

NITIN GADKARI- A PROFILE

An indomitable Nitin Gadkari for whom politics is an instrument of socio-economic transformation today joined the Narendra Modi cabinet as a senior minister.

Gadkari, 57, was elected to the Lok Sabha from Nagpur in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, a traditional Congress stronghold, defeating seven time winner Vilas Muthemwar by a margin of about three lac votes.

Under his dynamic supervision and able guidance, the BJP-Shiv Sena combine won 42 out of 48 seats in Maharashtra, including all the ten seats in the Vidarbha region for the first time since independence.

Gadkari was born in a middle-class agricultural family in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, which is also the headquarters of the RSS.

Gadkari's mother had a great influence on him and she inculcated in him the spirit of social work. He was also inspired in his early life by the RSS and its mission of nation building through selfless motivation to work for the welfare of all sections of the society.

The imposition of emergency by Indira Gandhi in June 1975 was the turning point in his life and he decided to dedicate his life to serve the country rather than practicing law. Gadkari has studied M.Com, LLB & Diploma in Business Management (DBM).

Gadkari entered politics as a student leader of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and later joined the Janata Yuva Morcha, youth wing of the BJP. Nitin Gadkari does not consider himself to be a career politician but takes politics to be social service - initiating projects for the poor, for the society and the downtrodden.

Gadkari has been a member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council since 1989. He was also the leader of the opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council from 1999-2005.

He was also President of the Maharashtra Pradesh BJP till 2009 when he was elevated to the post of the BJP National President to become the youngest ever party president.

He was a PWD minister in Maharashtra between 1995 & 1999, when he gained first experience to undertake infrastructure projects. "With Rs.5 crore equity, I

earned the distinction of completing works worth 8,000 crores”; Gadkari often recalls this unique distinction he earned as the PWD minister.

Gadkari managed to convince the state to allocate Rs. 700 Crores for rural connectivity. In the next 4 years, 98% of the total population of Maharashtra achieved all-weather road connectivity. The project aimed to connect 13,736 remote villages which remained unconnected since independence by road. It also helped to solve the malnutrition problems prevailing in remote areas of Vidarbha which previously had no access to medical aid, ration or educational facilities.

As Public Works minister in Maharashtra, he built the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. From that experience he was asked by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to launch the National Highways Authority.

The Vajpayee Government appointed him the Chairman of National Rural Road Development Committee. After a series of meetings and studies, Gadkari submitted his report to the central government and gave a presentation to the Prime Minister Vajpayee. His report was accepted and a new rural road connecting scheme now popularly known as Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was launched. The ambitious scheme is of Rs. 60,000 crores.

Gadkari has a vision for a strong India and he earnestly believes that the 21st century politics is the politics of progress and development.

His focus has always been on accomplishments. He gave Nagpur a new face when he was the District Guardian Minister. Building flyovers in Mumbai during his stint as Public Works Minister earned him the nick-name ‘Flyover-Man’.

But Pride of place goes to his flagship project, the Mumbai-Pune Expressway.

Gadkari is also an agriculturist. He has promoted Water Management, Solar Energy Projects and the use of modern technology & management tools in agriculture. Gadkari has a passion for bio-fuel, non-conventional sources of energy.

His social enterprise has brought enormous development in the catchment areas of Nagpur region, notorious for farmers’ suicide.

Gadkari has also carried out many social welfare projects in Vidarbha region including making several villages self-sufficient by solar energy, couple of thousand heart surgeries and solar rickshaws for the needy.

Nitin Gadkari is married to Kanchan Gadkari and they have three children. Nikhil, Sarang and Ketki. His eldest son Nikhil is married to Rutuja Pathak and Sarang Gadkari is married to Madhura Rodi.