

GENDER, POVERTY AND ILLITERACY: THE TURBULENCE OF WOMEN IN TARA BAI SHINDE'S COMPARISON BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

Abstract

The present study examines the gender-based elements of poverty and illiteracy presented in the insightful book "Stri Purush Tulna" by Tara Bai Shinde. (Comparison of Women and Men). An early 20th-century feminist pioneer from India, Shinde explores the challenging realities that women experience while underlining their societal marginalisation. The study aims to evaluate Shinde's writing in light of gender inequality and how it interacts with poverty and illiteracy. The research intends to shed light on the struggles women experience in poverty and illiteracy by examining the social structures and cultural norms that support gender inequalities. The study also examined how race, class, and caste interact with gender to increase the vulnerability that women experience. The results of this study, with an emphasis on women's experiences, demonstrate the complex nature of gender poverty and illiteracy. It also looks at the effects of illiteracy on the health, general well-being, and economic empowerment of women. The research emphasises the significance of dismantling repressive systems to attain equality by looking at her support for women's education, economic empowerment, and opposing patriarchal standards. Finally, by examining Tara Bai Shinde's "Stri Purush Tulna," this research article hopes to add to the body of knowledge on gender inequality, poverty, and illiteracy.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Poverty Illiteracy and Social structures

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I. INTRODUCTION

Shilpa Prasad's (2017) article, "Tarabai Shinde: Breaking Caste and Patriarchy Glass Ceilings," delves into the significant contributions made by Tarabai Shinde in challenging patriarchal and caste structures within Indian society. Shinde's intersectional thinking, which recognises the interconnectedness of caste and gender, takes centre stage in this essay. Through her writings, Shinde sheds light on women's oppression from lower castes, underscoring the urgent need to address both caste and gender inequalities simultaneously. Shinde fearlessly questions the Brahmins of higher castes who impose traditional gender roles and customs. She firmly believed education was essential for liberating women from patriarchal and caste-based oppression. Challenging social norms and practices that curtailed women's rights and agency, Shinde's essays openly called for the abolition of repressive customs, urging women to embrace their uniqueness and freedom. Furthermore, the article highlights Shinde's lasting influence on feminist movements in India. Her audacious and daring ideas continue to inspire future generations of feminists to combat caste and gender-based inequalities.

Vinathe Sharma's (2001) book, "Gender Inequalities in India: The Need for Education for Emancipation," explores the prevalent gender discrepancies in India and stresses education's critical role in addressing and eliminating these inequalities. To question established norms, make wise decisions, and engage in social, economic, and political realms on an equal footing with males, it is said that education empowers women by giving them information, skills, and critical thinking abilities. To promote equitable educational opportunities for girls and women, it emphasises the need to remove these hurdles.

The significant literary work "Stri Purush Tulna" by Tara Bai Shinde examines gender inequality and societal injustices. The early 20th century book compares men and women in Indian society and centres on that topic. In her writing, Shinde examines how gender differences affect women's access to school, employment prospects, and general well-being. The literary accomplishments of Tarabai Shinde, a well-known feminist author from the early 20th century in India, are critically analysed in "The Unwavering Feminism of Tarabai Shinde". Shinde argued for women's rights and empowerment in her works while criticising current patriarchal conventions. She addressed gender disparities and emphasised how marginalised women are in Indian society in works like "Stri Purush Tulna," for example. The feminist viewpoints of Shinde placed a strong emphasis on the value of women's education, financial security, and the destruction of repressive societal systems.

In the 19th century, when India was still submerged in the raging waves of the so-called 'patriarchal system', Tarabai Shinde did not cower to raise her voice against the many injustices women faced based on gender. Even though the society around her seemed unfavourable and against her, she persisted as one of the first feminist activists in India. This study aims to rekindle the fire lit by Tarabai Shinde in the fight against the patriarchal system. Information about such a strong woman open to standing up for her rights must be more robust and abundant. This study aims to inform women of the work done by Tarabai Shinde and follow in her footsteps to stand up for their rights.

