



Jyotiba Phule

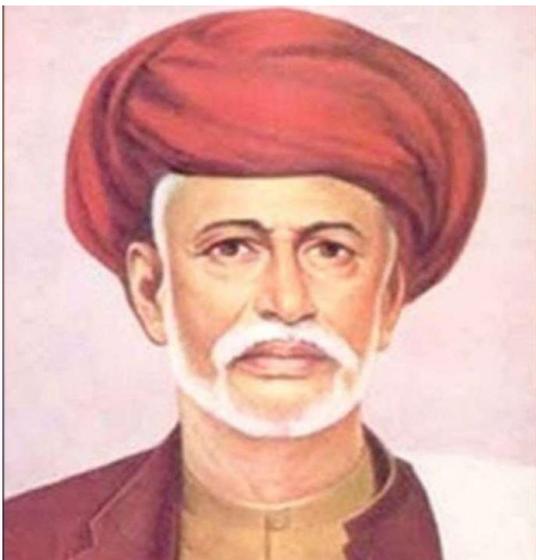
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Why in News?

The birth anniversary of [Jyotiba Phule](#) was observed on **11th April**, the great **social reformer, philosopher and writer**.

What are the Key Facts about Jyotiba Phule?

- **About:** He was born on **11th April, 1827**, and emerged as a pioneering social reformer who challenged **Brahmanical orthodoxy**, fought for the **rights of Dalits and women**, and laid the foundation for India's **social justice movements**.



- **Key Contributions:**

- **Educational Reforms:** Phule and his wife [Savitribai](#) opened **India's first girls' school in 1848** and later started **night schools (1855) for workers, farmers, and women** in Pune.
- **Social Reforms:**
 - **Opposed Orthodoxy:** Phule opposed **caste oppression**, **criticized** Brahminical figures like **Chiplunkar and Tilak**, and **supported the British** to uplift the oppressed and women.
 - **Anti-Caste Movement:** Phule founded **Satyashodhak Samaj (1873)** to fight caste hierarchy and, in **Gulamgiri**, compared caste oppression to **American slavery**.
 - **Deenbandhu**, a Marathi weekly newspaper founded by **Krishnarao Pandurang Bhalekar in 1877**, served as an outlet for **Satyashodhak Samaj**.

- **1857 Revolt Critique:** Viewed it as an **upper-caste effort** to restore Brahmin rule.
- **Economic Reforms:** Advocated **compulsory education** for lower castes and economic upliftment to **dismantle caste hierarchies**.
- **Religious Freedom:** In his **Satsar (The Essence of Truth)**, Phule defended the right of **Pandita Ramabai** to convert to Christianity.
- **Farming Reforms:** In **Shetkaryanche Asud (Farmer's Whip)**, Jyotirao Phule **critiqued** the exploitation of **Shudra peasantry** by a **British and Brahmin bureaucratic alliance**.
- **Rationalism:** In **Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak**, he advocated for a **just and equitable society** where **God** is seen as a **loving and rational creator**. It dismantled **traditional hierarchies**.
- **Major Publications:** **Tritiya Ratna (1855)**, **Powada: Chatrapati Shivajiraje Bhosle Yancha (1869)**, **Gulamgiri (1873)**, **Shetkarayacha Aasud (1881)**.
- **Inspiration:** He was influenced by **Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man***, and saw **education** of women and lower castes as key to **ending social evils**.
- **Recognition:** He was bestowed with the title of **Mahatma** on **11th May, 1888** by a Maharashtrian social activist **Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar**.

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)