

MRS. DHANASHREE SHREENIVAS TALWALKAR

Biographical Sketch

Mrs. Dhanashree Shreenivas Talwalkar, is known affectionately as ‘Didi’ (meaning elder sister) to millions of Indians who have been touched by the idea of Swadhyaya. Rev. Pandurangshastri Athavale, (Rev. Dada), her father is the fountainhead of Swadhyaya; a reason-devotion based global phenomena started by him as a grassroots initiative more than six decades ago. She has an umbilical relationship with Swadhyaya. She grew up in an ambience that transcends traditional piety and unreasoned acceptance of tradition but encourages cultivation of classical learning and wisdom.



Rev. Dada, a giant Universal personality, moulded her life. He devised the core curriculum and a non-formal system of education for her and also ensured formal training in art, music and military disciplines. She completed her Masters in Philosophy with distinction from the prestigious Elphinston College of Mumbai University.

After a short stint as a lecturer in Elphinston College in late seventies, she immersed herself totally in Rev. Dada’s work. Due to her wisdom and enormous capacity to love and motivate people, she has found love and respect of one and all of the millions of Swadhyayees spread across the world. After Rev. Dada’s demise in the year 2003, she has continued with Rev. Dada’s focus in Swadhyaya. At the same time she has provided contemporary context to Swadhyaya. She has captured the imagination of the youth and the women and engaged them in various projects at various levels, catapulting Swadhyaya into the mainstream of the society. The youth participation in Swadhyaya has grown exponentially due to her astute efforts and motivation. With this she has also emerged as the most prominent youth icon in the society. In India, she commands matchless strength of rural as well as urban youth as she has successfully narrowed their divide, an arduous task even for the most seasoned politician.

Despite Rev. Dada’s physical absence, Swadhyaya pariwar is finding its footing, vitality, enthusiasm and momentum because of her all pervasive and holistic approach. She has judiciously used the edifice created by Rev. Dada to unleash projects for mass awareness and empowerment, community development, hygiene, medical care, disaster recuperation, rural development, harnessing of youth strength and for integrated development of women, children and families.

With exceptional understanding and clarity of Rev. Dada’s vision, thoughts and methods, Didi has drawn out various dimensions and contemporary global relevance of Swadhyaya, basically a grassroots initiative, for the academia at various national and international forums. Notable amongst them are the following few:

- Speaker at the International Colloquium on Environment - Living with the Earth Intercultural Institute of Montreal
- Plenary speaker and signatory to the resolution at the Centenary of Parliament of World’s Religions, Chicago, US
- Presentation at the Conference on Hunger and Poverty by IFAD at Brussels
- Presentation at the Hague Appeal for Peace on the role of religion in promoting peace
- Presentation at the Prayer for Universal Peace organized by The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Vatican, at behest of Pope John Paul II at Assisi, Rome.
- Presentation at the Special gathering organized by UNICEF in New York on the occasion of a session on Children at the UNO.
- Presentation at the Inter Faith Meet held by the Focolare Movement at London
- Presentation as the Member of Governing Council of Arigatou Foundation, Tokyo, for the initiative to impart Ethical Education to the Children of world – in association with UNICEF