Savitribai Phule

Why in news?
Commemorating the 186th birth anniversary of social reformer and poet Savitribai Phule, Google has dedicated a special doodle on the day.

Who is Savitribai Phule?

- Savitribai Phule was the wife of Jyotirao Phule, an Indian activist, thinker, social reformer and writer from Maharashtra.
- She was determined to study and was one of the very few indigenous literate women in her era.
- Savitribai, along with her husband Jyotirao Phule, stood up for the rights of women and fought against the injustice faced by them.
- They were the pioneers of women education in India and started the first girls’ school in 1848 in Pune.
- Their work extended to many fields including eradication of untouchability and the caste system, women's emancipation and the reform of Hindu family life.
- Savitribai Phule started Mahila Seva Mandal in 1852, which worked for raising women’s consciousness about their human rights, dignity of life and other social issues.
- First ever infanticide prohibition home of India was started by Savitribai Phule in 1853.
- They championed widow remarriage and started a home for lower and upper caste widows in 1854.
In September 1873, Phule, along with the followers, formed the Satyashodhak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth) to attain equal rights for peasants and people from lower castes.

Savitribai Phule was the first Dalit woman, in-fact the first woman whose poems got noticed in the British Empire.

The prestigious University of Pune was renamed to Savitribai Phule Pune University in 2014.

The Government of Maharashtra has instituted an award in her name to recognize women social reformers.

---

**Legacy of Jyotirao Phule:**

- He opened the first native library for low-caste students.
- In 1854, Jyotirao joined the Scottish Mission School as a teacher.
- He was against Sati and child marriages. He was in favor of Western education and demanded free and compulsory primary education—up to the age of 12.
- He advocated technical education for the lower classes.
- He always agitated for better living conditions for the workers in the mills in Bombay as well as for the farmers, a majority of whom were untouchables.
- Phule was bestowed with the title of Mahatma on 11 May 1888 by another social reformer from Bombay, Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar.
- His Published works include Tritiya Ratna (1855), Gulamgiri (1873), Ishara (1885).