



## History Of Reforms In Maharashtra : Mahatma Phule, Fatima Shaikh, Shahu Maharaj, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

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### Introduction :

The social and religious movements in India in the nineteenth century were interlined. These movements were complementary as well as supplementary. By and large, all the reformers of the nineteenth emphasised religious and social reforms. The nineteenth century was marked by strenuous attempts to rediscover, reassess and regenerate Indian society by eschewing orthodoxy and eradicating social evils which had been eating the very vitals of the Indian society and especially the Hindu society. The religious and social reformers emphasised that the truths revealed by the sages and theologians of ancient ages in India, should be seen in the right perspectives. The main streams of the new movements may be summed up as purging of society of superstitions reaping the fruit of science and restoration of the ancient glory of the society. There were movements in almost every part of India. The leaders of the movements made missionary tours over different regions of the country for promoting a rational outlook.

### Impact of British Rule :

The presence of a colonial government of Indian soil played a complex, yet decisive rule in this crucial phase of modern Indian History. The impact of British rule on Indian society and culture was widely different from what India had known before. Most of the earliest invaders, who had come to India settled within its frontiers, were either absorbed by its superior culture or interacted positively with it and had become part of the land and its people. However, the British conquest was different. It came at a time when India, in contrast to an enlightened Europe of the eighteenth century affected in every aspect by scientific outlook presented the picture of a stagnant civilization and a satisfaction and decadent society.

### Religious and Social Ills :

Indian society in the nineteenth century was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and social obscurantism. Hinduism had become steeped in magic and superstition. The priests exercised an overwhelming and, indeed, unhealthy influence on the minds of the people. Idolatry and polytheism helped to reinforce their position, and their monopoly of scriptural knowledge imparted a deceptive character to all religious systems. There was nothing that religious ideology could not persuade people to do.

### Mahatma Phule (1827-90):

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was an Indian social activist, Bussinessman, anti-caste social reformer and writer. His work extended to many fields education of untouchability and caste system.

For his efforts in educating women and appressed caste people. The two best navels by Jyotiba Phule are Setcaryacha Aasud and Gulamgiri (slavery). The title of Mahatma is given by social reformer Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar to Jyotiba Phule.

### Association with Phule's :

(1)Under pressure from upper castes, Jyotirao's father evicted Savitribai and Jyotirao from the family home in the late 1840s. (2)With nowhere else to go, the Phule's would find shelter at the house of Usman Sheikh, where they would live till 1856. (3)As many from their own community abandoned them, Fatima Sheikh and her brother stood strongly with the Phule's and the mission to educate girls and bahujans. (4)Sheikh met Savitribai Phule while both were enrolled at a teacher training institution run by Cynthia Farrar, an American missionary. (5)She taught at all five schools that the Phule's went on to establish and she taught children of all religions and castes. (6)Sheikh took part in the founding of two schools at in Mumbai in 1851.

**Determined amidst opposition :**(1)In Pune, a conservative bastion of culture and tradition, the very act of trying to educate the underprivileged caused uproar. (2)It is said that the two women would often have stones and pieces of dung thrown at them while walking in the streets. (3)Fatima specifically is said to have borne the wrath of both upper-castes and radical orthodox sections.

**Savitribai Phule (1831-1897) :** Savitribai was illiterate at the time of her marriage. Jyotirao educated Savitribai and Sagunabai Shirsagar, his cousin sister at their home along with working at

their farm. Once she completed her primary education with Jyotirao, her further education was the responsibility of his friends, sakharam Yeshwant Paranjpe and Keshav shivram Bhavalkar. She also enrolled herself in two teachers training programs; the first was at institution run by an American missionary, Cynthia Farrar, in Ahmednagar, and the second course was at a Normal School in Poona (Now Pune).

**Fatima Sheikh (1831-1900) :** Fatima Sheikh was an educator and social reformer, who was a colleague of the social reformers Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule. She is widely considered to be India's first Muslim woman teacher. Fatima Sheikh was the sister of Main Usman Sheikh, in whose house Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule took up residence. One of the first Muslim women teachers of modern India, she started education Bahujan children in Phule's school.

