



# सर्वश्रेष्ठ पहल

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI

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MARCH 2022



## *Presentations by Eminent Social Workers for the Benefit of Hon'ble Members of Parliament*

'सर्वश्रेष्ठ पहल' is an unique informative booklet published by Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE) to share valuable insights with various stakeholders about the best practices which are available in various fields across the country. Under the leadership and guidance of Hon. Speaker Shri Om Birla, this unique booklet highlights the endeavours and best practices of Eminent Social Workers from various fields of social and developmental work, who have been awarded prestigious Padma Awards for their immense contribution in their respective field of work such as agriculture, agro-bio diversity conservation, rehabilitation of divyaang, micro-finance, etc. This booklet will be a valuable asset to the Members of Parliament in enhancing their developmental work in their respective constituencies where they can adapt from the best practices of the country for the welfare of their constituents. The Padma Awardees will provide their guidance and support to the Members of Parliament in carrying out such initiatives in their constituencies.

**MARCH, 2022**



**SHRI OM BIRLA**  
HON'BLE SPEAKER, LOK SABHA

It is a matter of great pleasure that Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE) is bringing out a booklet titled "Sarvashreshtha Pahal" (सर्वश्रेष्ठ पहल). It is a compilation of presentations/addresses delivered by the Padma awardees during the online interactive session organized by PRIDE for Members of Parliament in January, 2021.

The experience and expertise gained by Padma awardees while working at the grassroot level may prove to be an instrument to solve myriad contemporary social and development related problems. I am sure that this compilation will greatly enrich the society in general and Members of Parliament in particular.

I appreciate the efforts made by the officials of PRIDE for publishing this compilation and wish this publication a great success.

**MARCH, 2022**



## **SHRI UTPAL KUMAR SINGH**

SECRETARY GENERAL, LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

I am delighted to learn that PRIDE is bringing out an informative booklet titled, "Sarvashreshtha Pahal" on the remarkable contributions of Padma Awardees (2021) at enriching our national life.

This initiative of PRIDE under the guidance of Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, is yet another endeavour to expose Members of Parliament to the extraordinary work being done by our Padma Awardees in the hope that such engagements will not only familiarize Members with innovative approaches to management of development challenges but also open up exciting new vistas for development programmes and activities in parliamentary constituencies in all parts of the country.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat expresses gratitude to Hon'ble Speaker for his farsightedness and commitment to improving public life and discourse and to distinguished Padma Awardees for sharing their knowledge and wisdom with Members of Parliament.

I once again thank the officers and staff of PRIDE for bringing out this unique booklet. I am sure this Publication will be greatly appreciated by the Members of Parliament and all those interested in the study of development at grass roots.

**MARCH, 2022**

Shri Sundaram Verma, a progressive farmer from a village in Rajasthan, India, is known for his innovative approaches in agriculture among the local farmer community on one side and for his systematic working style among the scientific community on the other side which has made many sustainable changes possible. He has analysed every small aspect of growing the sapling for years meticulously and came up with a solution of using minimal water when transplanting the sapling to the farmland.



## SHRI SUNDARAM VERMA

SOCIAL WORK | RAJASTHAN

SESSION - Agriculture

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

(IDRC) for Agro-bio-diversity, Jagjivan Ram Farmer Award by ICAR, New Delhi – 1997, Van Pandit Award by Government of Rajasthan, India – 1998, Best Farmer State Award by Agriculture University – 1998. Chaudhary Charan Singh Krishak Shiromani National Award – 2003, National Award for conservation of Biodiversity – 2007.

Shri Sundaram Verma was awarded with Padma Shri in 2020.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

### GROWING 50,000 TREES WITH A LITRE OF WATER

Holding an ownership of 6 hectares of land, he has grown 50,000 trees with a litre of water. Using the same technique of planting sapling with one litre water, he has planted varied forest trees, fodder plants and fruit trees. Results are phenomenal with a plant survival rate close to 100%. Up till date, he has planted over 50,000 trees using this technique. Additionally, he has set up multiple nurseries and distributed 1,50,000 saplings to other farmers, and provided them training in his technique to promote afforestation in the drylands. He has also collected and preserved local varieties of seeds, and has planted local varieties in his farm which are drought resistant, have good yield and are resistant to pests.

### CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

Shri Sundaram Verma was actively engaged in conservation of biodiversity, conducting various on-farm experiments in agriculture related to pest control, seed selection, variety selection, etc. He has till date collected and submitted over 400 germplasm of various local seed varieties in the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi. He has preserved the herbarium of over 400 local plants out of which more than 100 are medicinal plants. He has also preserved about 500 local varieties of 15 different crops. Sundaram Verma has gained recognition for his work at various forums at regional, state and national level by various bodies. After his association with Honey Bee Network, he has linked about 1500 innovators and Traditional Knowledge (TK) holders from various parts of Rajasthan and collected over 10000 examples of innovations and TK for National Innovation Foundation (NIF) database out of which over 10 been recognised at different levels and categories. His work has also been recognised by International Development Research Centre, Canada. He is a science graduate and has been curious about science since his childhood. His education ran parallel to his routine family work which was mainly agriculture. He retained his inclination towards science even after taking up farming as a profession.

A Gandhian father-daughter duo of farmers from Odisha – gave a fillip to sustainable organic farming in the country. Late Shri Radhamohan was the founder of SAMBHAV, an issue-based organisation working on the twin issues of environment and gender along with Sushri Sabarmatee, his daughter. Sushri Sabarmatee has successfully experimented, demonstrated and shared the knowledge regarding regenerating barren and abandoned land ecologically, conserving most precious resources like soil, water, biodiversity, organically producing indigenous varieties and pioneering women and common people as catalysts of change.



## LATE SHRI RADHAMOHAN & SUSHRI SABARMALEE

OTHERS | ODISHA

**SESSION** – Agriculture ( Farming for Future)

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Late Shri Radhamohan and Sushri Sabarmatee were conferred the Padma Shri Award by the President of India for their contribution towards turning a piece of land into “food forest” using only organic techniques.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

Apart from organic farming, they have done phenomenal work in conservation of forests, water and soil harvesting and collection of more than 800 varieties of indigenous seeds. SAMBHAV has been developed as a state-level resource centre for organic farming.

### CONSERVATION OF NATURE WITH THE HELP OF PEOPLE

Late Shri Radhamohan’s core vision was conservation of nature with the help of people’s participation. Through SAMBHAV, many villagers have been mobilised to undertake environment conservation by using organic methods of farming. His work gathered him the support of around 100 villages in his initiative of conserving the forests. Women engaged in agricultural activities have also been roped in by SAMBHAV to promote environment friendly farm practices.

### CONSERVATION OF LAND AND BETTER MANAGEMENT

Late Shri Radhamohan’s land falls in an area with little rainfall due to which only few plants or vegetation grew in the area. This was one of the largest challenges faced by him and his organisation. However, through relentless efforts and nature’s help, grass started growing in and around the once barren piece of land. Incorporation of new irrigation techniques helped nurture the land and soon the vegetation increased. Cultivation of bamboo, sabai grass, and hill brooms on the land fetched positive results and resulted in preventing soil erosion. Late Shri. Radhamohan was then able to grow healthy crops on his land. Late Shri Radhamohan and Sushri. Sabarmatee were successful in growing over 1,000 varieties of plants spread across different parts of the state. SAMBHAV successfully grew around 500 varieties of rice and around 100 vegetable varieties alone in the last year. It has also helped in developing and promoting many fruit and forest species too.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

SAMBHAV has been successful in bringing together hundreds of people with shared interest in promoting environment and biodiversity conservation. These people are not only from Odisha but also from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka among other states.

Shri Venkateswara Rao Yadlapalli is an Organic Farmer, Agri Journalist & Promoter – Organic Farming, Terrace Garden, Millets. Shri Venkateswara Rao Yadlapalli is a graduate in commerce from Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh. He turned into an Organic Farmer & Agricultural journalist and provided yeomen service to the farming community. Shri Yadlapalli believes that the farming community is the backbone of India and recognised the dire need to alleviate their sufferings. He is producing healthy and safe products for consumption without any pesticide residues.



## SHRI VENKATESHWARA RAO

OTHERS | ANDHRA PRADESH

SESSION – Agriculture

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

In 2019, Shri Venkateswara Rao Yadlapalli was conferred the Padma Shri award by the President of India for his contributions towards organic farming.

## PADMA SHRI 2019

### THREE MONTHLY FARM MAGAZINES

Shri Venkateswara Rao Yadlapalli is the editor of sector-focused three monthly farm magazines in vernacular language i.e. 'Rythu Nestham' (Farmers' Friend) on agriculture & horticulture from 2005, 'Pasu Nestham' (Animals' Friend) on dairy, poultry & fisheries from 2012 and 'Prakruthi Nestham' (Nature's Friend) on organic & natural farming from 2014. He reaches out to 40 lakh people, covering about 76% of the total geographical area of Telugu speaking region of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka every month through these publications. His contemporary editorial columns are much enriching and thought-provoking to the stakeholders, including policy makers.

