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Social reformers of Maharashtra - part 14

LESSON 4 OF 4



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- **This lesson covers :**

- Acharya Vinoba Bhave

- Tarabai Modak

Acharya Vinoba Bhave

- **Birth: 11th September 1895**
- He was born in Gagoda, a village in the then Colaba(Raigad) district.
- While on his way from Vadodara to Mumbai to appear for the Inter examination, he got down midway at Surat station and left for Kashi (Varanasi) via Bhusaval.
- He started to teach English in one of the schools there on a very nominal salary.
- He then went to Ahmedabad to meet Mahatma Gandhi.
- Gandhiji was impressed by his simplicity, discipline, and by his sincere intentions to serve the nation he asked Vinoba to stay back in his Ashram (in Ahmedabad).
- Later on Vinoba went on a year's leave from the Ashram to Wai where he studied Sanskrit literature.
- Vinoba reached Wardha with a few of his colleagues in 1921.

- There he set up the **Satyagraha Ashram** with the help of Seth **Jamnallal Bajaj who considered Vinoba as his Guru.**
- **Waikom** in Kerela is a sacred place of lord Shankar.
- The road leading to the temple passed through an area where the Brahmin community lived.
- The community had blocked the road for the untouchables for many years, thus denying the entry to the temple.
- Vinoba led a Satyagraha against this indiscrimination in 1924.
- **In 1931, he presided over the convention of Satyagrahi held in Khandesh.**
- Vinoba established the **Paramdham Ashram** at Pavnar near Wardha.
- He wrote the **Geetai**, a Marathi translation of the **Geeta**.

- He was extremely proficient in Gujarati, Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Kannad, Malyalam, Urdu, Arabic, French and Latin.
- **Jeevandrishti** (Life's Vision), **AbhangVrate** (Code of conduct based on saintly hymns), **SwarajyaShastra** (the science of self-rule) are some of his literary works.
- From 17th October 1940, Mahatma Gandhi started the **individual** Satyagraha against British policies. **Vinoba was the first Satyagrahi he selected.**
- After independence, Vinoba founded the **Sarvodaya Samaj**, a society to spread the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi.
- In 1951, he started the revolutionary **Bhoodan movement** (donation of land).
- **This movement started in Pochampalli village in Nalgonda district of Andhra Pradesh.**

- Thousands of acres of land were given to the landless people through this movement.
- **Sab Bhoomi Gopal ki** (all land is God's land) was the slogan of this movement.
- The life of this influential Mahatma came to an end on 15th November 1982.
- In **1983**, he was posthumously felicitated with the title of **BharatRatna.**

Tarabai Modak

- **Born :19th April, 1892**
- Tarabai was born in Indore and spent her childhood there.
- Both her parents were strict followers of Prarthana Samaj, a sect of Progressive Hindus.
- Her father, Sadashiv Kelkar, purposefully married a widow.
- Subsequently in the year 1903, the Kelkar family left Indore and settled in Mumbai.
- Tarabai and her sister were however sent to Pune and enrolled in the Hujurpaga School.
- They were made fun on many occasions by the society as daughters of a widow. They were refused admission into the school hostel.
- Around the time the family shifted to Mumbai, Tarabai's father died and she had to leave Pune and return to Mumbai. She joined the Elphinston College after matriculation in 1909. Soon after, she lost her mother and had to leave the Elphinstone College and join Wilson College.

- While she was in college she became acquainted with K. V. Modak, the son of Prof. Vaman Modak, the retired principal of Elphinstone College and got married.
- Tarabai moved to Amravati after marriage in 1915.
- She acquired the distinction of being **the first woman graduate in Amravati.**
- It was in this period that Tarabai started a school which lasted for just 3 yrs.
- For some tragic reasons Tarabai's marriage was unsuccessful.
- Tarabai was offered a post of the Principal of Barton Female Training College in Rajkot.
- Tarabai visited Baroda and Ahmadabad and learnt management techniques from the training college there.

- After 2 years she left the job as her daughter Prabha was uncomfortable.
- She had read about the experiments in education by **Gijubhai Badheka at Bhavnagar in Saurashtra, and so, she arrived at Bhavnagar.**
- Gijubhai was conducting experiments in children's education based on the principles of Montessori at the Dakshinamurty Institute in Bhavnagar.
- He needed an assistant, and found one in Tarabai.
- It was the beginning of **Montessori education** (kindergarten or pre-schooling) in India.
- Gijubhai and Tarabai studied the Montessori principles and applied them to Indian conditions.
- Tarabai respected Gijubhai as her Guru as she learned the technique from him.
- In 1926 she founded the **Nutan BalShikshan Sangh**, an organisation devoted to the Montessori Education and started publishing a monthly magazine titled **ShikshanPatrika**, in both Hindi and Marathi.

- With the abundant experience gathered at Bhavnagar, Tarabai returned to Amravati in 1933.
- After she came to Mumbai she founded a school at **Dadar in 1936** based on her ideas. It was called **ShishuVihar**.
- She also established teachers training facility in the Shishu Vihar school premises named **Bal Adhyayan Mandir**
- She came to Bordi in 1945, a small village in Thane district.
- She was accompanied by her pupil Anutai Wagh to devote preschool education.
- Opened **Kuranshala** (schools in meadows where cattle grazed), **Ghantashala** (a school that started with a bell), **Aanganwadi** (a school that assembled in the backyard) which ultimately led to the spread of education and employment amongst the tribal.
- This extensive work was duly recognized by the Government of India and Tarabai was
- honoured with the **PadmaBhushan**, in 1962.

- After the demise of Gijubhai in 1939, Tarabai headed the **Nutan BalShikshan Sangh**.
- She was a member of the then Bombay Presidency Legislative Assembly for five years from 1946 to 1951.
- She worked for many years as a member of the Text Book Committee for primary schools.
- She was chairperson of the **All India Primary Education Department** twice.
- Mahatma Gandhi had given Tarabai the duty of preparing the **Draft Plan** of his Basic Education Scheme (Buniyadi Shikshan Paddhati).
- She was invited to the **International Conference on Montessori Education in Italy in 1949 to give a speech**.
- Her experiments of primary education in **Thane** became a national model for primary education for tribal people.
- Death: 31st August, 1973.