ABSTRACT

Mahatma Jotirao Phule who strived hard to eradicate untouchability, inequality, outdated customs and conventions in the society, was revolutionary philosopher in modern era. He portrayed realistic picture of downtrodden society. He severely criticized inequality, untouchability, exploitation, superstitions, ignorance and illiteracy of the masses in his writings. He depicted realistic picture of sorrows and sufferings of peasants, labourers and downtrodden people who were called ‘shudras’ and ‘atishudras’ in those days. He was the great educationist who advocated that masses should be literate and accordingly he worked hard for wide spread of education in the society of his time. Jotirao Phule shows his deep concern and his role in the book ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’. Jotirao Phule’s interpretation will be adequate to understand the causes of farmer’s suicides these days. The dominance of upper classes, casticsm, inequality and ignorance among the people in the society should be wiped out to change this situation. The interpretation of Phule’s work in this regard is very important, in present situation. It is my humble attempt to make critical analysis of Phule’s book ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’, and his contribution alongwith the present relevance of his philosophy.

Keywords: Dalit, Downtrodden, Mahatma Jotirao Phule, Shetkaryacha Asud

INTRODUCTION

India is an agriculture country. Most of the people in rural area are engaged in farming. It is their sole occupation for livelihood. In the past we come across tha agriculture flourished in cultivable and rich land, but it was belonged to rich aristocratic society. The people from this strata of society were mostly Brahmin who dominated entire society. Jotirao Phule represented class of peasants who had scanty land, and cultivation based on monsoon season. It was arable land owned by those farmers who were called ‘Shudras’ and ‘Atishudras’. The farmers who toiled days and nights in the field to earn their bread are represented in the works of Jotirao Phule. Ignorant, hard worker and illiterate people who worked days and nights in their land were physically weak. They had no alternative than to work hard. The situation had been going on in the society for years together. Jotirao who observed this plight of farmers and miserable life, which was full of sorrows, suffering and exploitation. In ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’ as the title suggests he severally criticized the social situation and tried to expose sorrow and sufferings of farmers, shudras and atishudras of his time. In this respect Phule is the first revolutionary thinker. Phule made various attempts for upliftment of farmers. He gave prime importance to the welfare and underlined humanity. ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’ represents Phule’s philosophy as mentioned above, where as he tries to throw light upon the life of peasants, workers, shudras and atishudras; their pitiable condition. While portraying contemporary situation he did not hesitate to expose the factors those were responsible for that plight of farmers including Brahmin and government machinery of the
time. It is not far from the truth that situation of farmers in India is not drastically changed than that of Phule’s time; as it has been described in ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’. Even today farmer has to work hard for day and night to meet two ends of the month. His income is scanty; even it is difficult to fulfil basic needs of the family, due to bankruptcy many farmers are committing suicides. The concept of ‘welfare state’ has been withered away long ago; in free economic state, nobody has any interest to pay attention at farmers and labourers. The globalization safeguards interests of capitalist. Phule in his book analyses and comments on the situation of farmers of his time and further asserts that to change the social situation severe criticism is needed. Phule did so in his ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’. Even today relevance of Phule’s criticism is not decreased. Phule’s philosophy should be put into practice to check the suicides of farmers and bankruptcy of farmers in Maharashtra today.

LIFE OF JOTIRAO PHULE

Jotirao Phule was born in a family of a gardner (Mali). The family was engaged in the farming of flowers and business of selling flowers. Traditionally this type of people are included in Balutedar system. No doubt family was surviving on the scanty income from selling flowers.