**Rajarshri Shahu Maharaj (1874-1922) :** Rajarshri Shahu Maharaj was considered a true democrat and social reformer. Rajarshri Shahu Maharaj was an able ruler who was associated with many progressive policies during his rule. He strongly believed in equality amongst all members of the society. In his rule he initiated various revolutionary schemes in the discriminating system to promote equality.

**Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) :** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a fighter in the cause of Annihilation of Caste. He was born a low caste Mahar family on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1891, at Mahu. Contentment were his father, served in the army. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was born in a caste which was considered as the lowest of the low. But these very man framed Constitution for the nation. His life was a one of the struggles as his radical proposals to deal with the caste system met with overt hostility from the from the Upper Castes. Not only did the great doctor fight against all institutional and social odds to keep studying, but spectacularly earned a Doctorate in Economics from Columbia University in 1917. The boy who suffered bitter caste humiliation became the first minister of law in free India and shaped the nation's Constitution. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's struggle against Brahmanical Patriarchy. His radical proposals for the Hindu Code Bill. His suggestions for a radical restricting of property relations, alert us to his challenging of the status-quo. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar perhaps India's most radical thinker transformed the social and political landscape in the struggle against British Colonialism, by making the downtrodden politically aware of their own situation. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar famously said to Dalits something that bears immense importance even today- "Educate, Agitate, and Organize". Clearly, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar laid a great emphasis on education. Specially where it was traditionally denied in fact, he is known to have

said once that education was more important than temple entry for the downtrodden. He saw education as a potent tool which could equally empower every citizen of India to build an egalitarian society as also help break the age-old restrictive shackles of discriminatory social practices, bad evils as a college bearing his name we continually strive to emulate his vision and help empower the future generation built a holistic, inclusive and progressive society of modern India. briefly contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to social reform movement of Maharashtra and India as under.

**1.Southborough Commission (27<sup>th</sup> January 1919) :** On 27<sup>th</sup> January 1919 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar submitted a memorandum and gave evidence before the Southborough Commission. British Parliament has the first passed the government of India Act 1919. On the recommendation of Southborough Commission to which Dr. B.R. Ambedkar submitted a memorandum and raged a issue of right to vote and adequate representation. After this the British Government Constituted Simon Commission in the year 1928 and sent to India to revive the provisions.

**2.Mangaon Parishad (21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> March 1920) :** Mangaon Parishad 21<sup>st</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1920 Mangaon Conference on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1920 was the public meeting of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the 1920. He started the newspaper Muknayak Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the President of Mangaon Parishad and Shau Maharaj was the chief guest of Mangaon Parishad.

**3.Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha (20<sup>th</sup> July 1924) :** On July 1924 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1924. The aim of Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha was to uplift the downtrodden society and politically and bring them to the level of others in the society.

**4.Mahad Satyagraha Or Chavadar Tale (20<sup>th</sup> March 1927) :** Mahad Satyagraha (20 March 1927) Or Chavadar Tale Satyagraha was a Satyagraha led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1927. To allow untouchables to use water in Public tank in Mahad (Maharashtra). The day is observed social empowerment in India where he burnt copies of the Manusmriti publically.

**5.Co-operation to The Simon Commission (1929) :** In 1929 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made the controversial decision to Co-operate with the all British Simon Commission which was to took into setting up a responsible Indian Government in India.

**6.Nashik Temple Satyagraha (1930) :** The Temple entry movement was started by Bhimrao Ambedkar it was a movement to allow to lower caste people to enters temples. B.K. Dadasheb Gaikwad and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar led a protest outside the temple of Kalaram on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1930 at Nashik, in order to allow the Dalits into the temple.

**7.Round Table Conferences (1930-32) :** First Round Table Conference (12<sup>th</sup> November 1930-19<sup>th</sup> January 1931), Second Round Table Conference (7<sup>th</sup> September 1931 to 1<sup>st</sup> December 1931), Third Round Table Conference (17<sup>th</sup> November 1932 and 24<sup>th</sup> December 1932). All three round table conferences were attended by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Tej bahadur Sapuru.