Women and men have often been compared throughout history. Whether it be a position in society, an education, or even the occupations they desire, they have been denied

even the most basic rights to which they were entitled. The social structures and societal standards in India, where a girl child is viewed as a burden the minute she is born, have limited the future of women. It is particularly true among Indian women, with cultures comprising the "purdah system." Even though these customs have significantly diminished over the past few decades, they remain unchanged in many Indian communities.

Global issues that negatively affect women include gender poverty and illiteracy. In many nations, women have barriers and disparities that limit their access to education and job prospects. These inequalities keep women impoverished and prevent them from getting a decent education. For today's generation, it is essential to understand the difficulties women experience regarding gender, poverty, and illiteracy.

Tarabai Shinde was a social reformer and accomplished writer from colonial India renowned for her liberal stances on women's rights and education. Her articles critically investigate the significant distinctions between men and women in many areas of society and shed light on the highs and lows of women. This article explores the complex interplay between gender, poverty, and illiteracy, focusing on women's experiences as described in the writings of Tara Bai Shinde. We aim to shed light on the root causes of the turmoil women experience in society by exploring Shinde's comparisons between women and men. Even though gender equality has significantly progressed, it remains a severe issue today. Women continue to deal with discriminatory practices, including economic disparity, limited resource access, and unequal chances. Due to this disparity, women find it challenging to progress and realise their full potential. In various areas of modern society, women continue to experience gender-based discrimination. Despite performing the same work, women are still paid less than men and seldom placed in leadership positions. Furthermore, economic disparities restrict their ability to participate fully in the economy and keep them from attaining economic empowerment.

These disparities include uneven allocation of resources, discriminatory social standards, and unequal economic possibilities. Women are already vulnerable, and poverty makes it harder for them to break free of the cycle of poverty. We shall then examine how gender and illiteracy interact. Primarily due to social and cultural causes, a lack of educational facilities and gender discrimination, women have historically experienced higher illiteracy rates than males. On the other hand, illiteracy fosters gender disparities by preventing women from fully participating in the social, economic, and political arenas. We will examine women's difficulties in pursuing education, economic independence, and societal status through Tara Bai Shinde's writings. The work of Shinde offers an insightful understanding of the complex nature of women's suffering and possible paths to empowerment and growth.

The importance of the study on "Gender, Poverty, and Illiteracy: The Turbulence of Women in Tara Bai Shinde's Comparison between Women and Men from Tarabai Shinde's 'Stri Purush Tulna'" in today's world lies in its relevance to the ongoing global efforts towards achieving gender equality and addressing the challenges faced by women in the domains of poverty and illiteracy. The study adds to our understanding of these complicated problems by evaluating women's turmoil in today's society. It also offers suggestions for promoting educational equality, female empowerment, and reducing poverty. Furthermore, today's

generation is unaware of who was Tarabai Shinde's literary works and the hardships she faced to become one of the first feminist activists in India.

The study on "Gender, Poverty, and Illiteracy: The Turbulence of Women in Tara Bai Shinde's Comparison between Women and Men" aims: i) To gain an understanding of Gender Disparities ii) To Recognise Tara Bai Shinde's literary works and her feminist viewpoint. Iii) To Unravel Women's Turbulence in Tarabai Shinde's era and iii) To compare Women's Turbulence in the present era with Tarabai Shinde's.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does "Stri Purush Tulna," a work by Tara Bai Shinde, depict the adversity faced by women in the context of their gender, illiteracy, and poverty?
2. What are the critical gender disparities in poverty and lack of education that Tara Bai Shinde presents in her work, and how do they relate to what is happening in the present?
3. What were Tara Bai Shinde's feminist viewpoints on tackling issues like poverty, illiteracy, and gender inequality, and how comparable are they to current efforts for women's empowerment?
4. What are the prospects for gender equality and development, as well as how the lack of access to education affects the turmoil women feel in connection to poverty and illiteracy?
5. What difficulties do women living in poverty and without access to education face now, and how do they relate to the historical context Tara Bai Shinde portrays in her work?