### RYTHUNESTHAM FOUNDATION

To scale up his activities, he along with other like minded philanthropists, started a foundation called 'Rythunestham Foundation' in 2016. The Rythunestham Foundation has organised cancer-screening health camps for farmers' families, tree plantations, modernisation of graveyards and Swachh Bharat programmes in surrounding villages. He further developed RYTHU NESTHAM App – a natural farming app to help the farmers update their knowledge on different crops and livestock rearing.

### AWARENESS PROGRAMS

He regularly organises awareness programs on Kitchen Garden, Roof Garden and Terrace Garden in Hyderabad. For better environment & healthy life in the society, he started Rythu Nestham – natural products store at Hyderabad & Guntur. Here, they procure organically grown vegetables, millets and other products from farmers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and supply to consumers at reasonable prices.

Dedication and perseverance have been the constant companions of Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi in his efforts at initiating organic farming in his village and later, at popularising it. After completing his college education from Delhi University, he returned to his village where he had to face many challenges while doing organic farming. Today, he is one of the renowned farmers in India whose main objective is to make farmers self-reliant (Atmanirbhar). A progressive farmer, Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi, a resident of Bihata village of Siana Tehsil, Bulandshahar district, has devised his own way of doing organic farming.



## SHRI BHARAT BHUSHAN TYAGI

OTHERS | UTTAR PRADESH

SESSION - Organic Farming

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi was conferred the Padma Shri award in 2019 by the President of India for his contributions towards organic farming.

## PADMA SHRI 2019

He is not only doing organic farming successfully but is also training thousands of farmers at his farm. At present, farmers from India as well as abroad come to Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi to take the training. He provides free facilities to the trainees who come and live with him during the training period.

### FUTURE AGRICULTURE

"Agriculture is the foundation of rural India and is the largest employer in the country. Strengthening the agricultural base will have cascading effects in ensuring food security, generating employment, facilitating ancillary industrial development and boosting national income. The Indian youth should come forward to opt for a career in agriculture and allied fields that can play an important role in strengthening the rural economy" says Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi.

### EARTH SON HONOR

Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi has also been honoured with the Putra of the Earth award at the World Organic Agriculture Kumbh held in India. In 2018, he was honored by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on UP Divas. Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi, who has trained farmers on organic farming through natural methods, claims, "One acre earns Rs 3 to 4 lakhs a year by doing mixed and co-cropping farming". He motivates farmers by conducting workshops in surrounding districts as well as other states and is said to have trained more than 80,000 farmers to date.

Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi has closely worked with government associations like National Centre of Organic Farming, International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA), Ministry of Agriculture (India) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.

## PADMA SHRI 2017

His innate desire to seek an alternative to the routine cycle of planting routine crops 14 years back, earned Shri Genabhai Dargabhai Patel the sobriquet, 'Anar Dada'. The pomegranate cultivation has catapulted his small village in Banaskantha district to great heights and has helped him and other farmers explore beyond the traditional farming methods.

Shri Genabhai Patel gained knowledge about pomegranate cultivation and drip irrigation at Agriculture University and State government's Krishi Mahotsav (2003-04). Subsequently, he brought 18000 varieties of saplings from Maharashtra and planted them in his 5-acre land. At the beginning he neither found the support from the farmers of the district nor could he fetch the right price for his produce owing to his lack of market knowledge.



### SHRI GENABAI DARGABHAI PATEL

OTHERS | GUJARAT

● SESSION - Agriculture

#### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Shri Genabhai Dargabhai Patel was conferred the Padma Shri award 2017 by the President of India for his contributions in Agriculture. He has been honoured with more than 18 state level awards and many national-level awards and 2 international recognition for his work as well.

However, with consistent and undeterred efforts, the yield and profits both grew. This encouraged more farmers and in a few years, the entire village along with a few neighbouring villages started growing pomegranate.

Today, pomegranate is grown all over the district, with traders from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and Maharashtra coming during December - January every year to purchase the product, he said. He has himself planted around 5,500 trees of Pomegranate. As organic fertilisers, he uses Panchamrut (cow urine + cow dung + jaggery + pulses flour) and vermicompost on each tree every month. This produces red, shiny, big and good quality fruits. He mentions that a harvest once a year is enough. This helps in maintaining quality and fetching premium prices. He has been awarded several times by state and central governments. Anar Dada suggests that farmers should think beyond traditional farming methods and explore new opportunities.

