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

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2. BARTI | Mahad Satyagraha
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