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More Human Values from Leaders and Reformers

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Each of these six people is remembered for one clear value: equality, service, courage, vision or discipline. For each one, you will learn the value, the real event behind it and the facts exams test.

Ambedkarled the Mahad march to Chavdar Tank on 20 March 1927.

Hindu Codefour Acts passed by Parliament in 1955-56.

Bhagat Singh Assembly bomb on 8 April 1929; hanged on 23 March 1931.

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity from 7 October 1950; Nobel Peace Prize 1979.

KurienOperation Flood began in 1970; milk output hit 247.87 million tonnes in 2024-25.

Sreedharanheaded the Konkan Railway, a 741 km line.

Reformers who fought for equality

1 Why is B.R. Ambedkar remembered for social justice?

Ambedkar spent his life fighting caste discrimination, and he helped write equality into the Constitution. Social justice means fair treatment and equal chances for groups that were pushed down for centuries.

Who was he?

- **Born:** 14 April 1891, at Mhow near Indore.
- **Constitution:** he was elected **Chairman of the Drafting Committee** of the Constitution.
- **Government:** in 1947 he became **independent India's first Law Minister**, in Nehru's cabinet.
- **Honour:** he was given the **Bharat Ratna** after his death, in 1990.

What was the Poona Pact?

The British announced the **Communal Award**. It gave the "depressed classes" **separate electorates**. That means only voters of one group would choose that group's members.

In September 1932, Ambedkar and Gandhi reached an understanding called the **Poona Pact**. Separate electorates were dropped. Instead, seats were **reserved** for the untouchables in legislatures and government jobs.

Is Ambedkar remembered only for the Constitution?

No. That is a common narrow view. He also led mass protests, like Mahad, and pushed for women's rights through the Hindu Code Bill. Card 2 and card 9 cover both.



B.R. Ambedkar, chairman of the Drafting Committee. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Sources: static.pib.gov.in; pib.gov.in

2 What happened at Mahad in 1927?

At Mahad in March 1927, Ambedkar led about 5,000 people to a public water tank they had been kept away from. This protest is called the **Mahad Satyagraha**. A satyagraha is a peaceful protest that insists on what is right.

Why did the tank matter?

The tank was the **Chavdar Tank** in Mahad, in present-day Maharashtra. Since 1924, the Mahad municipality had allowed “untouchables” to take water from it. But the order was never carried out.

So the protest was about a simple right that existed only on paper. People still could not use public water.

What happened on those two days?

- **19 March 1927:** a huge public meeting was held at Mahad, led by Ambedkar.
- **20 March 1927:** about 5,000 men and women marched to the Chavdar Tank and washed their hands.

Upper-caste Hindus then “purified” the tank by pouring 108 pitchers of water into it. The municipality, under pressure, withdrew its order.

Did Ambedkar give up?

No. He launched a second satyagraha on **25 December 1927**. On reaching Mahad, he learnt that a court case had been filed over the tank. He postponed the protest so as not to break the law.

He then fought the case himself. The **Bombay High Court** ruled for the Dalits on **17 March 1936**.

Today, **20 March** is observed as **Social Empowerment Day** to mark the Mahad Satyagraha.

> **Quick check 1.** About 5,000 people marched to the Chavdar Tank at Mahad on 20 March 1927. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: archive.pib.gov.in

3 What value does Mother Teresa stand for?

Mother Teresa stands for selfless service: caring for people nobody else would look after, with no reward expected. She is already covered on this site under compassion. Here the focus is on service.

How did her work begin?

- **1931 to 1948:** she taught at **St. Mary's High School** in Calcutta, now Kolkata.
- **1948:** she got permission to leave the school and work among the poorest people in the city's slums.
- **First step:** she had no money, so she started an **open-air school** for slum children.
- **7 October 1950:** the Holy See, the government of the Catholic Church, let her start her own order, the **Missionaries of Charity**.
- **1979:** she was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize**.

She later opened **Nirmal Hriday** in Kolkata, a home where dying people found on the streets could be cared for with dignity.

What is the misconception here?