Phule’s forefathers were living in a small village named Katgun in Satara district (Maharashtra). His grandfather Shetiba was also a farmer and was dealing with same type of work. In this background Phule born on April 11, 1827. He learnt in Scottish Missionary school. He had many friends in his childhood and he was fond of friendship and loved to be in the company of friends. “On one occasion his friend invited him to attend marriage ceremony; so he participated in the marriage procession, but as he was not Brahmin he was insulted and he was forced to leave wedding party.” (Ra. Dho; Shesh Samaj Swasth, Intro. P.G. Padmgandha Prakashan, Pune). The incident deeply touched his heart. In the later life he advocated liberty, equality and fraternity in his writings. He made every attempt to eradicate untouchability from the society and establish equality. He expects such a society where all will be treated equally and there will be integrity in the society. He raised his voice against influence of Brahmins and convention of untouchability in the society. Phule tried his level best to remove discrimination from the contemporary society. He decided to establish ‘Satyashodhak Samaj’ (A Society that will try to search truth / insist for truth) to enlighten the people by severely criticizing old and outdated customs and conventions in the society. This book ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’ is an attempt to enlighten people of his times.

Hon. Sayajirao Gaikwad Maharaja of Baroda felicitated Jotirao Phule for his book ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’ and extended his help for future career of Jotirao Phule. The book manifests the feelings of love, affinity, kindness and deep concern of Jotirao Phule for workers, peasants, downtrodden and deprived classes in the society. The characters and incident in the book are from contemporary society. Those project the realistic life of that time. Phule thought that it is does not enough to protest against the situation, but necessary to enlighten the next generations of Dalit Shudras and Atishudras from the society. The way to enlighten the masses is to make them aware of the sorrows and sufferings of the past generations. When they will realize these things they will be aware of their exploitation and suffering. In this context Phule is humanitarian in the true sense of the term. Phule wants to change the society, he expects new society based on values like truth and away from hypocrisy and puritanism. New society as he conceived as advanced secular fearless and based on equality.

SOCIAL CONDITION

Period 1827–1890 is depicted in the writings of Phule, it clearly indicates social cultural and economic situation of that period. The society was based on puritan ideas and dominated by Brahmins was not better than that of medieval ages. Phule tried his level best to change this society into modern society. On this Laxman Shastri Joshi writes; “Unless and until we realize new objectives and their meaning we hardly feel to destroy traditional social set up”. (Mahatma Phule, Samagra Vangmay, P. G. (Introduction).Jotirao Phule was committed social reformer and thinker who realized the social objectives to form new society. He wants new society free from traditional bindings outdated conventions where all will be treated equally. He spent his life to eradicate untouchability by starting
first school for women and untouchables as he realized importance of education for upliftment of society. The same thought is underlined in the prologue to ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’.

“Without education, wisdom was lost
Without wisdom morals were lost
Without morals development was lost
Without development wealth was lost
Without wealth Shudras were ruined
So much has happened through lack of education”

(Prologue : Mahatma Phule, Samagra Vangmay, P. 189)

The book is written to give an exposition of few of many reasons connected with religion and politics that have put Shudra farmers in pitiable condition. Education is the only way to change the situation as he points out in prologue.

Jotirao Phule portrays realistic picture of farmers' situation of his times in these words, “All Shudras and farmers alongwith their family members toil days and nights in the farm and pay revenue, all taxes, funds and contributions every year which goes to more than ten millions rupees. However government never bothers about the education of farmer's, children’s that will enable them to read some books of agriculture or some information on agriculture published in the newspaper. Lot of families of farmers are living on scanty food and are barely clad. On the contrary judges, military, police and other government employees are paid heavily. It is highly suprising.”

Phule rightly points out contemporary situation, the people in the society are mad for power and money and are forgotten the reality. The employees and officers in government are selfish and farmers are starving. The government, politicians and officers in government should take serious notice of this situation and make some conscious efforts to change this situation. They should be aware of their commitment to society. The revenue collected by government from farmers should be utilized to change the miserable condition of farmers. There should be provision of education to the farmers’ children; government should not spent lavishly on other items such as health and military (defence). Where as said amount be spent for the welfare of masses. The book : Shetkaryacha Asud advocates Jotirao’s perception of contemporary society, his urge for upliftment of society. He strongly asserts that government and government employees are the servant of people. These people deliberately exploit the masses with various strategies and put them in bad plight. Phule mentions in following lines the way in which Shudra farmers were exploited by Brahmin community and negligence of government. “Malpractices in accounts of Money Lender Perplex the Farmers”.