**8.Communal Award (16<sup>th</sup> August 1932) :** Communal Award was created by the British Prime minister James Ramsay Macdonald on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1932. Also known as the James Ramsay Macdonald Award. It was announced the after the Round Table Conferences 1930-32 and extend the separate electorate to depressed classes (now known as the Scheduled Caste) and other minorities. (Muslim, Jain, Sikhs, Christian).

**9.Poona Pact (24<sup>th</sup> September 1932) :** Poona Pact is agreement between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on behalf of Dalits, depressed classes and upper caste Hindus on the reservation of electoral seats for the depressed classes in the legislature in British in India in 1932. It was made on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1932 and Yerwada Central Jail in Poona. It was signed Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on behalf of depressed classes and by Madan Mohan Malviya. On the behalf of upper caste Hindus.

**10.Yewala Conference (13<sup>th</sup> October 1935) :** At Historic declaration Conference Yewala, Nashik District 13<sup>th</sup> October 1935, it was decided depressed classes would embrace another religion. In this conference he gave the shock to the Hindus by announcing. He was born in Hinduism but I will not die as a Hindu.

**11.Foundation of The Independent Labour Party (15<sup>th</sup> August 1936) :** The Independent Labour Party (ILP) was a political organization formed under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1936.

**12.Principal Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1935-37) :** In 1935, Ambedkar was appointed Principal of Government Law College, Bombay. A position he held for two years. He also served as the chairman of Governing body of Ramjas College, University of Delhi, after the death of its founder Shri Rai Kedarnath.

**13.Khoti Bill (1937) :** In 1937 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar introduced a Bill to abolish the Khoti System of the tenure in the Konkan region, the serfdom of agricultural tenants and the Mahar watan system of working for the government as salves. A clause of agrarian bill refered to the depressed classes as Harijans, or people of God. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was strongly apposed to this title for untouchables.

**14.Hindu Code Bill (1951) :** In 1941 the Government of India appointed a Hindu Law Committee with Sir B.N. Rao as a Chairman. The Rao Committee recommended codification of Hindu

Law. A Government Bill in exactly the same terms as the draft of Hindu Code prepared by a Hindu Law Committee was introduced in the legislative Assembly on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1947. The report of the select committee, to amend and codify certain branches of the Hindu Law was presented to the Constituent Assembly to the India (Legislature) on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1948. The discussion on The Hindu Code clause by clause was resumed on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1950. Again The Hindu Code Bill Clause by Clause 5<sup>th</sup> February 1951 to 25<sup>th</sup> September 1951. After prolonged debates, some clauses were cleared. Frustrated by the dilatory tactics of some of the members, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar submitted his resignation on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1951.

**15.Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Labour Minister (1942-1946) :** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the labour member in the British Viceroy's Executive Council since 22th July 1942-20<sup>th</sup> October 1946. On 7<sup>th</sup> July 1942 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar takes charge of labour department British Viceroy's Executive Council as the first Labour Minister of India below is the list of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar work done for labour in India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar implemented labour laws and welfare for them as labour rights and welfare in other words it is welfare bills.

**16.Working hours times reduced :** Reducing working hours form 14 hours to 8 hours. Also Dr. B.R. Ambedkar proposed holidays with pay for factory workers. He followed the English pattern of working of 48 hours per week in India.

**17.Insruance for workers :** The first document on the social insurance was report on health insurance submitted to the LIC of 1942. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has contributed to the coal and Mica Mines labour fund 1946.

**18.Provident Fund :** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar also contributed to the making of employees. Provident Fund Law. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar an amendment to the workmen's compensation Act of 1923 in 1944. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar initiated the amendment to the factories at a 1934 with several modifications it was Ambedkar, again who introduced canteen and medical facilities inside the factory etc.

**19.TA, DA, and Medical leave :** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar drafted the minimum wages act in 1942 though it was enacted into law in 1948. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar moved the Payment of wages (Amendment) Bill in 1944. Dearness Allowance (DPA), 'Leave Benefit' 'Revision of Scale of pay', extra payment for Overtime, Subsidized food etc.