Many people think the fame came first. It did not. She worked in the slums for about three decades before the 1979 Nobel Prize. That gap is why she is the classic example of service without seeking reward.

Quick check 2. Mother Teresa started the Missionaries of Charity before she left St. Mary's High School. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: nobelprize.org

Courage in the freedom struggle

4 Why is Bhagat Singh a symbol of courage and sacrifice?

Bhagat Singh chose a bold protest, and he went to the gallows at 23. Sacrifice means giving up something precious, here life itself, for a larger cause.

What were the key events?

- **Birth:** 27 September 1907, at Banga village in Lyallpur district, now in Pakistan.
- **17 November 1928: Lala Lajpat Rai** died of injuries. Police officer **J.S. Scott** had beaten him at a protest against the **Simon Commission**.
- **1928:** Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sukhdev and others founded the **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)** in Delhi.
- **Revenge plan:** Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev and Chandra Shekhar Azad meant to kill Scott. By **mistaken identity**, they shot another officer, **Saunders**, on 17 December 1928.
- **8 April 1929:** Bhagat Singh and **B.K. Dutt** threw a bomb in the **Central Legislative Assembly**. It was a protest against two harsh Bills.

- **23 March 1931:** Bhagat Singh, **Rajguru** and **Sukhdev** were hanged at Lahore Central Jail.

Why does the Assembly bomb show courage?

The aim was not to kill. Their leaflet said it was “to make the deaf hear”, meaning to force a careless government to listen.

The British had no clue who killed Saunders. In all probability, Bhagat Singh would never have been caught without the Assembly protest.

Was the trial fair?

No. The Governor-General set up a **special tribunal** for the Lahore conspiracy case. A special tribunal is a court created for one case. The accused were denied the right to appeal.

He was only **23** when he was hanged. He went to the gallows shouting “Inquilab Zindabad”, which means “Long live the revolution”. He is remembered as **Shahid-e-Azam**, the greatest of martyrs.

> **Quick check 3.** Bhagat Singh's group meant to kill Saunders to avenge Lala Lajpat Rai. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: pib.gov.in; ncert.nic.in

5 What made Rani Lakshmibai a model of courage and leadership?

Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi led her people against the British in 1857 and was defeated and killed in June 1858. Leadership here means standing in front when the cost is highest.

Why did she turn against the British?

After her husband died, she wanted the East India Company to accept her **adopted son** as heir to Jhansi. The Company refused.

What did she do in 1857?

In 1857, she **joined the rebel sepoys** and fought the British with **Tantia Tope**. Sepoys were Indian soldiers in the Company's army.

She was defeated and killed in **June 1858**. Tantia Tope escaped and kept fighting a guerrilla war in central India.

Why was she unusual for her time?

Her story is still told in songs and poems, and exams test one of them.



Rani Lakshmibai. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Sources: ncert.nic.in

Builders of modern India

6 How did Verghese Kurien turn a vision into results?

Kurien built farmer-owned dairy systems that helped India become the world's largest milk producer. He is called the **"Father of the White Revolution"**. The White Revolution is the big rise in India's milk production.

Which posts did he hold?

- **NDDB:** he was founder chairman of the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** from **1965 to 1998**.
- **GCMMF:** he was founder chairman of the **Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation** from 1973 to 2006.
- **Operation Flood:** he led it.
- **IRMA:** he started the Institute of Rural Management at Anand in 1979.

A **cooperative** is a business owned and run by its own members. Here the members were village milk producers.

What was Operation Flood?

In the late 1960s, Kurien drew up a project called **Operation Flood**. It was launched in **1970**. Its aim was “a flood of milk”, better rural incomes and reasonable prices for consumers.

- **Phase I (1970-1980):** it was paid for by selling **skimmed milk powder and butter oil** gifted by the European Economic Community (EEC).
- **Phase II (1981-1985):** milksheds grew from 18 to 136.
- **Phase III (1985-1996):** cooperatives got stronger infrastructure and **veterinary services**.

A **National Milk Grid** now links milk producers with buyers in over **700 towns and cities**. It helps farmers get fair prices on a regular basis.

