



**Date - 9 March 2022**

## **‘Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav’**

- On the eve of International Women’s Day, Ministry of Women and Child Development launched an unprecedented campaign ‘Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav’ to bring back school dropouts to formal education/or skill system.

### **Key points of this plan:**

- The scheme has been launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF.
- This scheme will also fulfill the target set in the ‘Right to Education Act’ to bring back the out-of-school girls back to the ‘education system’.

### **Issues related to women’s education:**

- **Gap in upper primary and secondary schooling:** Although female enrollment has increased rapidly since the 1990s, substantial gaps exist in female upper primary and secondary schooling.
- **High dropout rate:** The increasing rate of female enrollment becomes ineffective due to higher dropout rate of girls relative to boys and lower class attendance. Girls have the largest number of children who do not go to school.
- **Inter-state differences:** There are considerable variations in terms of ‘gender equality’ between different states in the country. Although the most educationally backward states such as Bihar and Rajasthan have recorded the highest growth in female enrollment, these states still have a long way to go on par with better performing states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh.
- **Son Preference:** Some studies show that girls are significantly more represented in government schools than boys, which shows a tendency to consistently give

preference to sons. According to the Economic Survey 2018, boys are sent to (allegedly) better quality private and better schools.

## Various government efforts being made towards women's education in India:

- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Scheme:** Its objective is to create awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services for the girl child. The main objective of the campaign was to improve the steadily declining 'child sex ratio' but also to promote education, survival and protection of the girl child.
- **Digital Gender Atlas:** A 'Digital Gender Atlas' has been prepared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to advance girls' education in India.
- **National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE):** The objective of this scheme is to reduce the dropout rate and promote enrollment of girls in secondary schools. Creating an enabling environment.
- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:** In order to ensure greater participation of girls in elementary education, various interventions for girls under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are targeted, these include opening of schools, appointment of additional female teachers, separate toilets for girls, sensitization programs of teachers etc. Apart from this, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyas have also been opened in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs).
- **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA):** To enhance the quality of education, improve the quality of education imparted at the secondary level, remove gender, socio-economic and disability barriers by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of each habitation.
- **UDAN:** CBSE has launched UDAN scheme to provide free online preparation resources to girl students of class XI and XII. The special focus of this scheme is to improve the low enrollment ratio of girl students in reputed institutions.
- **STEM Education:** To increase the participation of women in STEM education, additional seats have been created in IITs and NITs.

# Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule

- Recently, the Governor of Maharashtra was criticized for allegedly mocking the “young marriage” of 19th century social reformers Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule.
- Mahatma Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule are counted as an extraordinary couple in the social and educational history of India.
- She acted as a pioneer in the direction of women’s education and empowerment and in ending caste and gender based discrimination.

## Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule:

- In the year 1840, when child marriage was a common practice, at the age of 10, Savitribai was married to Jyotirao, who was then 13 years old.
- In later times the couple opposed child marriage and also advocated widow remarriage.

## Jyotirao Phule:

- Jyotirao Phule was an Indian social activist, thinker, anti-caste social reformer and writer from Maharashtra.
- He is also known as Jyotiba Phule.
- **Education:** In the year 1841, Phule was enrolled in the Scottish Missionary High School (Pune), where he completed his education.
- **Ideology:** His ideology was based on liberty, egalitarianism and socialism.
- Phule was influenced by Thomas Paine’s book ‘The Rights of Man’ and believed that the only way to combat social evils was to provide education to women and the lower classes.
- **Major Publications:** Tritiya Ratna (1855); Powada: Chhatrapati Shivajiraj Bhonsle Yancha (1869); Ghulamgiri (1873), Shaktarayach Asud (1881).
- **Title of Mahatma:** On May 11, 1888, he was honored with the title of ‘Mahatma’ by Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar, a social worker from Maharashtra.
- **Social Reforms:** In the year 1848, he taught his wife (Savitribai) to read and write, after which the couple opened the first indigenously run school for girls in Pune, where they both taught.
- He believed in gender equality and followed his beliefs by involving his wife in all his social reform activities.
- By the year 1852, Phule had established three schools, but due to lack of funds after the revolt of 1857, these schools were closed by the year 1858.
- Jyotiba understood the plight of widows and established an ashram for young widows and eventually became an advocate of the idea of widow remarriage.
- Jyotirao opposed the orthodox beliefs of Brahmins and other upper castes and termed them as “hypocrites”.

- In the year 1868, Jyotirao decided to build a mass bath outside his house, to reflect his sense of belonging to all human beings, along with that he started eating with members of all castes.
- He started an awareness campaign which eventually led to Dr. B. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi, who later took a major initiative against caste discrimination.
- Many believe that it was Phule who was the first to use the word 'Dalit' to depict the oppressed masses who were often excluded from the 'Varna system'.

### Savitribai Phule:

- In the year 1852, Savitribai started 'Mahila Seva Mandal' to raise awareness about the rights of women.
- Savitribai called for a Mahila Sabha, where members of all castes were welcomed and all were expected to sit on the stage together.
- He published 'Kavya Phule' in the year 1854 and 'Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar' in the year 1892.
- In her poem 'Go, Get Education' she urges oppressed communities to get education and break free from the chains of oppression.
- They campaigned together against child marriage while supporting widow remarriage.
- They started the first Satyashodhak marriage in the year 1873 – marriage without dowry, Brahmin priest or Brahminical custom.