#### BANASKANTHA CREATED HISTORY

Today, pomegranate crop is improving the lives of farmers of Banaskantha district. Banaskantha Pomegranate is being exported to countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Dubai and UAE. In the last 12 years, three Banaskantha districts in about 35 thousand hectares are at the forefront in terms of harvest of wealth.

Shri Genabhai Patel also conducts workshops for villagers on pomegranate farming and consultation with agricultural scientists and experts. His efforts has transformed once a severely drought hit Banaskantha district into the country's major pomegranate producing region. A divyangjan farmer Shri Genabhai Patel adopted scientific farming techniques and enabled spread of knowledge, even at personal cost, benefiting more than 60,000 people directly and indirectly.

His Holiness Shri Ramesh Baba Ji Maharaj is a renowned saint who has been living at Maangarh hill of Sacred Barsana dham in Braj-Vrindavan for the last 65 years. He has given up his entire life in protecting & preserving the divine culture of Braj, its topography, ecology, environment and spreading the holy name of the Lord all around the world. He was also honored as a topper in Sanskrit at Varanasi University in 1967. In the past 65 years, under his noble and divine guidance, over 37 Kunds (water bodies) of Braj have been protected and preserved. Gaya Kund, Dohani Kund, Vrishbhanu Kund are a few examples which were on the verge of extinction.



## SHRI RAMESH BABAJI MAHARAJ

OTHERS | UTTAR PRADESH

SESSION – Animal Husbandry & Bio Gas

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Shri Ramesh Babaji Maharaj was conferred the Padma Shri award by the President of India for his contribution towards efforts towards the welfare of animals.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

### COURAGEOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Under Shri Ramesh Baba Maharaj's inspiration and efforts, Kunds were rebuilt and preserved. Sacred hilly terrain of Braj area measuring about 5232 hectare has been subsequently declared as forest after a long movement which was led under his leadership. In July 2007, a cow shelter home (Gaushala) was started by him in Barsana with a vision to serve 'gau mata' (mother cow) with utmost sincerity and devotion. The cow shelter is today the largest single gated Gaushala in India, nurturing and serving cattle wealth of 55,000 cows in a holistic manner. Shri Mata ji Gaushala under the Maan Mandir Sewa Sansthan Trust has been constantly working since 2007 with a vision to provide an abode to rescued cows and to treat them with affection and care they deserve. The Gaushala not only takes care of sick, abandoned cows, but it also serves the environment, and strives to provide many resources to the surrounding community.

### VISION

Maan Mandir Sewa Sansthan Trust has started Mata Ji Gaushala with a vision of bringing the glory and majesty of mother cow back to its original form as it used to be in Krishna's time. By the grace of the Lord Almighty, this project is becoming a heavenly abode of rescued cow and enhancing by leaps & bounds every day. The Gaushala is not only taking care of sick, abandoned cows, but is also serving the environment, and striving to provide many resources to the surrounding community.

### INSPIRATION AND EFFORTS

Shri Ramesh Babaji Maharaj is instrumental in starting Bhagwan Naam Sankeertan in more than 32,000 villages and for the past 8 years, His Holiness Ramesh Baba Ji Maharaj has been leading the movement for revivification of River Yamuna under 'Save Yamuna Campaign'.

## STOP ILLEGAL MINING

For the past 60 years, Shri Ramesh Babaji Maharaj constantly raised his voice against illegal mining of the divine mountains of Braj believed to be extensions of Govardhan Parvat. In 2009, he sat on a hunger strike and around 10,000 Brajwasis and Braj yattris showed their solidarity by observing the hunger strike themselves. This was the largest hunger strike ever recorded in Indian history where around 10,000 people sat on a hunger strike at the same time. The strike led to an intervention by the Government of Rajasthan which announced the protection of all Braj mountains and stopped mining activities. They were officially converted to forest land and thousands of trees were planted in various villages under his instructions.

Coming from a small village called Komblne of Akole tribal block in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, Smt. Rahibai Soma Popere, popularly known as Seed Mother has set her mark in organic farming and has been an inspiration to many. Unable to attend school due to poverty, she supported her family in agriculture and cow rearing since she was just 10 years old. It took 20 years of immense hard work, practice and experience which helped her gain knowledge about agro biodiversity, wild food resources and traditional culture.