He increases the loan.
That makes him rich.
As he loves money the most.
He least bothers about farmer’s condition.
Poor farmer makes plea for loan;
And he gives loan to farmer on mortgage.
And harasses him for repayment.
Time to time.
And makes farmer helpless.
Cunningly increases the amount of loan to double.
Mentions it on mortgage deed.
Ignorant farmer unaware of it.’’
(Ibid, P. 57)

Thus Phule portrays realistic picture of his society. Where money lenders, rich, government maehenary and Brahmins exploit Shudras and farmers. Phule expects free society based on equality. Dominance of single religious community on society leads to detoriation of society. The people who are selfish and indifferent to masses, involved in bad practices lead society towards the distruction. Such people always misguide the masses by religious practices puritan ideas, bad conventions and by spreading superstitions dominate the people. This wicked policy of such people should be realized by the masses. They have paralyzed the society. The common man is in the state of confusion today by such practices. Now programmes are launched with hidden agendds, farmers are bankrupt. Phule criticizes severely contemporary society; his criticism is like a whip of farmer that whips the contemporary government, their employees and Brahmins who exploit farmers. Dominance of puritan ideas, brahminism, lethargy in the society and pretentions of so called people from higher class from the society, every thing is criticized by Phule. He desires that the distinction between poor and rich should be removed. He wants to destroy the society based on classes; he expects classless society based on humanity and equality. It is his conscious efforts for upliftment of farmers, labourers, Dalit and Adivasis from the society.

TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND STATUS OF UPPER CLASS

Puritans in this country deeply influenced common people by different type of rituals, religious practices, conventions, traditions and customs. Brahmins tried their level best to impress the masses by their priesthood and wicked religious practices. As a result Indian society lagged behind, it remained undeveloped and weak. The people in the society were not better than slaves of religious practices. Jotirao Phule pointed this reality in his ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’ and other writings. Indian society which was distributed in different classes based on caste and creed was disintegrated. Ultimately the people from upper strata of the society achieved prominence in the society, where as the people who belonged to different castes dealing with the different work were treated as untouchable, dalit or shudras or atishudras. Brahmins being rich and dealing with the work of priest achieved prominence in the society. Thus new class of Brahmins who were capitalist, emerged in that society. Brahmins being rich and educated enjoyed the various posts as government employees in British Government of that time. Due to this situation Brahmins not only influenced the people from other community but began to torture them and exploit them. The Brahmins made social situation such a way that farmers and other remained illiterate and were suffered in a bad plight. Phule faithfully describes contemporary society in the book "Shetkaryyacha Asud" he writes "As there is dominance of Brahmins in all government departments, they deliberately put farmers in difficulty in such a way that they never think about their kids’ schooling of any kind; or any provision of education for them. And if any facility is there they misguide the people in such a way that they never think about it” (education) (Ibid 192). It is strong desire of Phule that a common man should get rid of cocknbull stories from mythology narrated by Brahmins; the people should not believe in it. They should teach their children to read and write. The government authorities and policy makers should pay attention at it, and make some provision of education for illiterate and ignorant society. But it hardly happened during his time on the other hand farmers and people from lower classes were treated with prejudice. Phule being much annoyed with situation that government did not pay any attention at it nor did it made any provision for the education of oprans, children of widow and helpless children in the society. On the other hand government spent lot of money collected from farmers, shudras and atisudras in the form of taxes on other heads. Ultimately the place of shudras and atishudras remained as it was, the traditional religious conventions, beliefs and practices remarried in that class. Their pitable situation is described by Phule in these lines: “Presently Shudras that treats them as a human beings. So that dominance of Brahmins is lessened they have to work as a labourer to earn their daily bread. Some cunning Brahmins sreading
remours about Christianity and Muslim religion to spoil the minds of farmers.” (Ibid 202) This situation be changed. Strategies and cunning moves of Brahmins should be understood by masses. Society should be changed. There should not be religious discrimination in the society. There should be equality in the society. So ceaseless efforts should be made by present generation in this regard. The farmers and shudras should make conscious efforts to overcome the situation. They are deprived of knowledge. Ignorance and illiteracy should be removed from the society. Farmers and Dalit should try their level best to acquire knowledge by education in various disciplines. It had been expected by Phule long ago.

