

Madhukar Dattatraya Deoras

Madhukar Dattatraya Deoras^[a] (11 December 1915 – 17 June 1996), popularly known as **Balasaheb Deoras**, was the third *Sarsanghchalak* of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS).^[1]

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Biography

Deoras was born in a Telugu-speaking^{[2][3]} *Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmin* (DRB) family^[4] on 11 December 1915 in *Nagpur* and raised in *Andhra Pradesh*. He was the eighth child of Dattatreya Krishnarao Deoras and Parvati-bai; the ninth child, his younger brother *Bhaurao Deoras* (Murlidhar alias Bhaurao), also became a *pracharak* of the RSS. During Balasaheb Deoras's tenure as RSS chief, Bhaurao Deoras played a key role in the organization in North India. Balasaheb Deoras was a student at New English High School. He graduated from Morris College in Nagpur in 1938 and obtained his LLB degree at the College of Law, *Nagpur University*. Inspired by Dr. *K. B. Hedgewar*, he was associated with the RSS from its inception and decided to dedicate his life to its goals.

He was the first *pracharak* sent to Bengal, and he returned to the movement's headquarters to direct the publication of *Tarun Bharat*, a Marathi daily, and *Yugadharma*, a Hindi daily. Deoras brothers wanted RSS to be more activist, and they withdrew from the organization from 1953 to 1957 because of dissatisfaction with Golwalkar's more insular policies. But they kept in touch and the brothers resumed working for RSS in 1957 upon Golwalkar's suggestion. Balasaheb Deoras became general secretary of the RSS in 1965. During the same year he addressed the annual meeting of the *Jana Sangh*. After the death of second RSS chief *M. S. Golwalkar*, Deoras became *Sarsanghachalak*, the leader of the RSS, in 1973.^[5] Deoras chose to involve RSS more deeply in social activism than any other past RSS *sarsanghachalak*. The following year, Deoras expressed his activist leanings by having the RSS support the "*JP*

Madhukar Dattatraya Deoras



Sarsanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

In office

1973–1993

Preceded by M. S. Golwalkar

Succeeded by Rajendra Singh

Personal details

Born	11 December 1915 <div> <i>Nagpur</i>, <i>Central Provinces</i>, <i>British India</i></div>
Died	17 June 1996 (aged 80) <div> <i>Pune</i>, <i>Maharashtra</i>, <i>India</i></div>
Nationality	 <i>Indian</i>
Mother	<i>Parvatibai Deoras</i>
Father	<i>Dattatreya Krishnarao Deoras</i>
Education	<i>LL.B.</i>
Alma mater	<i>University of Nagpur</i>
Occupation	<i>Politician</i>

Movement", an anti-Indira Gandhi movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan.^[6] There are also accounts, disputed by RSS spokesmen, of Balasaheb Deoras apologising to Indira Gandhi, while being incarcerated at Yerwada jail, and offering support to her twenty point programme if the ban on RSS was lifted. ^[7]

In the aftermath of the end of The Emergency, Deoras met with Christian and Muslim leaders. The RSS's national assembly exhorted, "all citizens in general and R.S.S. Swayamsevaks in particular to further expedite this process of mutual contact by participation in each other's social functions". Such sentiments can be viewed as consequences of the optimism in Indian public culture at that time.^[8] Under Deoras, the RSS took a turn towards accelerated activism and tried to dramatically increase the number and range of its recruits. This shift in orientation was reflected in its literature: it produced simplified versions of its ideology and used new generic forms to present them in (comic books, posters, postcards, inland letter cards, etc.). The term "the masses" came to occupy a central place in its vocabulary.^[9]

Deoras continued as Sarsanghachalak till 1994, when he stepped down due to ill health. He left behind a shining legacy and paved the way for Rajendra Singh to replace him. Declining health eventually resulted in his death on 17 June 1996. He lived long enough to see Atal Bihari Vajpayee become India's Prime Minister in May 1996, the first adherent of Hindutva philosophy and of RSS affiliation to become PM.

Views of Deoras

Deoras echoed Savarkar by stating: "We do believe in the one-culture and one-nation Hindu rashtra. But our definition of Hindu is not limited to any particular kind of faith. Our definition of Hindu includes those who believe in the one-culture and one-nation theory of this country. They can all form part of the Hindu-rashtra. So by Hindu we do not mean any particular type of faith. We use the word Hindu in a broader sense."^[5] According to Deoras, even though Mahatma Gandhi appeased Muslims, the Muslims never accepted him as one of their own.^[10]

In one of the most important speeches delivered in the history of RSS from the platform of Vasant Vyakhyamala (Spring Lecture Series), Deoras denounced the practice of untouchability in May 1974 in Pune, and appealed to the RSS volunteers to work towards its removal from the Hindu society. The RSS has set up many programs under Seva Bharati, an organization devoted to uplifting the members of scheduled castes. Under it, RSS volunteers have started schools in which they offer vocational courses for slum dwellers and former untouchables while teaching them the virtues of Hinduism.^[11] Deoras declared: "If untouchability is not wrong, nothing in the world is wrong."^[12] He said on 9 November 1985, that the main purpose of the RSS is Hindu unity and that the organization believes all citizens of India should have a 'Hindu culture'.^[13]

A brainchild of Deoras, the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch was vocal in its defense of swadeshi. Founded in 1993, it was conceived as a protectionist bulwark against economic liberalization by the Congress government of P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1991.^[14]

Books by Deoras

Deoras wrote in both English and Hindi. Some of books he authored:

- Punjab, problem and its solution (1984)
- Social equality and Hindu consolidation (1974)
- Hindu sangathana aura sattavadi rajaniti (1997)
- Sri Balasaheb Deoras answers questions (1984)
- Rouse: The power of good (1975)

Notes

[a] The surname is alternatively spelled 'Devaras' or 'Devras'.

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3. Braj Ranjan Mani (2005). *Debrahmanising History: Dominance and Resistance in Indian Society* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=hjxuAAAAMAAJ>). Manohar Publishers & Distributors. p. 248. ISBN 9788173046407. "The third head of the RSS - after Hedgewar and Golwalkar – was Balasaheb Deoras, another Telugu brahman."
4. *New Quest, Issues 25-30* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=bpctAAAIAAJ>). the Indian Association for Cultural Freedom. 1981. p. 4. "Nanaji Deshmukh, Moropant Pingle and the deoras brothers too, insist are deshastha brahmins"
5. Klostermaier, p. 446.
6. Jaffrelot, p. 177.
7. "Unlearnt lessons of the Emergency" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170608184717/http://www.thehindu.com/2000/06/13/stories/05132524.htm>). *The Hindu*. 13 June 2000. Archived from the original (<http://www.thehindu.com/2000/06/13/stories/05132524.htm>) on 8 June 2017. Retrieved 8 June 2017.
8. Bhatt, p. 166-167.
9. Hasan, p. 206.
10. Malik, p. 160.

11. Malik, p. 157.
12. Ghimire, Yubaraj. "A Seamless Hindu Vision" (<http://www.outlookindia.com/article/A-Seamless-Hindu-Vision/201628>). *outlookindia.com*. Outlook. Retrieved 26 June 2014.
13. Sharma, p. 111.
14. Saha, p. 94.

External links

- Balasaheb Deoras (<http://arisebharat.com/tag/balasaheb-deoras/>) from Arise Bharat (<http://arisebharat.com/>)
 - An organizer par excellence (<http://www.archivesofrss.org/A-Fruitful-life--Balasaheb-Deoras.aspx>)
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