



श्री शिवाजी शिक्षण संस्था, अमरावती द्वारा संचालित

# जे. डी. पाटील सांगळूदकर महाविद्यालय दर्यापूर, जि. अमरावती

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## Baba Amte the Great Social Reformer

Prof. D. D. Jondhale

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Charity Destroys, work Builds' was the mantra of the last of India's great social activists, Baba Amte, revered as a saint in his lifetime and as god by the thousands of lepers he cared for.

Innumerable awards including Padma Vibhushan and the Magsaysay Award came the way of 94- years old Murlidhar Devidas alias Baba Amte, who one allowed bacilli from a leprosy patient to be injected into him for further tests, justifying the title 'abhaysadhak' given to him by Mahatma Gandhi.

Born on December 26] 1914 in Wardha district of Maharashtra, Amte trained as lawyer and participated in the freedom struggle against the British Empire. He spent time at Mahatma Gandhi's ashram in Sevagram and was also influenced by VinobhaBhave, Ravindranath Tagore, and sane Guruhji.

Amte's life was story of one man's colorful odyssey to conquer his own fears and expand the notion of justice and peace through innovative experiments was the Anandwan, literally meaning, the Forest of Joy, where he breathed his last on Saturday and the Proper way to develop India.

Baba Amte will also be remembered for his many peace and justice marches across india, his solidarity with the aborigine tribes and his opposition to big dams like the SardarSarovar project on Narmada river.

Amte was awarded the UN Human Rights Prize, the Magsaysay award, the Templeton Prize, the Gandhi Peace Prize, and several other humanitarian and environmental prizes.

Right from his childhood days, Amte rebelled against the prevailing injustice and discrimination in the society on the basis of birth, caste and creed.

After Completing his education in Law successfully, he decided to disown his paternal property and pursue emancipation of leprosy patients single-mindedly.

Amte, who did a leprosy orientation course a Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine, started the Anandvan commune for leprosy patients, with his wife Sadhana, two sons and six leprosy patients.

Anandvan soon became the nerve centre of Amte,s relentless crusade, helping leprosy patients become self –confident persons capable of cooperative and creative leadership.

With a view to bring about national integration and check communal violence, Baba Amte took up the Bharat JodoYatra in December, 1984 from Kanyakumari to Jammu and covered different states reiterating his plea from checking religious fundamentalism, linguistic and territorial bickering and keeping the country above individuals.

He as honoured with several national and international awards including the Padma Shree (1971), Jamnalal Bajaj Award (1979), Magsaysay Award (1985), Welfare of the disable award (1986), Padma Vishushan (1986), G.D. Birla International Award (1988) and the Gandhi Peace Prize (2000) for his selfless service to the deprived segments of the society.

The Dr. Ambedkar International Award, 1999 for Social Change was given to Amte for espousing the cause of the exploited and underprivileged fight against injustice and inequality.

Amte, often referred to as the last follower of Mahatma Gandhi, Said there was no alternative to the Father of the Nation.

GandhijiEstablished a permanent relationship with the common man with a thread and spinning wheel. He could start a mass movement with pinch salt," he said.

In a nation which many say he slipped out of Gandhism's clasp, Baba Amte rigidly held firm to the Mahatma's ideals and demonstrated it in his firm belief in village industry, empowerment of the people, uplift of the poor and by leading a Spartan life.

He wore khadi woven from the looms of the Anandvan rehabilitation center and ate fruit and vegetables cultivated there. Amte rarely missed an opportunity to acknowledge his wife Sadhana's contribution to his work.

Amte's sons, Vikas and Prakash are doctors and have followed in his footsteps. Vikas looks after Anandvan and Prakash works for the welfare of the Maidan and Gond tribes in Hemalkasa in Vidharbha.

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