



Introduction:

Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, born as **Ramabai Dongre** on April 23, 1858, though cast as an Indian social reformer by secular historians, she was only so because of her relationship with [*Jesus Christ, her new 'guru'*](#).

She holds the distinction of being the first woman to be awarded the titles of **Pandita** (a Sanskrit scholar) and **Sarasvati** (after examination by the faculty of the University of Calcutta). Ramabai was a Christ following converted ex-Brahmin woman from India who made significant contributions to, women's rights, women's education and other social reform.

Early Life and Education:

- Born into a Marathi-speaking Chitpavan Brahmin family, Ramabai's father, Guru **Anant Shastri Dongre**, was a Sanskrit scholar who, contrary to the vast majority of Hindu teaching that woman were of very low value, taught her Sanskrit at home at the age of eight. By the time she was 20 she could recite [*18,000 verses of the Puranas*](#)
- She learned several languages, including English. Her exposure to public speaking came from participating in her family's public recitations of the Purana at pilgrimage sites across India.
- Orphaned during the Great Famine of 1876–78, she continued the family tradition of traveling and reciting Sanskrit scriptures, but discovering a growing discontent with the culture she was raised in.

Conversion to Christianity:

- After years of literal (4,000 mile) and figurative wandering in the Indian-Hindu wilderness, having discovered the incongruent, contradictory and in many cases wretched teaching on woman and Hindu 'salvation earning' practices, she heard about Jesus Christ in Calcutta. She balked at first at embracing what she saw as 'western culture' and was initially entangled in a Christian/Hindu cult. However, after a Christian Missionary fully explained to her the freedom of Christianity, she was able to follow Christ and Christian culture, not 'European' customs. Soon, she felt drawn to visit England and with virtually no resources found her way there. It was during her stay in England in the early 1880s, that Ramabai was finally baptised by Anglican Church Sisters.
- She toured extensively in the United States to collect funds for destitute Indian women. With the funds raised, she started [Sharada Sadan](#), a home for child widows.



"I realized after reading the fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel, that Christ was truly the Divine Saviour he claimed to be, and no one but He could transform and uplift the downtrodden women of India. ... Thus my heart was drawn to the religion of Christ."

Pandita Ramabai

Mukti Mission:

- In the late 1890s, Ramabai founded [Mukti Mission in Kedgaon village](#), India. Mukti is a broad word meaning, liberation, freedom, but [more profoundly, salvation](#).
- Mukti Mission provides secure homes for Hindu societies [often most loathed outcastes](#) – destitute women and children, offering love, care, and acceptance.



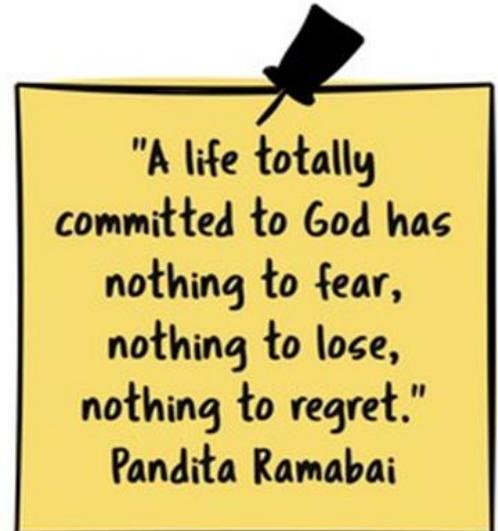
"People must not only hear about the kingdom of GOD, but must see it in actual operation, on a small scale perhaps and in imperfect form, but a real demonstration nevertheless."

Pandita Ramabai

- It also supports communities through services like hospitals, education, vocational training, and more.

Legacy:

- a hospital and mobile medical clinic
- a farm
- community development projects
- schools and vocational training courses
- homes for people groups
- nursery and adoption
- Learning about Jesus
- Ramabai's work continues through **Mukti Australia** and other partners.
- Her dedication to empowering vulnerable women and children remains an inspiration.



For more insights, you can explore the following:

- ☑ [Jesus Was Her Guru](#)
- ☑ [Setting the Captives Free](#)
- ☑ [Hope for Outcastes](#)
- ☑ [Mukti Mission](#)
- ☑ [A Brief History of Mukti Mission](#)

‘Pandita’ Ramabai – First Hindu Woman to ever be called ‘Learned’ by Hindu Scholars. Disciple of Christ – Founder of **Mukti Refuge** for Women and Outcasts