view men and things through Brahmin spectacles, and hence the deplorable ignorance they often exhibit in forming a correct estimate of them. I have tried to place before my readers in the concluding portions of this book what expedients are employed by these Brahmin officials for fleecing the Coonbee in the various department to which business or his necessities induce him to resort. Any one knowing intimately the workings of the different departments, and the secret springs which are in motion, will unhesitatingly concur with me in saying that what I have described in the following pages is not one hundredth part of the roguries that are generally practised on my poor, illiterate and ignorant Sudra brethren. Though the Brahmin in the old Peshwa school is not quite the same as the Brahmin of the present day, though the march of Western ideas and civilization is undoubtedly telling on his superstition and bigotry, he has not as yet abandoned his time-cherished notions of superiority or the dishonesty of his
ways. The Beef, the Mutton, the intoxicating beverages stronger and more finicky than the famed Somejuice, which their ancestors once relished, as the veriest dainties, are fast finding innumerable votaries among them.

The Brahmin of the present time finds to some extent, like Othello, that his occupation is gone. But knowing full well this state of matters, is the Brahmin inclined to make atonement for his past selfishness? Perhaps, it would have been useless to repine over what has been suffered and what has passed away, had the present state been all that is desirable. We know perfectly well that the Brahmin will not descend from his self-raised high pedestal and meet his Coonbee and low caste brethren on an equal footing without a struggle. Even the educated Brahmin who knows his exact position and how he has come by it, will not condescend to acknowledge the errors of his forefathers and willingly forego the long cherished false notions of his own superiority. At present, not one has had the moral courage to do what only duty demands, and as long as this state of matters continues, sect distrusting and degrading sect,
the condition of the Sudras will remain unaltered, and India will never advance in greatness or prosperity.

Perhaps a part of the blame in bringing matters to this crisis may be justly laid to the credit of the Government. Whatever may have been their motives in providing ampler funds and greater facilities for higher education and neglecting that of the masses, it will be acknowledged by all that in justice to the latter this is not as it should be. It is an admitted fact that the greater portion of the revenues of the Indian Empire are derived from the Ryot's labor—from the sweat of his brow. The higher and richer classes contribute little or nothing to the state's exchequer. A well informed English writer states that,

"Our income is derived, not from surplus profits, but from capital; not from luxuries but from the poorest necessaries. It is the product of sin and tears."

That Government should expend profusely a large portion of revenue thus raised, on the education of the higher classes, for it is these
only who take advantage of it, is anything but just or equitable. Their object in patronising this virtual high class education appears to be to prepare scholars. "Who, it is thought, would in time vend learning without money and without price." "If we can inspire." Say they "the lover of knowledge in the minds of the superior classes, the result will be a higher standard of morals in the cases of the individuals, a large amount of affection for the British Government, and an unconquerable desire to spread among their own countrymen the intellectual blessings which they have received."

Regarding these objects of Government the writer, above alluded to, states that :-

"We have never heard of philosophy more benevolent and more utopian. It is proposed by men who witness the wondrous changes brought about in the Western world, purely by the agency of popular knowledge, to redress the defects of the two hundred millions of India, by giving superior education to the superior classes and to them only."
"We ask the friends of Indian Universities to favour us with a single example of the truth of their theory from the instances which have already fallen within the scope of their experience. They have educated many children of wealthy men, and have been the means of advancing very materially the worldly prospects of some of their pupils; but what contribution have these made to the great work of regenerating their fellowmen? How have they begun to act upon the masses? Have any of them formed classes at their own homes or elsewhere, for the instruction of their less fortunate or less wise countrymen? Or have they kept their knowledge to themselves, as a personal gift, not to be soiled by contact with the ignorant vulgar? Have they in any way shown themselves anxious to advance the general interests and repay philanthropy with patriotism? Upon what grounds is it asserted that the best way to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of the people is to raise the standard of instruction among the higher classes? A glorious argument this for aristocracy, were it only tenable. To show the growth of the national happiness, it would only be necessary to refer to
the number of pupils at the colleges and the lists of academic degrees. Each wrangler would be accounted a national benefactor; and the existence of Deans and Proctors would be associated, like the game laws and the tenpound franchise, with the best interests of the Constitution.

Perhaps the most glaring tendency of the Government system of high class education has been the virtual monopoly of all the higher offices under them by the Brahmins. If the welfare of the Ryot is at heart, if it is the duty of Government to check a host of abuses, it behoves them to narrow this monopoly, day by day, so as to allow a sprinkling of the other castes to get into the public service. Perhaps some might be inclined to say that it is not feasible in the present state of education. Our only reply is that if Government look a little less after higher education and more towards the education of the masses, the former being able to take care of itself, there would be no difficulty in training up a body of men every way qualified and perhaps far better in morals and manners.
My object in writing the present volume is not only to tell my Sudra brethren how they have been dyped by the Brahmins, but also to open the eyes of Government to that pernicious system of high class education which has hitherto been so persistently followed and which statesmen like Sir George Campbell, the present Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, with broad and universal sympathies, are finding to be highly mischievous and pernicious to the interests of Government. I sincerely hope that Government will ere long see the error of their ways, trust less to writers or men who look through high class spectacles and take the glory into their own hands of emancipating my Sudra brethren from the trammels of bondage which the Brahmins have woven round them like the coils of a serpent. It is no less the duty of such of my Sudra brethren as have received any education to place before Government the true state of their fellowmen and endeavour to the best of their power to emancipate themselves from Brahmin thraldom. Let their be schools for the Sudras in every village; but away with all Brahmin school-masters! The Sudras are the life and
sinews of the country, and it is to them alone and not to the Brahmins that the Government must ever look to tide them over their difficulties, financial as well as political. If the hearts and minds of the Sudras are made happy and contented the British Government need have no fear for their loyalty in the future.

Jotiba Phoolya.
JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE
(1827-90)

JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO PHULE occupies a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the nineteenth century. While other reformers concentrated more on reforming the social institutions of family and marriage with special emphasis on the status and rights of women, Jotirao Phule revolted against the unjust castesystem under which millions of people had suffered for centuries. In particular, he courageously upheld the cause of the untouchables and took up the cudgels for the poorer peasants. He was a militant advocate of their rights. The story of his stormy life is an inspiring saga of a continuous struggle which he waged relentlessly against the forces of reaction. What was remarkable was his ability to stand up against all kinds of pressure without faltering even once and act always according to his convictions. Though some keen observers of the social scene in Maharashtra like Narayan Mahadeo Parmananda did acknowledge his greatness in his lifetime, it is only in recent decades that there is increasing appreciation of his service and sacrifice in uplifting the masses.¹
Throughout his life, Jotirao Phule fought for the emancipation of the downtrodden people and the struggle which he launched at a young age ended only when he died on 28 November 1890. He was a pioneer in many fields and among his contemporaries he stands out as one who never wavered in his quest for truth and justice. Though he was often accused of fomenting hatred between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins, very rarely an attempt was made to consider his scathing criticism in a broad perspective. The later generations also took considerable time to understand and appreciate the profound significance of his unflinching espousal of the rights of man which remained till the end of his life a major theme of his writings and a goal of his actions.

1%2:(From The Social Reformers of Maharashtra by Prof. Y.D. Phadke, Published by Maharashtra Information Centre, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Bombay), Government of Maharashtra, A/8, State Emporia Building, Baba Kharak Singh Marg, New Delhi-110 001, 1985, pp. 11 and 18.