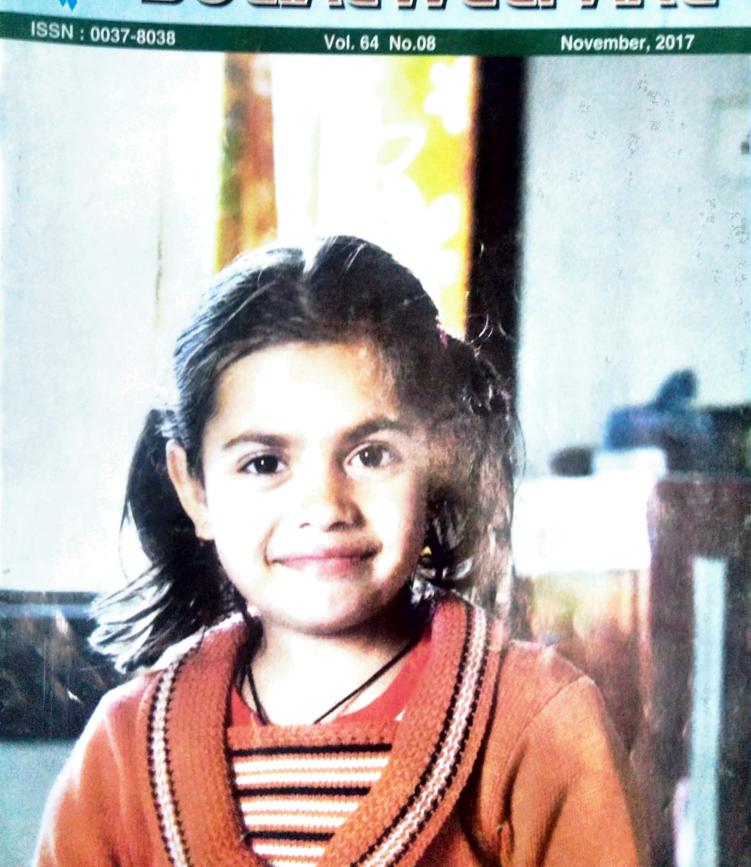




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Architect of Indian Feminism: **Mahatama Phule**

Praveen Ghodeswar

work from their life! Jyotiba first taught his wife Savitribai to read and write. He encouraged her to do so. This we can say was the first gender sensitive

Mahatama Jotiba Phule is known as the 'Father of Social Revolution' in India. He occupies an exceptional place among the social reformers of Maharashtra in the 19th Century. The other social reformers determined more on reforming the social institutions like family, marriage, and widow marriage etc. at the same time Jotiba revolted against the unfair caste system under which million of people had suffered for centuries. Jotiba also pointed out consequences of patriarchal system and its impact on society. This article throws the light on Mahatma Jotiba Phule's contribution towards emergence and development of Indian Feminism.

Jotiba not only was pioneer of social reforms but also the original architect of Indian feminism. The seeds of his sensibilities were sown in his childhood and adolescence and there was Savitribai, with whom he lived and worked for 50 years to contribute greatly to the women's reform movement of 19th century Maharashtra. Jyotiba-Savitri couple was partners in every sense of the term. We cannot disconnect Jotiba's theory from practice, his work from that Savitribai's, their

his aunt Sagunabai while he was still studying in act performed by him. Jotiba taught Savitribai and also set up a school for girls belongs to untouchable together girls of all castes under one roof. There Savitribai was its headmistress. The school brought their first school for girls in Bhidewada of Pune city. training certificate. and keen student and went on to obtain a teacher's the missionary school. Savitribai was a brilliant schools. In the next four years, the Phule couple set Sagunabai and some male teachers, taught in these community. Savitribai ,alongwith Fatima Shaikh, were 25 girls in the first batch. In the same year they with respect and dignity and directly blames the examinations of his schools. He links education had written on the occasion of one of the annual suppressing women's right to education," Jotiba of their wellbeing is against the Hindu religion for respect that they deserve and to take responsibility and to nurture their intelligence, to give them up number of schools for girls. "To educate women Hindu religion for suppressing women's rights to On, 15th May 1848, the Phule couple started

significance of ameliorating the condition of the on the education of women. On the contrary, that the overall enhancement of society hinged then Governor of Bombay. Jotiba was convinced in a letter dated 5th February 1852 wrote to the this beneficent object," Jotiba expressed his views instituted a schools with a view of promoting of female education and under this conviction have Natives and enlightening minds through the means would come into being and all men and women way of basic human rights of women, a free world wives and mothers. According to Jotiba, education education for women to enable them to be better other reformers of his time wanted at best limited Elsewhere he had said, " If men do not come in the was an undeniable part of women's human rights. would be satisfied and contented." "We are intensely impressed with the need and

