

## Jyotiba Phule –

### Jyotirao Phule (Inshort):

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827–90), who lived in Western India, fought for the lower castes. Jyotiba was born in Poona, India, in 1827. He belonged to the Mali caste; members of his family provided the Peshwa household with flowers, garlands, and other items.

Jyotiba's perspective was altered by a few instances of brahmanical conceit. A Brahmin once reprimanded and chastised Jyotiba for having the audacity to accompany a Brahmin wedding procession. The Brahmins were also against Jyotiba opening a school for women and members of lower castes.

Jyotiba said that the Brahmin oppressed other castes and made them into their slaves under the guise of religion. Jyotiba frequently criticised the leaders of the Indian National Congress for disregarding the concerns of the lower sections. He insisted that unless the Congress demonstrated a general concern for the welfare of the lower and backward castes, it could not be considered truly national.

To ensure social justice for the weakest segments of society, Jyotiba founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seeking Association) in 1873. For girls and women of all castes, he established a number of orphanages and schools. In 1876, he was chosen to serve on the Poona Municipal Committee.

Jyotiba claimed that the Brahmin oppressed other castes and transformed them into slaves under the guise of religion. Jyotiba believed that the Brahmin under the pretext of religion, tyrannized over other castes and turned them into their slaves. Jyotiba was ever critical of the Indian National Congress Leaders for their neglect of the interests on the weaker sections. He maintained that the Congress could not be called truly national unless it showed general interest in the welfare of the lower and backward castes.

In 1873, Jyotiba started the Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seeking Society) with the aim of securing social justice for the weaker sections of society. He opened a number of schools and orphanages for the children and women belonging to all castes. He was elected as a member of the Poona Municipal Committee in 1876. Publications by Jyotiba include Biography of Shivaji, Ishara (A Warning), and Dharma Tritiya Ratiya Ratna (Exposure of the Puranas). Jyotiba received the title of mahatma in 1888.



# Jyotiba Phule

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### Ideology

Instead than just social reform, Phule favoured social transformation. He had the opinion that there wouldn't be a widespread awakening or a social revolution unless the downtrodden classes or the masses were educated.

Jyotiba envisioned a society without exploitation. Several people think that Phule invented the word "dalit," which means "crushed," to refer to people who do not fall under the varna system. He made the brahmin priest's services unnecessary and popularised the Satyashodhak marriage rite, which was straightforward and affordable.

### Contributions

His initiatives included eradicating untouchability and the caste system, as well as educating women and caste members who were being exploited. Subsequently, the Phules founded schools for kids from the Mahar and Mang untouchable castes.

He founded a home for pregnant Brahmin widows in 1863 so they may give birth in a safe setting. He started an orphanage home to stop infanticide. He is regarded as the first Hindu to build an orphanage for destitute children in this regard.

In order to show his inclusive attitude towards all people and his willingness to eat with everyone, regardless of caste, Jyotirao made the decision to construct a communal bathing tank outside his home in 1868. In order to secure equal rights for members of oppressed castes, he and his followers established the Satyashodhak Samaj (Society of Truth Seekers). Joining this group devoted to the advancement of the disadvantaged classes was open to people of all religions and castes.

People of all religions and castes were welcome to join this organization dedicated to the upliftment of the oppressed classes. He founded a home for pregnant Brahmin widows in 1863 so they may give birth in a safe setting. He started an orphanage home to stop infanticide. He is regarded as the first Hindu to build an orphanage for destitute children in this regard.

In 1868, Jyotirao made the decision to construct a public bathing tank in front of his home to show his inclusive perspective on all people. One of the key players in Maharashtra's social reform movement is recognised as Phule. He received the title "Mahatma" in 1888 from Maharashtrian social activist Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar.

### Efforts Towards Women Education

Savitribai Phule, Jyotiba's wife, backed his efforts to guarantee women and girls the right to an education. Savitribai, one of the few literate women of her day, learned to read and write from her husband Jyotirao.

Jyotiba founded a ladies' school in 1851 and invited his wife to instruct the students there. Subsequently, he established two additional schools for girls in addition to an indigenous school for members of the lower castes, namely the Mahars and Mangs. After realising the miserable conditions faced by widows, Jyotiba founded an ashram for young widows and finally came to support the concept of widow remarriage.

His era's society was patriarchal, and women's status was especially appalling. Both female infanticide and child marriage were frequent occurrences, with minors occasionally becoming married to men who were significantly older. Before they reached adolescence, these ladies frequently lost their

husbands, leaving them without any familial support. In 1854, Jyotiba, who was distressed by their situation, founded an orphanage to protect these poor children from the society's unkind treatment.

### **Satya Shodhak Samaj**

Jyotiba Phule founded the Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873. (Society of Seekers of Truth). He conducted a methodical deconstruction of historical ideas and beliefs before rebuilding one that promoted equality. The Hindus' ancient holy texts, the Vedas, were harshly denounced by Jyotirao. He used a number of other ancient writings to trace the origins of Brahmanism and accused the Brahmins of creating cruel and exploitative regulations in an effort to preserve their social supremacy by repressing the "shudras" and "atishudras" in society. The Satya Shodhak Samaj's mission was to rid society of caste prejudice and free the oppressed members of lower castes from the stigmas imposed by Brahmins. The word "Dalits" was initially used by Jyotirao Phule to refer to everyone who the Brahmins regarded as belonging to a lower caste and being untouchable. Everyone was welcome to join the Samaj, regardless of caste or class. According to some documented accounts, they even encouraged Jews to join the Samaj. By 1876, the "Satya Shodhak Samaj" had 316 members. Jyotirao made the decision to build a communal bathing tank outside his home in 1868 to demonstrate his tolerant attitude towards all people and his desire to eat with anyone, regardless of caste.

### **Literary Works**

He was also an accomplished writer.

His best-known works include Gulamgiri (Slavery) and Shetkarayacha Aasud (Cultivator's Whipcord).

### **Some of his other notable works include:**

Tritiya Ratna (1855)

Brahmananche Kasab (1869)

Powada: Chatrapati Shivajiraje Bhosle Yancha (1869)

Powada: Vidyakhatyatil Brahman Pantoji (1869)

Manav Mahammand (Muhammad) (Abhang) Gulamgiri (1873)

