



Acharya Vinoba Bhave

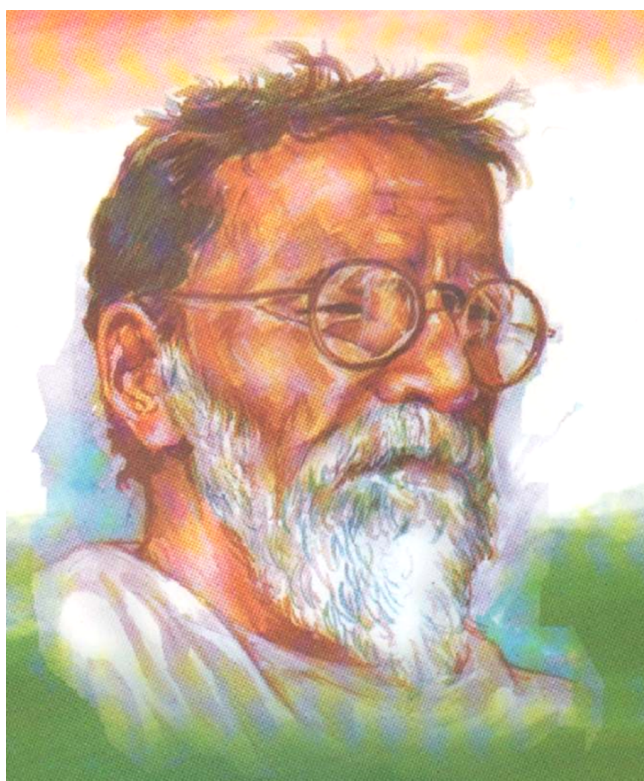
For Prelims: Important Personalities of Modern India

For Mains: Modern Indian History, Important Personalities, Freedom Struggle

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister paid rich tributes to **Acharya Vinoba Bhave** on his birth Anniversary.

What do we need to know about Acharya Vinoba Bhave?



- **Birth:**
 - Vinayak Narahari Bhave was born on **11th September 1895** in **Gagode, Bombay Presidency** (Maharashtra).
 - He was the eldest son of **Narahari Shambhu Rao and Rukmini Devi**.
- **Brief Profile:**
 - Acharya Vinoba Bhave was a **nonviolence activist, freedom activist, social reformer and spiritual teacher**.
 - Being an avid follower of **Mahatma Gandhi**, Vinoba upheld his doctrines of **non-violence and equality**.

- He dedicated his life to serve the poor and the downtrodden, and stood up for their rights.

▪ Awards & Recognition:

- Vinoba was the first recipient of the international [Ramon Magsaysay Award](#) for **Community Leadership in 1958**.
- He was also conferred with the [Bharat Ratna](#) (India's highest civilian awards) posthumously in **1983**.

▪ Association with Gandhi:

- Vinoba met Gandhi on **7th June 1916 and took residence at the Ashram**.
 - Gandhi's teachings led Bhave to a life of austerity dedicated to improving Indian village life.
- The name Vinoba (**a traditional Marathi epithet signifying great respect**) was conferred upon him by **Mama Phadke, another member of the Ashram**.
- On 8th April 1921, Vinoba went to Wardha to take charge of a Gandhi-ashram there under the directives from Gandhi.
 - During his stay at Wardha, Bhave also brought out a monthly in Marathi, named, '**Maharashtra Dharma**' which consisted of **his essays on the Upanishads**.

▪ Role in Freedom Struggle:

- He took part in programs of [non-cooperation](#) and especially the call for **use of Swadeshi goods** instead of foreign imports.
- He took up the **spinning wheel churning out Khadi** and urged others to do so, resulting in mass production of the fabric.
- In 1932, **Vinoba was sent to jail for six months to Dhulia** as he was accused of conspiracy against British rule.
 - During the imprisonment, he explained to fellow prisoners the different subjects of '**Bhagwad Gita**', in Marathi.
 - All the lectures given by him on Gita in Dhulia jail were collected and later published as a book.
- He was also chosen as the **first Individual Satyagrahi** (an Individual standing up for Truth instead of a collective action) **by Gandhi himself**.
- He served a **five-year prison sentence in the 1940s** for leading nonviolent resistance to British rule.
- He was given the honorific title "**Acharya**" (teacher).

▪ Role in Social Work:

- He worked tirelessly towards eradicating social evils like inequality.
- Influenced by the examples set by Gandhi, **he took up the cause of people who were referred to as Harijans by Gandhi**.
- He adopted the term **Sarvodaya from Gandhi** which simply means "**Progress for All**".
- **The Sarvodaya movement** under him implemented various programs during the 1950s, the chief among which is the [Bhoodan Movement](#).

▪ Bhoodan Movement:

- In 1951, Vinoba Bhave started his **peace-trek on foot through the violence-torn region of Telangana**.
- On 19th 1951, the **Harijans of the Pochampalli** village requested him to provide them with around 80 acres of land to make a living.
- Vinoba asked the **landlords of the village to come forward and save the Harijans**.
 - A landlord got up and offered the required land.
 - It was the beginning of the **Bhoodan (Gift of the Land) movement**.
- The movement **continued for thirteen years** and Vinoba toured the length and breadth of the country, a total distance of 58741 Km.
- He was successful in **collecting around 4.4 million acres of land, of which around 1.3 million was distributed** among poor landless farmers.
- The movement attracted admiration from all over the world and was commended for being the only experiment of his kind to incite voluntary social justice.

▪ Religious Work:

- He set up a number of Ashrams to promote a simple way of life, devoid of luxuries that took away one's focus from the Divine.
- He established the **Brahma Vidya Mandir in 1959**, a small community for women, aiming at self-sufficiency on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings.
- He took a strong stand on **cow slaughter** and declared to **go on fast until it was**

banned in India.

▪ **Literary Work:**

- **His important books include:** Swarajya Sastra, Geeta Pravachane, Teesri Shakti or The Third Power etc.

▪ **Death:**

- Died in 1982, Wardha, Maharashtra.

[Source: PIB](#)

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