## SMT RAHIBAI SOMA POPERE

OTHERS | MAHARASHTRA

● SESSION – Agro – Bio Diversity Conservation

**SEED MOTHER** – Self- taught tribal woman farmer from Ahmednagar, Famous Globally for her work in **Agro Bio – Diversity Conservation**.

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Smt Rahibai Popere received the Nari Shakti Award 2018 from the President of India on 8th March 2019. BBC 2018 Most Influencing and Inspiring women listed Rahibai Popere. She was awarded with the fourth highest civilian award 'Padma Shri' in 2020 for her exceptional contribution to agriculture.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

### CONTRIBUTION TO ORGANIC FARMING

She is a proponent of traditional farming with indigenous seeds and has worked for conserving hundreds of native varieties. She has conserved and multiplied about 48 indigenous landraces of 17 different crops (Paddy, Hyacinth bean, Finger Millet, Pulses, Oil Seeds etc.). Her organic farming methods led her to set up perennial nutrition gardens which ensure optimum organic crops with their complete nutritional value. Conservation of forgotten crop landraces is very important to her and in order to conserve such seeds, traditional seed storage systems are set up in well-equipped community seed centers. She has adopted improved cultivation practices like Single seedling (Paddy cultivation) and Ridge and Furrow Method (Hyacinth Bean).

### SPREADING AWARENESS

In association with BAIF Development Research Foundation, Pune (NGO working for sustainable livelihood and quality of life for Tribal and rural communities) Smt. Rahibai Soma Popere's voice has been able to reach many ears. Her motto is also to spread awareness about organic farming, agro-biodiversity, and wild food resources and encouraging farmers to grow traditional crops which has been possible with BAIF. She has been able to train, educate and spread community awareness among many farmers and their families across the state about the use of traditional farming and irrigation techniques, seed selection & organic techniques by conducting Seed Exhibitions/Workshops. She also holds a one on one interaction with students to educate them about crop diversity in such exhibitions. She has also raised awareness of women's participation in Self Help movements and other areas. One of her major contributions has been the establishment of Kalsubai Parisar Biyane Sanvardhan Samajik Sanstha, Akole, Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra- a community organization of seed savers.

Smt. Trinity Saioo belongs to the Jaintia hill tribe, one of the matrilineal hill tribes of Meghalaya that follow the matrilineal descent of inheritance. Smt. Trinity Saioo, who was trained as a school teacher, and whose mother had also cultivated turmeric as a cash crop, took the lead in educating the women of her village in the process of sustainable and organic farming of turmeric. She took it upon herself to visit the other women farmers, most of whom could not read or write, and educate them on the relative high yield and greater market value of Lakadong turmeric. She helped them apply for farm subsidies and ecologically sustainable vermicomposting subsidies with the Spices Board in Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya.



## SMT TRINITY SAIOO

OTHERS | MEGHALAYA

**SESSION - Agriculture ( Problems and Difficulties of the farmers regarding the "Lakadong Turmeric")**

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Smt. Trinity Saioo was conferred the Padma Shri award by the President of India for her contributions towards Agriculture.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

### SELF-HELP GROUPS & FARMERS

Smt. Trinity Saioo started her journey with 25 farmers from Mulieh and received support from the Spices Board. Her exemplary leadership skills were enough to encourage other farmers from the adjoining villages to be a part of the movement. Within four years, 800 farmers came together and cultivated this variety of turmeric crop in their respective villages. As of now, Smt. Trinity Saioo has over 100 self-help groups working in her federation. Not only this, the federation exports the Lakadong variety to North-eastern states and in the south to Kerala and Karnataka. Smt. Saioo realised the value of this distinctive variety and commercialised it with the help of other villagers. This proved to be extremely helpful as it enabled them to make ends meet by farming. She has helped the State to further Mission Lakadong by mobilising growers and expanding the area of Lakadong Turmeric cultivation in the country.

### WOMEN WITH ORGANIC CERTIFICATION,

Meghalaya with its abundant rainfall, moist climate and rich mountain soil has the perfect conditions to grow turmeric. With the help of the Meghalaya Spices Board, Smt. Trinity Saioo was able to help the women buy the relatively more expensive Lakadong seedlings. She taught the women how to raise seedlings, plant and fertilise them organically, remove white grub pest infestation through ecologically safe alternatives to chemical pesticides, and how to harvest the crops. Self-trained in organic farming methods, and in the tradition of training the trainers, she passed on that knowledge to the women farmers she mentored. Smt. Trinity Saioo's SHG collective owns two cooperatives: the Leng Skhem Spice Producer Industrial Cooperative Society, and the Life Spice Federation of Self-Help Groups, both based in the Jaintia Hills. While the men in the families and the villages assist in the farming, the Cooperatives are run by women.

