

Mahad Satyagraha

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | History

Why in news?

The scholars are revisiting the Mahad Satyagraha's influence on India's constitutional discourse and human rights, especially in the context of Ambedkar's death anniversary.

- **Location** - Mahad, a town located in the Raigad district of Maharashtra.
- **Mahad's legacy** - It was home to pioneering reformers like Gopalbaba Walangkar (early anti-caste activist), N. M. Joshi (social reformer), Sambhaji Gaikwad and others.
 - It became the site of India's 1st organised human rights movement, led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 1927.
- **Background**
 - **Bole Resolution, 1923** - It was named after S. K. Bole, and allowed untouchables access to public places, including tanks and wells.
 - **Municipal Board's order** - In 1926, the Municipal Board of Mahad, Maharashtra, passed orders to open the famous tank to all communities; it was opposed by high-caste Hindus.
- **Launch** - It was a ***non-violent movement***, launched on **March 20, 1927**.
 - It is also called as ***Chavdar Tank Satyagraha***.
- **Aim** - It aimed to assert the right of the untouchables to use water from a public tank.

Events

- **Led by** - Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, about 2,500 Dalits in a march to the Chavdar Tank in Mahad, where Dalits had long been denied access to this public water source.
- In a bold act, Ambedkar drank water from the tank, symbolising equality. This triggered strong protests from caste Hindus.
- Ambabai Temple Satyagraha (Nov 1927) - Ambedkar joined Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh's movement after violent attacks on Dalits.
- Later in **December 1927**, he and his followers ***burned the Manusmriti***, symbolically rejecting the ideological foundation of caste hierarchy (***Manusmriti Dahan Din - 25th December***).
- He stressed that true human rights must also mean gender equality, seeking for inclusion of women in the rights discourse.
- In **December 1937**, the Bombay High Court ruled that untouchables have the right to use water from the tank.
- **Constitutional Impact** - It emphasises how Ambedkar's struggle at Mahad influenced the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity later enshrined in the

Indian Constitution.

March 20 – Social Empowerment day to commemorate the Mahad Satyagraha
& **December 25** – Indian Women's Liberation Day, linking Ambedkar's vision to gender equality.

References

1. [The Hindu | How Mahad Satyagraha shaped constitutional discourse](#)
2. [BARTI | Mahad Satyagraha](#)
3. [The Wire | Mahad Satyagraha](#)

