Mahatma Jyotirao Phule

Prelims: *Current events of national importance | Indian Culture*

Why in News?

Recently, national leaders paid floral tributes on the 200th birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule at Prerna Sthal, Parliament House Complex.

Aspect	Details
Birth	11 April 1827, Pune, Maharashtra
Titles	'Mahatma' (1888) by social activist Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar, and 'Booker T. Washington of India'.
Organisation Founded	**Satya Shodhak Samaj (1873)** – Aimed at social equality and liberation of oppressed classes.
Municipal Role	Member of Pune Municipality (1876–1882).
Focus Areas	Elimination of caste discrimination, upliftment of peasants, women's education, farmer welfare.
Statue in Parliament	**12-foot bronze statue** sculpted by Ram V. Sutar, unveiled by PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee (2003).

Key Contributions

- He is known as *Father of Indian Social Revolution.*
- **Social Reform –** Radical critique of Brahmanical hegemony; described caste as institutionalised slavery.
- **Education as Emancipation –** Along with Savitribai Phule, he pioneered education for Shudras, Ati-Shudras (Dalits), and women.
- **Famous dictum** – *"Vidhye-vina mati geli"* (Without education, wisdom is lost).
- **Agrarian Reforms –** In *Shetkaryacha Asud* (The Cultivator's Whipcord), exposed exploitation of farmers by British bureaucracy and moneylenders.
- **Anti-Caste Ideology –** Used the symbol of Raja Bali to provide cultural identity for oppressed classes.
- He was one of the first leaders to use the term "**Dalit**" for oppressed castes and famously opened a water tank in his own home for

untouchables in 1868.

- **Satya Shodhak Samaj (1873) –** Rejected priestly mediation, promoted social service and equality.
- **Publications –**
  - **Gulamgiri (1873)** – Dedicated to the American abolitionist movement.
  - **Tritiya Ratna (1855)** – Play exposing priestly exploitation.
  - **Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak** – Posthumous work advocating rationalism and universal religion of truth.
- **Newspaper – Deenbandhu** – Voice of the Satyashodhak movement.

References

1. PIB | Jyotirao Phule
2. PIB | Jyotirao Phule

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