How big was the investment?

Operation Flood involved about **Rs 1,700 crore**, spread over 25 years.

What changed for India?

India went from a **milk-deficient** nation to the world's **largest milk producer**. It has held that top place **since 1998**.

National Milk Day, **26 November**, marks his birth anniversary. He was born on 26 November 1921, in Kozhikode, Kerala.

> **Quick check 4.** Operation Flood's first phase was paid for by selling gifted milk powder and butter oil. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: nddb.coop; pib.gov.in

7 Why is E. Sreedharan linked with discipline and integrity?

Sreedharan is remembered for discipline and integrity in big public projects. He headed the Delhi Metro as its Managing Director, and that work earned him the nickname **"Metro Man"**. Integrity means being honest and doing what you promise, even when no one checks.

What was his role in the Konkan Railway?

- **Before 1990:** he was Member (Engineering) of the Railway Board and due to retire on **30 June 1990**.
- **New job:** he was chosen to head the new Corporation as its **Chairman and Managing Director**.
- **Budget:** Railway Minister **George Fernandes** put the scheme in the **February 1990** Railway Budget.
- **19 July 1990: Konkan Railway Corporation Limited** was incorporated.

What was so hard about it?

The Konkan Railway is a **741 km** line. It links **Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka**. The route crosses rivers, deep valleys and steep hills.

The Corporation was first given just **five years** to build it. That time was later cut by six months. Sreedharan's team finished the line in about **seven years**.

Why does 760 km also appear?

The early project plan gave a project length of **760 km**. The Corporation now gives the line as **741 km**. Use 741 km unless a question clearly means the original project plan.

How was he honoured?

He received the **Padma Shri** in 2001 and the **Padma Vibhushan** in 2008.

Is "on time" just a matter of luck?

No. It comes from planning and strict follow-up. That is the discipline exam questions point to.

> **Quick check 5.** The Konkan Railway line runs through Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: konkanrailway.com; padmaawards.gov.in

Sources: iitpkd.ac.in

8 Why does the exam test the value, not the biography?

Exams usually describe an action and ask which value it shows. So you need the value behind each person, not their full life story.

An earlier lesson looked at Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Vinoba Bhave, Baba Amte and Nelson Mandela. This lesson adds six more names from the same part of the syllabus. The same rule applies to all of them.

What is the contrast trick?

Many of these people are remembered for a value that stands against a common failure.

- **Sreedharan:** he finished projects on time when delay was common.
- **Kurien:** he lifted up ordinary farmers when many schemes bypassed them.
- **Ambedkar:** he demanded equal access when caste rules shut people out.

The exam often tests this contrast, not just the name.

What does a typical question look like?

A question may say: “An officer builds a project on time, refuses shortcuts and keeps costs in check.” It will not name Sreedharan. You must spot the value: discipline and integrity.

Going deeper

9 What did the Hindu Code Bill change for women?

The Hindu Code Bill became four Acts in 1955-56 that gave Hindu women rights in marriage, divorce, property and guardianship. Ambedkar, as Law Minister, strongly supported it. So did Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and many women's groups.

What were the four Acts?

1. **Hindu Marriage Act:** ended polygamy, set a marriage age for boys and girls, and gave Hindu women the right to divorce.
2. **Hindu Succession Act:** gave Hindu women the right to inherit and hold property on the same terms as men.
3. **Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act:** made a mother's guardianship of her children equal to the father's.
4. **Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act:** allowed adoption of a son or a daughter.

Polygamy means having more than one wife or husband at the same time.

Is the Special Marriage Act one of them?

No. That is a common trap. The **Special Marriage Act** was passed in **1954**. It allowed divorce by mutual consent for people married in a civil ceremony. It is not one of the four Hindu Code Acts.

Why did Ambedkar resign?

In **1951**, Ambedkar resigned as Law Minister. He cited differences on the Kashmir issue, foreign policy and Nehru's approach to the Hindu Code Bill. So he left **partly over the Hindu Code Bill**.

The four Acts passed only in 1955-56, after he had left. His reform outlived his time in office.