The dominance of tradition, conventions, and customs are ruined the life of farmers. He takes loan to celebrate festivals and for different rituals those are outdated, it makes him bankrupt as he has to spend handover amount on these things. Brahmins and priest make such bewildering situation and deceive him. Such practices should be stopped and he should be encouraged to adopt scientific view, rational outlook. Phule underlines this objective in his ‘Shetkaryacha Asud’. He firmly believes that such thoughts will bring change in the society.

SITUATION OF FARMERS

Phule minutely describes farmers situation of his times. The impact of puritan ideas on farmers; life. He points out that illiteracy and ignorance are major hindrances in the lives of farmers. He describes farmers situation in following words: "In each and every small and big village and hamlet the farmers houses were of two or four meters thatched roofs. In every house, in the corner of the hearth there is an iron spatula or sycle, a wooden pan and blow pipe, a frying pan an earthen pot for milk and below in the cavity a metal or earthen vessel for boiling, in nearby corner some copper vessels, a big pan and brass eating palates, small bowls or if not an old leaking drinking vessel near earthen stics and small earthen platters. Next to those four or five pots stacked one on the top of other, with little stores, wheat corn, dal, noodles, groundnouts, fried turmeric, ears of wheat’s, spiced balls of dalflour, salt, turmeric, cardamom, chilllies, cumin, pepper green chilies, onions, tamarind, garlic and coriander. Next to that below on the ground some old stone filled jawar has been brought from pensioner money lender. Goblbolya Bhat in the evening. Packets of lentil stalks are kept against the wall one on top of other. On the other side on a hanging stick are coarse woolen blankets, and small saries made wearable from pieces of old torn saries swen together one on tope of another, a wooden peg is pounded into the wall and on that hung dangling a loose bundle of rags and nets to carry chaff, husk and dried cowdung cake. In a small niche for a lamp are kept a bit of oil in an earthen pot and a small bottle for kumkum with comb; on top, dried cake of cowdung and fodder will kept neatly near some fuel prickly pears. Below on the ground will be various corners a hoe, and axe, a sickle a noose for harrow, an instrument for weeding, a rice pounder, a handmill, (grinding stone) a mortar a pestle and near a broom a small earthen hot for spitting. Outside the door on the left a spot for bathing, a pot to carry water, and beyond that an open-bathroom made of loosely piled stones. On the right side a frame work put up to make a thatched shed for tying up bullocks and other animals”. Jotirao Phule expects that the farmers should be free from all difficulties, the living standards of farmers should be raised. The agriculture and cultivation should be based on new agricultural techniques. He should be literate and should acquire knowledge about agriculture. He tries to expose sorrows and sufferings of farmers. It is very essential to change this situation of farmers. It is inevitable to establish equality in the society. Unless there is change in the situation of farmers society will not change. Where as there should reasonable rate to the agriculture products so that farmer may live happily. Jotirao Phule underlines this message in his writing.

