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Jyotiba Phule

Published On: 29-11-2022

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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