What happened later?

A **coparcener** is a family member who gets a share of joint Hindu family property by birth. In **2005**, an amendment made daughters coparceners too.

In **Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma** (11 August 2020), the Supreme Court settled a doubt. A daughter is a coparcener whether she was born before or after the 2005 amendment.

> **Quick check 6.** Ambedkar was still Law Minister when Parliament passed the Hindu Code Acts in 1955-56. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: ncert.nic.in; pib.gov.in; indiankanoon.org

10 What do Bhagat Singh's writings show about him?

His writings show that he reasoned about his beliefs. His prison essay, **"Why I Am an Atheist"**, shows how he reasoned about his beliefs.

Why does this detail come up?

The exam sometimes tests it. It checks whether you know Bhagat Singh only as a symbol, or also know his ideas.

What is the common mix-up?

Not every revolutionary text was written by Bhagat Singh. “The Philosophy of the Bomb” is a good example. The NDA question in card 13 uses his name as a trap.

11 How do these figures help in the interview and essay?

They give you ready, real examples of values in action. They suit interview and essay answers.

What do interviewers ask?

A common question is which figure inspires your own idea of public service. Knowing several figures well helps more than knowing just one.

What is the follow-up question?

A good follow-up does not stop at the name. It asks for one specific action the person took. Then it asks how you would use that approach in a real office situation.

For example, you might name Ambedkar at Mahad. Then you could say you would make sure a public scheme reaches everyone, not just on paper.

Current affairs

12 How much milk does India produce now?

India produced 247.87 million tonnes of milk in 2024-25, the most of any country. These figures come from **Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics (BAHS)**, released each year on National Milk Day, 26 November.

What are the latest numbers?

Item	Figure
Milk output, 2023-24	239.30 million tonnes
Milk output, 2024-25	247.87 million tonnes
Growth in 2024-25	3.58 percent
Milk per person per day, 2014-15	319 grams
Milk per person per day, 2024-25	485 grams

“Per capita availability” means how much milk is available for each person, on average, each day.

Which states lead?

The top five milk states in 2024-25 were **Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra**. Together they gave about 54 percent of India’s milk.

How does this link to Kurien?

India has been the largest milk producer since 1998. The cooperative system built under Operation Flood is the base of that lead.

Sources: pib.gov.in

Exam practice

13 Which past exam questions come from this lesson?

Here are two real questions from past papers, newest first.

The answer is (b), Subhadra Kumari Chauhan. Her Hindi poem “Jhansi Ki Rani” made this line famous.

The answer is (d), Yashpal. Bhagat Singh is the tempting wrong choice, which is exactly the trap from card 10.

Sources: mcqquestion.com

Review your 6 understanding checks

Review the feedback after each answer. The score lasts only for this page session.

Reset the checks when you want another try. This score is separate from the practice MCQs below.

Questions to think through

Why did the Mahad protesters need to march if the water order already existed?

The municipality’s 1924 order was never carried out. A right on paper means little until people can use it. The march made that gap visible.

Why is Bhagat Singh’s Assembly bomb seen as courage, not just violence?

In all probability, he would never have been caught for the Saunders killing. He still chose a public protest that led to his arrest and death.

Why does India still lead in milk decades after Operation Flood?

Operation Flood built village cooperatives and a National Milk Grid. Those systems still link farmers to buyers in hundreds of towns.

Why is the Special Marriage Act not part of the Hindu Code Bill?

It was passed in 1954 for civil marriages. The four Hindu Code Acts came in 1955-56 and dealt with Hindu law.

Sources: archive.pib.gov.in; pib.gov.in; nddb.coop; ncert.nic.in

Practice MCQs

1. Besides drafting the Constitution, what other major reform did Dr. B.R. Ambedkar pursue as India's first Law Minister?