### His legacy:

- In the year 1848, Phule started a school in Poona for girls, Shudras and Ati-Shudras.
- In the 1850s, the Phule couple started two educational trusts—the Native Female School (Pune) and the Society for Promoting the Education of Mahar—which included several schools.
- In the year 1853 he opened a care center for pregnant widows for safe delivery and to end the practice of infanticide due to social norms.
- **Bal hatya Prabandhak Griha** (Infant Killing Prevention Home) started in his own house.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj** (The Truth-Seekers Society) was founded on September 24, 1873 by Jyotirao-Savitribai and other like-minded people.
- He advocated social changes in the society and took steps against the prevailing traditions which include economic marriage, inter-caste marriage, abolition of child marriage and widow remarriage.
- Simultaneously, Satya Shodhak Samaj was established with the aim of imparting education to the low caste, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and making them aware of the exploitative tradition of the society.

# 'Samarth' Initiative: International Women's Day 2022

- On the occasion of International Women's Day 2022, the Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched a special entrepreneurship promotion campaign for women – "SAMARTH" (SAMARTH).

## About Samarth Initiative:

**The following benefits will be available to the aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs under the Samarth initiative of the Ministry:**

- 20 percent seats will be allotted for women in the free skill development programs organized under skill development schemes of the ministry.
- Under the Schemes for Marketing Assistance implemented by the Ministry, 20 percent of the MSME business delegation to be sent to domestic and international exhibitions will be dedicated to women-owned MSMEs.
- 20% discount on annual processing fee for commercial schemes of National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC).
- NSIC is a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- Special campaign for the registration of MSMEs owned by women under Udyam Registration.
- Through this initiative, the Ministry of MSME is focusing on providing skill development and market development support to women.
- More than 7500 women candidates from rural and sub-urban areas will be trained in FY 2022-23.
- In addition, thousands of women will get opportunities to display and market their products at domestic and international exhibitions.
- Also to increase the participation of women entrepreneurs in public procurement, a special discount of 20 percent on annual processing fee will be offered on the following commercial schemes of **NSIC during the year 2022-23:**
  - Single Point Registration Scheme
  - Raw material support and bill discounts
  - Tender Marketing
  - B2B Portal MSME Mart.com

## **International Women's Day:**

- It is celebrated every year on 8th March. This includes:
- Celebrating the achievements of women,
- Raising awareness of women's equality,
- Supporting accelerated gender equality,
- Raising funds for women-centric charities etc.

## **Brief history:**

- Women's Day was first celebrated in the year 1911 by Clara Zetkin, a German woman. The roots of this festival were rooted in the workers' movement.
- In the year 1913, it was decided to celebrate this day on 8th March and since then it is celebrated on this day.
- International Women's Day was first celebrated by the United Nations in the year 1975.
- In December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be celebrated on any day of the year by member states according to their historical and national traditions.

## **Theme of the year 2022:**

- **"Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow".**

## **Related data:**

- According to the United Nations, legal sanctions have denied 2.7 billion women access to the same jobs as men.
- Till the year 2019, the participation of women in Parliament was less than 25%.
- One in three women experiences gender-based violence.
- According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimate, in the year 2019 before the Covid pandemic, the female labor force participation in India was 20.5%, as compared to 76% for women in comparison.
- According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index/Global Gender Gap Index (which measures progress towards gender equality), India is one of the worst performing countries in South Asia, out of 156 countries in 2021 Ranked 140th.

- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, 57% of women in the age group 15-49 were suffering from anemia in the year 2019-21 as compared to 53% in the year 2015-16.

## Protective measures for women in India:

### Constitutional safeguards:

- **Fundamental Rights:** Right to equality for all Indians (**Article 14**), no discrimination by the state on the basis of gender [**Article 15(1)**] and special provisions made by the state in favour of women guarantees [**Article 15(3)**].
- **Fundamental Duties:** Constitution through Article **51 (A) (e)** provides for fundamental duty for every citizen to give up practices degrading to the dignity of women.

### Legal Remedies:

- **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** It provides for the means of practical remedies through prosecution to the victims of domestic violence.
- **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** It prohibits the request, payment or acceptance of dowry.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013:** This legislative act seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at workplace.
- **Related Schemes:** Mahila E-Haat, Mahila Technology Park, Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) etc.

## Global conference on women:

### The United Nations has organized 4 world conferences on women:

- Mexico City, 1975
- Copenhagen, 1980
- Nairobi, 1985
- Beijing, 1995

- **The Fourth World Conference on Women (WCW), held in Beijing**, was one of the largest UN gatherings ever and was a turning point in drawing world attention to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- **The Beijing Declaration** is an agenda for women's empowerment and is considered the leading global policy document on gender equality.
- It sets out strategic objectives and actions for the achievement of gender equality in 12 important areas of concern such as women's advancement, health and the established and decision-making women in power, the girl child and the environment.
- Recently the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has proposed a temporary basic income for poor women in developing countries, to help them cope with the effects of the corona pandemic and reduce the economic pressure they face every day.

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