



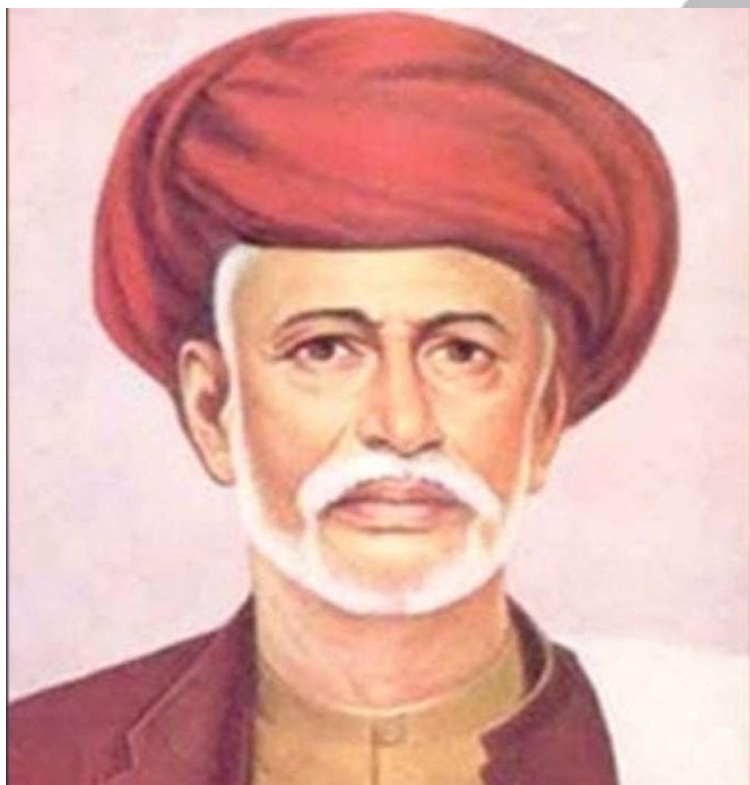
Jyotirao Phule

For Prelims: Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai.

For Mains: Socio-cultural Reform Movements, Important Personalities.

Why in News?

The Prime Minister has paid tribute to the great social reformer, philosopher and writer [Mahatma Jyotirao Phule](#) on his birth anniversary (11th April). He is also known as Jyotiba Phule.



Who was Jyotirao Phule?

▪ Brief Profile:

- **Birth:** Phule was born on 11th April, 1827 in present-day Maharashtra and **belonged to the Mali caste of gardeners and vegetable farmers.**
- **Education:** In 1841, Phule was enrolled at the Scottish Missionary High School (Pune), where he completed education.
- **Ideology:** His Ideology was based on: Liberty, Egalitarianism, Socialism.
 - Phule was **influenced by Thomas Paine's book titled The Rights of Man** and believed that the only solution to combat the social evils was the enlightenment of

women and members of the lower castes.

- **Major Publications:** Tritiya Ratna (1855), Powada: Chatrapati Shivajiraje Bhosle Yancha (1869), Gulamgiri (1873), Shetkarayacha Aasud (1881).
- **Related Association:** Phule along with his followers **formed Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873** which meant 'Seekers of Truth' in order to attain equal social and economic benefits for the lower castes in Maharashtra.
- **Municipal Council Member:** He was appointed commissioner to the Poona municipality and served in the position until 1883.
- **Title of Mahatma:** He was bestowed with the title of Mahatma on 11th May, 1888 **by a Maharashtrian social activist Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar.**
- **Social Reformer:**
 - In 1848, **he taught his wife ([Savitribai](#)) how to read and write**, after which the couple opened the first indigenously run school for girls in Pune where they both taught.
 - He was a **believer in gender equality** and he exemplified his beliefs by involving his wife in all his social reform activities.
 - By 1852, the **Phules had established three schools but all of them had shut by 1858** due to the shortage of funds after the Revolt of 1857.
 - Jyotiba realised the pathetic conditions of widows and established an ashram for young widows and eventually **became an advocate of the idea of Widow Remarriage.**
 - Jyotirao **attacked the orthodox Brahmins and other upper castes** and termed them as "hypocrites".
 - In 1868, **Jyotirao constructed a common bathing tank outside his house to exhibit his embracing attitude towards all human beings** and wished to dine with everyone, regardless of their caste.
 - He started awareness campaigns that **ultimately inspired the likes of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and [Mahatma Gandhi](#)**, stalwarts who undertook major initiatives against caste discrimination later.
 - It is believed by many that **it was Phule who first used the term 'Dalit'** for the depiction of oppressed masses often placed outside the 'varna system'.
 - He **worked for abolishment of untouchability and caste system** in Maharashtra.
- **Death:** 28th November, 1890. His memorial is built in Phule Wada, Pune, Maharashtra.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Satya Shodhak Samaj organized (2016)

- (a) a movement for upliftment of tribals in Bihar
- (b) a temple-entry movement in Gujarat
- (c) an anti-caste movement in Maharashtra
- (d) a peasant movement in Punjab

Ans: (c)

Source: PIB