When compared to males, women are more afflicted by poverty and illiteracy, as seen in Tara Bai Shinde's "Stri Purush Tulna". Shinde's study and contemporary society both make clear that women endure more significant disparities in poverty and illiteracy than males. All of it is primarily due to patriarchal attitudes and societal systems. Women's education is essential to reducing the turmoil brought about by gender-based illiteracy and poverty and improving economic empowerment and general well-being. In the current struggles for gender equality, reducing poverty, and educational development, Tara Bai Shinde's feminist viewpoints, which support women's education and empowerment, still hold value.

Viewpoints expressed by Tara Bai Shinde in "Stri Purush Tulna": In her book, Shinde makes a strong case for gender equality, one of the book's central themes. She argues for an equitable society by challenging the cultural norms and practices that continue to promote gender-based discrimination. The patriarchal system, which has historically suppressed women and restricted their social, economic, and political involvement, is subject to criticism by Shinde. She challenges the established hierarchies of power and demands the eradication of systems of repression. While "Stri Purush Tulna" primarily focuses on gender inequality, Shinde also acknowledges the interrelated nature of gender with other elements, including caste, class, and race. She highlights how these interrelated issues make it much harder for women, especially those from less fortunate origins, to overcome obstacles. Shinde's work challenges old societal standards that limit women to predefined roles and responsibilities. To achieve freedom and individuality, she encourages women to question established norms. "Stri Purush Tulna" by Tarabai Shinde is a notable feminist work that courageously confronts illiteracy, poverty, and gender discrimination. For establishing a more just and equitable society for women, her views strongly emphasise the need for gender equality, women's

education, and the abolition of patriarchal traditions. Her work still motivates and shapes conversations on gender problems in India and elsewhere. Tarabai Shinde did not shy away from making her voice heard to the extent that she did not hesitate to question the gods. One of the passages from her literary works includes: "God brought this amazing universe into being, and he was also who created men and women both. So, is it true that only women's bodies are home to all wicked vices? Or have men got just the same faults as we find in women? I wanted this to be shown clearly, which is why I have written this small book, to defend the honour of my sister countrywomen. I am not looking at particular castes or families here. It compares women and men" {Tarabai Shinde, Rosalind O'Halon - A COMPARISON BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN_ Tarabai Shinde and the critique of gender relations in colonial India-Oxford University Press, New Delhi, India (1994)} She is shown as opposing the widespread belief that women are primarily to blame for society's adverse problems and flaws and argues that since men and women are God's creatures, they are equally capable of making mistakes. The author of the short book says that she wants to safeguard women's honour regardless of their caste or family history and expresses her willingness to take action accordingly. So, to promote equality and justice in the treatment of men and women, the declaration emphasises the need to bust gender stereotypes.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Tarabai Shinde's "Stri Purush Tulna" is a compelling feminist work that exposes the harsh realities women confront in society and criticises the widespread disparities in the gender they experience. The book's primary goals are to promote gender equality, oppose patriarchal practices, and emphasise how caste, class, and race intertwine gender. Insisting that both men and women are equally capable of making errors, Tara Bai Shinde courageously confronts social norms and the idea that women are only to blame for society's issues. To create a more just and equitable society for women, she advocates for gender equality, women's education and the abolition of patriarchal norms. The survey's data analysis reveals that respondents generally recognise how illiteracy affects women's empowerment and acknowledge the barriers it imposes on women's access to education and employment opportunities. To raise knowledge and support for gender equality activities, increased education on gender equality and feminist viewpoints is necessary. The book's review of intersectionality highlights the significance of understanding how other factors, such as caste, class, and ethnic background, connect with gender to cause challenges for women from different origins. The importance of empowerment through education becomes apparent, and efforts to address illiteracy and promote equitable education can help women break the cycle of poverty. Promoting equality and diversity is also necessary to consider women's experiences from marginalised groups and involve them in decision-making. By applying these ideas into practice, society may significantly advance its attempts to achieve gender equality, eradicate poverty and illiteracy specific to women, and create a more equitable and welcoming community for women. "Stri Pursh Tulna" is a significant and influential book that motivates discussions and activities about gender issues in India and abroad.

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