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Jyotiba Phule

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Why is in news? Nation pays homage to social reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule on his death anniversary

Phule is regarded as an important figure in the social reform movement in **Maharashtra**.

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule, also known as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule (11 April 1827 – 28 November 1890) was an **Indian social activist, thinker, anti-caste social reformer and writer** from Maharashtra.

His work extended to many fields, including **eradication of untouchability and the caste system** and for his efforts in **educating women and oppressed caste people**.

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**".

He and his wife, Savitribai Phule, were **pioneers of women's education** in India.

Phule started his **first school for girls in 1848 in Pune** at Tatyasaheb Bhide's residence or Bhidewada.

He, along with his followers, formed the **Satyashodhak Samaj** in 1873 (Society of Truth Seekers) to attain equal rights for people from lower castes.

People from all religions and castes could become a part of this association which worked for the **upliftment of the oppressed classes**.

He was bestowed with honorific Mahatma title by Maharashtrian social activist **Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar** in 1888.

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'.

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