CONTEMPORARY SITUATION OF AGRICULTURE

Phule in his ‘Shetkaryacha Asud” states that agriculture is the sole means of living for farmers and it is the means of production. This basic concept is explored in the book. A farmer produces food grains, fruits and vegetables these items constitute the basic for food human beings. We obtain food grains for people and fodder for animals from agriculture. Thus life of a man depends upon agriculture.
Agriculture is necessary for survival of human beings, trade, commerce and economy. One should not neglect this science and technology are complimentary to agriculture. No doubt pesticides and chemical fertilizers are essential, but more than that fertility of land and water are also equally important factors. It is rightly pointed out by Jotirao Phule. He gives detail description of agriculture of Roman people and how they cultivate the land. He throws light upon how did agriculture (farming) came into existence. The trade and commerce flourished by agriculture throughout the world. Muslims and European invaders exploited natives of this land; it was great loot made by them. Later on cunning and diplomatic policies of Brahmins made all farmers, shudras and atishudras very poor. In addition to that the government levied new tax named local fund in addition to existing taxes. In this regard Phule writes, “careless engineers from irrigation department entrust their work on Brahmin employees and work as per their will like Muslim begams in the curtain. Brahmin employees make false report to the European engineers and get sanctioned the resolutions as per their wish from the government”. (Ibid, 228)

The factors those were deteriorating agriculture of his time were increasing taxes and complications created by Brahmin employees for farmers and agriculture. Phule writes about such practices: "As water in the canal finishes crops die and due to shortage of water, in this regard irrigation department does not take any responsibility” (Ibid, 228) If the government is neglecting agriculture, where should farmers go for solace? As Phule poses this question and points out that the irrigation department is equally responsible for the plight of agriculture. Thus by criticizing contemporary government and work of irrigation department, he warns the government about the loss of farmers. Where as further he states that in this condition government should give compensation to the farmers for such loss. Phule did not hesitate to state this sordid reality. He is the first philosopher to expose the problems of farmers. He expects that management of agriculture and water management will improve the condition of agriculture. Phule criticizes this situation in following words. "It is very essential that engineers and workers who are working in irrigation department should know that how much water is there in the dam and by measuring its’ quantity in gallon, how much land will be irrigated by it and accordingly they should inform to the concerned farmer of that land about it by notice.” Thus carelessness and negligence of employees from irrigation department is pointed out by Phule.

PROVISIONS TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURE

Farmers need different types of tools and equipments to cultivate land, hence he needs loan; it is inevitable and its amount increases by every year due to lofty interest. It becomes impossible to repay it: and for generations together farmers are in debt. They work hard and lead miserable life. Phule wants that situation of agriculture should be changed, he writes: "If the mind of government is truly agitated about our ruined farmers, why don’t they completely stop this accumulation of billions by the English money lender? wouldn’t it be better to do that and see if the farmer can be foot hold?” (Ibid, 231) There should not any sort of loan on the land of a farmer; rather there should not be such a situation that farmer has to take loan. Where as if any loan given to farmer; it should be interest free, so that he can meet the expenditure incurred on agriculture. Expenses on agriculture are in the form of debt and it increases due interest. The said amount is credited to the money lenders in England they become rich and farmers in India became bankrupt. Under interest charged on loan of farmers made them helpless even it is true today. The government and irrigation department should help to improve the condition of agriculture. Proper distribution of water and planning during draught situation is very important. In this connection Phule writes: "Our justice loving government without any check either on their indolent or cunning employees and without lessening at all water tax on the farmers makes no arrangement to see that water reaches to the field on time. As a result today the farmers abundance has vanished and they have to auction their houses and homes to the government and leave all money in the pockets of pitiless employees.” (Ibid, 229) Hence Jotirao Phule points out that the government department should keep all information about farmers and farming. The government should make available all fertilizers, seed and water at affordable rate so that farmers develop agriculture and it would be profitable. So that there will not be auctions of farmers houses and property. Thus this calamity may be avoided.
Law is necessary to establish justice in the society. No one should be deprived of justice. However such type of laws should be sanctioned by democratic set up for the welfare of the people. On the other hand the rulers are enjoying luxurious life by deceiving common people. Such type of activities of the rulers have worsened the situation of farmers. Phule's detail description of farmers' situation of this time clearly shows this fact. "Water for irrigation be given by tap so that farmers may use it according to their need no more or less." (Ibid, 229) This indicates foresight of Jotirao Phule about planning and management of irrigation. It is expected that farmers and government learn from this. Agriculture is the most important and a matter of deep concern for farmers. Proper supply for agriculture and whenever required will be beneficial. Such system will save expenditure of water supply and water changes may be lessened.

