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# Dadasaheb Rupwate



## About Dadasaheb

Lovingly known as "Dada" or "Dadasaheb", Damodar Tatyaba Rupwate was born on the 28th of February 1925 in Akole, a small village in the Ahmednagar District, situated on the banks of the Pravara River, in a community that was forced to live outside the village! Though the age old Caste system had a host of discriminations in store for him.... Dadasaheb's innate intelligence and farsightedness was a nature's gift to him. He developed a strong, dynamic, progressive and cultured personality by continuously strengthening his knowledge, mind and body.

He completed his primary education in Akole and Nashik. Around the same time, a wave of enthusiasm and optimism was created on account of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's struggle for social equality. Dadasaheb was totally engulfed by this wave! In order to be a part of it, Dadasaheb entered Mumbai to pursue his collegiate education. It was in Mumbai that he closely studied Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts, work and was overwhelmed by it. This was instrumental in deciding the direction that his life and work would finally acquire.

Gradually Dadasaheb's interaction with Dr. Ambedkar increased. Realizing his potentials, Babasaheb entrusted the young, principled, impressive and dynamic Dadasaheb with several responsibilities with immense faith. He fulfilled all his responsibilities with great dedication and conviction. His work as the first Rector of the Hostel at Siddharth College in Mumbai, the Secretary of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Students Scholarship Committee in the People's Education Society and the Editor of the weekly called "Prabuddha Bharat" (after Dr. Ambedkar's death) was greatly appreciated.

In 1948, Dadasaheb Rupwate established the Bahujan Shikshan Sangh and created an opportunity for the students of the downtrodden communities to access education. Today the Bahujan Shikshan Sangh successfully runs a number of hostels, nursery schools, primary and secondary schools, colleges and cultural centers. With the support of organizations like Samajik Samata Parishad and Upekshit Vyaspeeth, Dadasaheb also initiated a movement to seek justice for Dalits, workers and landless laborers.

Dadasaheb was also instrumental in organizing poets, local dancers, performers and entertainers to fight for their own dignity. He lent his support in preserving the local art forms and was an inspiration for young performers. Dada also fulfilled his intellectual responsibilities by compiling a Marathi Encyclopedia, preserving the essence of ancient languages like Pali and Sanskrit, critical analysis of the contemporary political and social issues and documentation of the same. He also contributed to the spread of Buddhism at the International level. Dadasaheb represented the issues and problems of the Dalits and Minorities in India at international forums, initiate discussions and sought to arrive at some reasonable solutions.

Right from heading the Ahmednagar School Board to holding the various portfolios in the Maharashtra State Cabinet as the Social Welfare, Housing and Cultural Minister ..... Dadasaheb performed all his roles with innovation and commitment. To accentuate the progressive change process, Dadasaheb participated in the political, social mainstream and continued to represent the marginalized as long as he lived. He did not negate struggle in the process of resolving conflicts between the different sections of the society ...but at the same time he was vigilant enough to ensure that the process of resolution does not disintegrate. Dadasaheb was convinced that the social equality in our society is possible only on the foundation of tolerance and unity. All inclusive, holistic views and a humorous, frank nature were unique facets of his personality. Wherever he went, he lit up the atmosphere with joy and enthusiasm.

A hardcore, dedicated worker, excellent administrator, an able policy maker, an inspiring leader, an impressive orator, a soldier of social change and equality, a true follower of the Phule-Ambedkarite ideology...an extraordinary personality Dadasaheb has carved a permanent place in the minds of one and all.

## Educational

- First Rector - Siddharth College Hostel, Mumbai. (1948 - 1951)
- Secretary - Scheduled Castes and Tribes Students Scholarship Committee in The People's Education Society (1946)
- Founder - Siddharth Night School (3 years)
- Founder - Bahujan Shikshan Sangh (1948) President(22 hostels, 5 Secondary Schools, 1 Junior College, Bahujan Cultural Centre, Dr. Ambedkar Pali Studies, Buddha Darshan and Research Centre)
- Founder – Trustee - Akole Education Society(College, Secondary school and Technical education school)
- Chairman - District School Board, Ahmednagar ( 1953 – 1956)

## Journalism and Research

- Editor - Weekly "Prabuddha Bharat".
- Sub – Editor - Weekly " The Republican" (1960 - 1962)
- Editor - Marathi Encyclopedia, Vai (1962-1966)
- Honorary – Editor - Marathi Encyclopedia, Vai (From 1966 onwards)
- Trustee - Weekly "Sadhana" Trust (1968 – 1978 and from 1997 onwards)
- Member/President - Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Speeches and Writings Publications Committee (Government of Maharashtra, 1978 – 1986 and 1988 – 1995)

## Propagation of Buddhism – "Dhamma"

- Joint Secretary - The Buddhist Society of India (1968 - 1971)
- Joint Secretary - All India Buddhist Forum (1985 onwards)
- Member - Mahabodhi Society of India, Calcutta
- Member - Ashok Mission, Delhi
- Founder-President - Asian Buddhist Congress(Participated in the Buddhist Conferences held at Sri Lanka, China, Japan, England)

## Cultural

- President - Marathi Tamasha Parishad (1970 onwards){ "Tamasha"- a form of folk dance peculiar to Maharashtra}
- Vice President - Yuvak Biradari
- Founder-President - Shahir Amarshaikh Puraskar Samiti
- President - Marathi Lok-Kala (Folk Art) Manch
- Member-Advisor - A film made by the Central Government on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's life

## Social

- Founder-President - Samajik Samata Parishad, Maharashtra. (1970 onwards)
- Founder-President - Upekshit Vyaspeeth (1971 onwards)
- Member - Pune University Senate (1968-1971)
- Founder-Trustee, - Yashwantrao Chavhan Centre, Mumbai. Vice-President
- Chairperson - Hon. Jyotiba Phule 100th Death Anniversary Commemoration Committee (Govt. of Maharashtra)
- Member - Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar 100th Birth Anniversary Celebrations Committee (Govt. of Maharashtra) [Back To Top](#)
- Trustee - Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial Committee, Mumbai
- President - Association for Indo-Mongolian Friendship
- President - Minorities Association (Aghadi)
- Founder-President - Agasti Co-operative Sugar Factory, Akole, Ahmednagar

## Political

- Member-Candidate - Scheduled Caste Federation (1952) {Candidate – Maharashtra State Assembly Elections}
- Founder-Member - The Republican Party of India (1957)
- Leader - Agitation for the rights of Sugar Factory Workers (1966-1967) & Landless Laborers (1967)
- Member of the Maharashtra State Legislative Council - 1968 – 1978
- Minister State of Maharashtra - 1972 – 1975 & 1977 – 1978 Department: Social Welfare, Hosing, Cultural, Fisheries, Slum Development.
- Member - All Indian Congress Committee (from 1972 onwards)
- Joint Secretary - All Indian Congress Committee (1977 – 1978) (National)
- President - Employment Guarantee Council (1988 - 1991) Government of Maharashtra
- Candidate - Congress (I), Lok Sabha Elections (1989 & 1991)
- Chairperson - Committee for Sugarcane Workers appointed by the Government of Maharashtra



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