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Q1(b)

Jyotirao Phule as an agrarian radical

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Perspectives on the study of Indian society

Perspectives on the study of Indian society: Indology (G.S. Ghurye); Structural functionalism (M.N. Srinivas); Marxist sociology (A.R. Desai).

Core demand of the question

- Jyotirao **Phule** as an agrarian radical
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Phule linked caste domination to the robbery of the peasant.

Gulamgiri and the cultivator's whip made tillers the centre of critique.

Satyashodhak schools attacked the knowledge monopoly that kept the field unfree.

He is closer to anti-caste agrarian politics than to mild temple reform.

Class language came later; the landlord-priest pair was already his target.

Introduction

Jyotirao **Phule** was an agrarian radical because he joined caste slavery to landlord and Brahman power over the tiller. **Gulamgiri** and **Shetkaryacha Asud** made the peasant, not the priest, the measure of justice.

Body

Agrarian reading of caste

- **Phule** saw the bahun cultivator as the producer robbed by rent, ritual fee, and denial of knowledge.
- Brahmanical texts, for him, were a licence for this robbery, not a sacred order in Dumont's later sense.
- **Satyashodhak work and schools for girls and ati-shudras were agrarian politics:** without letters, the field stays a field of others.

Radical, not only reformer

- He wanted a peasant-shudra alliance against twice-born monopoly, closer to later non-Brahman and Dalit assertion than to temple reform alone.
- **Gail Omvedt** and later sociologists read him as a founder of anti-caste agrarian thought in Maharashtra.

Limit

- He wrote before industrial class language. A. R. Desai's nationalism-as-bourgeoisie thesis is a later grid; **Phule**'s enemy was priest-plus-landlord, not only capital.

Flow diagram

Phule -> Tiller bahun
Tiller bahun -> Extracted by rent and ritual
Phule -> Satyashodhak school

Conclusion

Phule is an agrarian radical because he named caste as a system that extracts from the cultivator. Education and Satyashodhak organisation were his tools against that extraction.

Facts & figures

Gulamgiri

Phule's text that recast caste as slavery of the bahun producer.

Shetkaryacha Asud

The cultivator's whip: a direct agrarian indictment of priest and moneylender power.

Satyashodhak Samaj

Organisation for truth-seeking, education, and non-Brahman self-respect.

Gail Omvedt

Read **Phule** as a radical of caste and peasantry, not a mere social reformer.

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