The resolution regarding agriculture are violated deliberately by rulers and employees of government it results in to great loss, however it is overlooked. Such deceitful behaviour be avoided. Government and government employees should render their services honestly for the development of agriculture. It will certainly improve the situation of farmers and injustice and exploitation will come to an end. Proper water management by the personnels from irrigation department will improve the situation of agriculture in the country. This thought is emphasized by Phule in his book.

PRESENT RELEVANCE OF JOTIRAO PHULE’S THOUGHT

Jotirao Phule describes and comments on the situation of farmers and agriculture of his time. The social scenario depicted in the book : 'Shetkaryacha Asud' exposes poverty, ignorance of masses and social set up, government policies, government employees and crude behaviour of Brahmin community which was responsible for the plight of farmers of this times. His realistic writing compells scholars, rulers and government for introspection.

The rulers and government should try to understand the realistic aspect of Jotirao’s writing. The farmer who have been toiling in the land from ages together has to face many difficulties. Agriculture in India is dependent on monsoon which is uncertain time to time. Farmer who is poor, has no money to cultivate land. The changing government policies add his difficulties. Unfortunately the large community of farmers is considered as a vote bank by politicians; that increases their party support. Indian policies today are centered around farmers, common man, and Dalit, Adivasi and downtrodden. The policy makers and government always treat men with injustice; even today, there is no change. The living standards of people are remained as before. Poverty and pitiable situation is not lessened. It is reality that interests of aristocratic rich people, big city magnets and capitalist were nourished by the government. It has created deep valley between rich and poor. The government should make policies favorable for farmers and poor people, Dalit, Adivasis and Adivasis. The rulers are come from agriculture background, they certainly know the situation of farmers and situation of agriculture. Aren't they aware of the present situation? such problem may be raised in this regard today. The genuine problems of masses are neglected, as the rulers are involved in dirty politics of reservation, water for irrigation, electricity for agriculture and so on. Government taxes, funds, compulsory investment have become unnecessary burden on farmers. Jotirao Phule has mentioned number of instances of exploitation of farmers by government officers during his time. The farmers had to give bribe to the government employees and officers to get their work done; and failing to do so, they had been harassed directly or indirectly by government employees. Today the situation is not far better than that time, even corruption is a crime. It is not totally removed from government today.

It is far from the truth to say that the farmers have to spend lavishly on domestic matters and so they become bankrupt. Phule clearly states the situation of farmers in 'Shetkaryacha Asud' in following words: "As compared the history of farmers in various nations in the world to that of Indian, it is clear that farmers in the country are ignorant, poor and who believes in god are at lowest level they are leading the life of animals". (Ibid, 190) The life of farmer is deeply influenced by religious practices rituals and puritan ideas. He is trapped in religious ideas. He likes pompus and lavish life to cherish his pride; being impressed by such ideas he tries to complete with other in this respect. Many times he
unnecessarily involves in it. His routine should be based on geographical and social condition. He should try to understand techniques of agriculture, new crops and irrigation and should acquire skill for cash-crops. He should equip himself with all necessary knowledge about land, crop system irrigation, fertilizers and new techniques. Proper utilization of water, rainfall and advanced technology will be useful to change his situation. Along with farmers politician should know this.

