

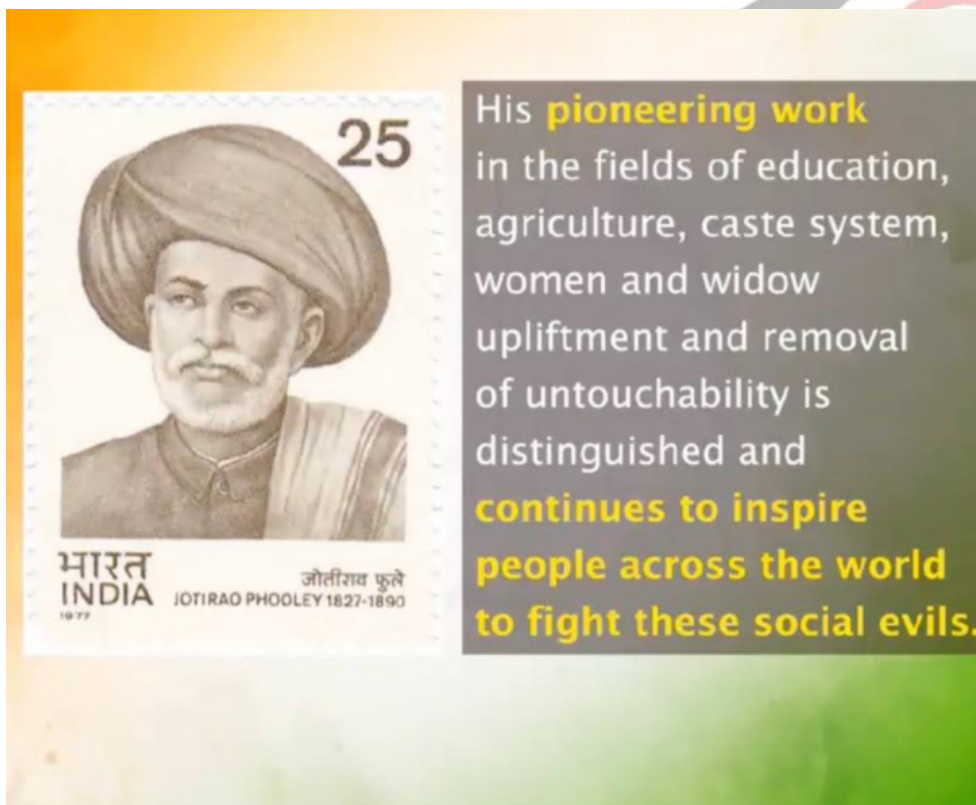


# Jyotirao Phule

## Why in News

The '**Tika Utsav (vaccination festival)**', started on the birth anniversary of Mahatma **Jyotirao Phule** (11<sup>th</sup> April) will continue till the birth anniversary of **Babasaheb Ambedkar** on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

- The aim of the four day festival is to vaccinate as many people as possible for the priority groups and zero wastage of **Covid-19** vaccine.
- **Jyotirao Phule** was an **Indian social activist, thinker, anti-caste social reformer and writer from Maharashtra**. He is also known as **Jyotiba Phule**.



## Key Points

- **Brief Profile:**
  - **Birth:** Phule was born on **11<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> 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:** 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1890. His memorial is built in Phule Wada, Pune, Maharashtra.

**Source: PIB**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/jyotirao-phule>