**20.The coal Mines safety Bill :** Before coal Mines maternity law was presented, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, as a Labour Member went to the coalfields in Dhanbad to study the working conditions. He inspected both surface and underground, conditions of work and went 400 feet underground. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has contributed the 'coal and, Mica Mines, Provident

Fund' and the 'Mica Mines Labour'. Welfare Fund, 1946. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar also contributed to the making of Employees Provident Fund Law. He brought an amendment to the workmen's compensation Act of 1923. In 1944, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar initiated the amendment to the Factories Act of 1934 with Several modifications. It was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar again, who introduced canteen and medical facilities inside the factory etc.

**21.Mines Maternity Benefit Bill :** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar initiated many laws for women workers in India. They include 'Mines Maternity Benefit Act', 'Women's Labour Welfare Fund' 'Women's and Child Labour Protection Act'. 'Maternity Leave Benefit for Women Labour' as well as 'Restoration of Ban on Employment of Women'. On underground work in Coal Mines. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar took steps to amend the Maternity Benefit Act. When the Maternity Benefit Bill was introduced in the house he said, "I believe that it is in the interest of the nation that the Mother ought to get a certain amount of rest during the prenatal period and also subsequently and this Bill is based entirely on that principle". He advocated for equal pay for equal work and he got success in the field of Coal Mines.

**22.The Factories Second Amendment Bill :**

This Act may be called Constitution Second Amendment Act, 1952. Second Amendment of Article 81 in the sub-clause (1) of Article 81 of the Constitution. The words and figures not less than one member for every 750,000 of the population and shall be omitted.

**23.Mica Mines Welfare Bill :** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has contributed the 'Coal and Mica Provident Fund' and the 'Mica Mines Labour'. Welfare Fund, 1946. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar also contributed to the making of Employees Provident Fund Law. He brought an amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923. In 1944, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar initiated the amendment to the Factories Act of 1934 with several modifications. It was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar again, who introduced canteen and medical facilities inside the factory etc.

**24.Industrial works housing and health Bill :** 14 Equal wages for men and women workers. For fixing minimum wages for labour, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar drafted the 'Minimum wages Act in 1942 though it was enacted into law in 1948'. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar moved the payment of wages (Amendment) Bill in 1944. Dearness Allowance (DA) Leave Benefit, Revision of Scale of pay extra payment for overtime, subsidized food etc. are the contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

**25.Worker can go on Strike :**

It is because of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar that workers can go on strike for their rights. In 1943, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar introduced the Indian Trade

Unions (Amendment) Bill for compulsory recognition of trade unions. The Industrial Disputes Act, which is the basic labour law of the country, was passed in 1947 and ESI Act passed in 1948, but were introduced in the Viceroy's Council by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar years back. It was an epoch-making event in the History of Modern India when Dr. B.R. Ambedkar joined the British Viceroy's Executive Council as Labour member on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1942. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar truly represented the working class all his life. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's instruction into Viceroy's cabinet beginning of new era. Man who has fought his way against poverty adversity, injustice to pinnacle of leadership. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the member for labour in the British Viceroy's Council in this capacity he advocated for many labour reforms like minimum age, equal pay, payed live etc.

**Conclusion :**

Socio-religious reformation is the glorious chapter in the history of Maharashtra as well as Modern India. Balshastri Jabhekar, Lokhitwadi : Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Justice M.G. Rande, Vishnushastri Chipalunkar, Shiram Mahadev Pranjpe, Gopal Ganesh Aagarkar, Gopal Krishna Ghokhale, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Shatrapati Rajashri Sahu Maharaj, Maharshi Dhondav Keshava Karve, Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, Pandita Ramabai, Sir Sayad Ahmad Khan, Sayajirao Gaikwad, Karmavir Bavorao Patil, Panjabrao Deshmukh, Iravati Karve, those were the greatest reformer in Maharashtra and India. They tried for spread of education in the Indian society. There are so many bad evils and bad practices in Indian society as like Sati System, Untouchability, Blind faiths, Devdasi, The practice of Niyoga (Leviarate), Purdah System, Caste System, Varna System, Child Marriage, Devdas, Potraj, Vighya Murali, these were the bad evils and superstitions in Indian society. So, it removed by various reformers and thinkers in Maharashtra Indian society. The most significant role of Mahatma Phule, Savitribai Phule, Fatima Shaikh, Shatrpati Shau Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the socio-religious reform movement in Maharashtra.

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