There should be social change according to the condition of farmers at the same time change in perspective is also important. Today more attention be paid at seeds, quality grains, and animal husbandry. Foreign seeds, hybrid seeds, hybrid cattle's and pesticides will not be so helpful, rather they would be dangerous. Hence natural qualities of food grains, fruits, and flowers should be maintained. Hybrid and cross breeds some times will misguide. Day by day farmers are becoming dependent, money has achieved importance in agriculture as barter system has ended long ago. Farmers have to invest lot of amount in agriculture today. Changing climate, new life style have changed entire scenario of agriculture.Prof. Hari Narake points out "A comprehensive picture of farmers and agriculture development has been projected by Mahatma Phule in 'Shetkaryacha Asud' in 1883. Phule emphasized agriculture education, hybrid seeds, new tools, crop system; complimentary business to farming, irrigation system, and percolation tanks. Where as he insisted for market price based on production cost for agriculture products". (Ibid, 13) The contribution of farmers in development of nation is not negligible. The priority should be given to agriculture and farmers sustainable life.

Industrial and material development is not enough for society, but the contribution of agriculture, farmers and laborers is essential. Phule rightly pointed out that Brahmins and Bhats were ruthlessly behaving with people and were selfish. They did not show any concern for masses, Shudras and atishudras in the society. It was sordid reality of his times. The development of this nation is not possible without contribution of masses. Even today it is not far from truth. The present relevance of Phule's thoughts is rightly pointed out by Prof. Dr. Hari Narake". Lacs of farmers committed suicide, as it agriculture is no longer affordable for them. Phule in his 'Shetkaryacha Asud' mentioned that unless farmers get price to agriculture products based on production expenditure farmers will not be free from poverty, almost 130 years ago Phule pointed it to draw the attention at this problem. Modern agriculture techniques percolation tanks, dams and water supply to agriculture by tap, complementary business, industry allied to agriculture will be profitable. He pointed out it is seed of modern drop irrigation system." (Ibid 17). This is applicable to the situation of farmers today. No one can deny that lacs of farmers committed suicide. Why does farmer commit suicide? The answer of this question is clear that - farmer does not get price to agriculture yield based on production cost. Jotirao Phule, pointed out this in 19th century. Phule in his book 'Shetkaryacha Asud' tried to draw the attention of politicians and social workers of his times to this issue. He underlined modernism in agriculture. He emphasized the issue of water supply to agriculture. Almost 130 years ago made a plea to the British government to construct dams, reserviours and tanks and water supply to land by taps. He suggested equal and just distribution of water. Here drop irrigation system is long ago conceived by Phule with his idea of tap for agriculture. If Phule would have been alive today he would have advocated drop irrigation system. He recommended allied professions and cottage industry as complimentary to agriculture. It shows that Phule was a seer who long ago thought about agriculture, farmer and agriculture produciton.

A farmer faces two types of calamities. Agriculture is based on monsoon; but same times it is irregular. Hence there is draught due to excessive rain or no rain. Farmer is always ready to face such natural calamities. However, it is expected that government should extend all sort of help to farmers. But it is noticed that government always neglected farmers and their issues. The government implements sometimes adamant policies, all those affect farmers. It is true that such situations are common in Indian history. Besides this today government is deliberately neglecting problems related to farmers and agriculture. The government is indifferent many times to agriculture. Thus a farmer faces two types of problems one is of government policy another is natural calamity. Thus the farmer is trapped in it. Even though in democratic set up today these issues are neglected. This is sordid
The thoughts expressed by Phule in Shetkaryacha Asud are useful today in respect of agriculture. If the government takes this seriously and makes the policies accordingly and execute them properly there will not be suicides of farmers in India. In this context Phule writes: "If the all wise people sincerely think that all people in this nation should be integrated and be developed, then they should discard their puritan religion that was prevalent in victor and defeated. The religion that is wicked should be exposed in front of all shudras and atishudras. They should try to end all distinctions and should behave with others (i.e. shudras and atishudras) with love. Then and then there will be integration that will lead to the development of nation" (Ibid, 330) Phule expects that there should not be disintegration in the society. He appeals for social integrity and equality and sincere behaviour towards one another. The government, social thinkers and intellectuals should seriously contemplate on this issue and to implement his thoughts will be relevant in this situation today.

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