A. The Green Revolution's irrigation policy for northern India

B. The Bhoodan land-gift movement, to persuade landowners to donate land

C. The Delhi Metro project, finished on time and within budget

D. The Hindu Code Bill, to expand women's legal rights in marriage, inheritance, and property

See answer ↓

2. The Mahad Satyagraha of 1927, led by B.R. Ambedkar, was about access to which place?

A. Kalaram Temple, Nasik

B. Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad

C. Chavdar Tank, Mahad

D. Gateway of India, Bombay

See answer ↓

3. In which year did Mother Teresa receive the Nobel Peace Prize?

A. 1950

B. 1948

C. 1931

D. 1979

See answer ↓

4. On which date did Bhagat Singh throw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly?

A. 8 April 1929

B. 17 November 1928

C. 23 March 1931

D. 27 September 1907

See answer ↓

5. Verghese Kurien was the founder chairman of which body from 1965 to 1998?

A. Institute of Rural Management, Anand

B. Indian Council of Agricultural Research

C. National Dairy Development Board

D. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

See answer ↓

6. According to Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics 2025, India's milk production in 2024-25 was about:

A. 247.87 million tonnes

B. 146.3 million tonnes

C. 239.30 million tonnes

D. 231 million tonnes

See answer ↓

7. Which of the following was NOT one of the Acts passed in 1955-56 under the Hindu Code Bill?

A. Hindu Succession Act

B. Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act

C. Special Marriage Act

D. Hindu Marriage Act

See answer ↓

8. Konkan Railway Corporation Limited, which E. Sreedharan headed as Chairman and Managing Director, was incorporated in which year?

A. 1985

B. 1990

C. 2002

D. 1998

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **D.** The correct answer is **the Hindu Code Bill**. As India's first Law Minister, Ambedkar strongly backed it. Parliament passed it in 1955-56 as four Acts on marriage, succession, guardianship and adoption. The other three options belong to other people and other policies, not to Ambedkar's work as Law Minister. ↑ Q1
2. **C.** The correct answer is **Chavdar Tank**. On 20 March 1927, about 5,000 people marched there with Ambedkar. The Mahad order letting untouchables take its water had never been carried out. The Kalaram Temple entry movement at Nasik came later, in 1930. Memory hook: Mahad means water. ↑ Q2
3. **D.**
   Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for helping suffering people. The other years mark earlier stages of her life. The Missionaries of Charity began in 1950. She left convent life for work among poor people in 1948. Her first religious vows came in 1931.
   Review Mother Teresa: mission and honours.
   ↑ Q3
4. **A.** The correct answer is **8 April 1929**. Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt threw it to protest against two harsh Bills. 17 November 1928 is when Lala Lajpat Rai died. 23 March 1931 is when Bhagat Singh was hanged. 27 September 1907 is his birth date. ↑ Q4
5. **C.** The correct answer is **the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)**. He led it from 1965 to 1998. Kurien did start the Institute of Rural Management at Anand, but that was in 1979. He is called the Father of the White Revolution. ↑ Q5
6. **A.** The correct answer is **247.87 million tonnes**, up 3.58 percent. 239.30 million tonnes was the 2023-24 figure, and 146.3 million tonnes was the 2014-15 figure. Tip: always match a milk figure with its year. ↑ Q6
7. **C.** The correct answer is **the Special Marriage Act**. It was passed in 1954, for civil marriages. The four Hindu Code Acts were the Marriage, Succession, Minority and Guardianship, and Adoption and Maintenance Acts. ↑ Q7

8. **B.** The correct answer is **1990**. The Corporation was incorporated on 19 July 1990. George Fernandes had put the scheme in the February 1990 Railway Budget. The line is 741 km long and links Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** A public meeting was held on 19 March 1927. The next day, about 5,000 men and women marched to the tank. ↑ 1
2. **False.** She left the school in 1948. The Missionaries of Charity came later, on 7 October 1950. ↑ 2
3. **False.** They meant to kill J.S. Scott. Saunders was shot by mistaken identity. ↑ 3
4. **True.** Phase I (1970-1980) used skimmed milk powder and butter oil gifted by the EEC. ↑ 4
5. **True.** The 741 km line connects these three states. ↑ 5
6. **False.** He resigned in 1951. The four Acts passed in 1955-56, after he had left. ↑ 6

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