Dr. Rajani Kant has played a vital role in protection and promotion of traditional crafts through Geographical Indication (GI) registration under Intellectual Property Rights. Due to his initiatives, Varanasi and Eastern UP region now boast 12 GI granted products. More than 30 products of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand are under GI registration process with his facilitation. Dr. Rajni Kant has thus been conferred the Padma Shri Award (2019) for Social Service (mainly for Geographical Indication, Artisans and Weavers Development in Handicraft and Handloom sector).



## DR RAJANI KANT

SOCIAL WORK | UTTAR PRADESH

**SESSION** - Preservation, protection and promotion of the traditional craft and related products of India and linking sustainable livelihood and entrepreneurship with appropriate marketing through Geographical Indication under Intellectual Property Right

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Dr. Rajani Kant was conferred the Padma Shri award by the President of India for his contributions towards protection and promotion of traditional craft and related products of India and linking with sustainable livelihood and entrepreneurship appropriate marketing through Geographical Indication under Intellectual Property Right.

## PADMA SHRI 2019

He has also been awarded “National Intellectual Property Award-2017” and Samay Udyami Award-2012 as Best Social Entrepreneur, and Lokmat Samman-2018.

His efforts have borne fruits with more than 2 million people availing legal protection for their traditional products under IPR. This figure is the highest in the world in one geographical area where GI craft is existing and growing in a comprehensive way for their uniqueness and excellent human skill. A few important GI registered products in Varanasi and Eastern UP are - Banaras Brocade and Sarees, Handmade carpet of Bhadohi, Banaras Gulabi Meenakari, Varanasi Wooden Lacquerware & Toys, Mirzapur Handmade Dari, Nizamabad Black Pottery, Banaras Metal Repousse craft, Banaras Glass Beads, Ghazipur Wall Hanging, Varanasi Soft Stone Jali work and Chunar Balua Patthar (Sand Stone) and Gorakhpur Terracotta.

### SHIFT IN FOCUS

After completing his graduation and post graduation in agriculture related field, and whilst working on a project related to Ganga water pollution during his Ph.D days in BHU, Dr. Rajni Kant came across widespread corruption and exploitation of weavers, sculptors, craftsmen and handicraft makers that affected 4-5 lakh livelihoods, thus, putting a huge question mark on their sustenance.

Upon seeing their plight, Dr. Rajni Kant worked with the UN to evaluate the WTO agreement stating the clause of Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, which opened a new dimension by informing them of a law in Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the field of Geographical Indication. This knowledge helped in lawfully preserving the genre of artisans, handicraft makers, weavers and also in protecting the consumers who were paying an exorbitant amount for the “seemingly” original products.

## HUMAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION (HWA)

In 1991, Human Welfare Association (HWA) was formed in collaboration with his colleagues after seeing some malpractices. Upon the completion of his stint with Mahamana(or BHU) in 1993, Dr. Rajni Kant took a plunge in the social sector with HWA focusing on sustainable livelihoods with agriculture as the prime area. Apart from this, he explored other areas such as economic empowerment, child rights and development initiatives for the youth.

## EDUCATING WITH AWARENESS AND AUTHENTICITY

The introduction of GI Tags has brought a wave of change. Today, educated and informed consumers are demanding original and genuine products. Different products are finding their own consumer base in the market. For instance, Japan has shown a lot of interest in clothes made in Varanasi for export.

“In the last 4-5 years, the Government and the Ministry of Textiles are making continuous efforts to develop a large market through various platforms such as exhibitions, trade fairs, displays and others for handicrafts, handlooms, agriculture products, food products etc.”, Dr. Rajni Kant shared in an interview with Good Evening India.

## HIS ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

Dr. Rajni Kant while sharing his enthusiasm about post GI initiatives concerning the crafts also stresses on the need for appropriate skill upgradation, prototyping and developing new products along with improving designed products as per the CSR initiatives. “Thanks to GI tagging, the country’s GDP has seen a whopping increase of 28-32 percent in revenue resulting in a gross increase in the daily income ranging from Rs. 100-150 for artisans, Rs. 400-500 for Benarasi thread work weavers and Rs 500-600 for the wooden toy makers”.

As a social activist, Shri Bimal Kumar Jain has taken up the challenge to eradicate the problems faced by the physically challenged in Bihar. He has been working in this field for more than two decades. His Viklang Kendra has helped get artificial support for more than 30,000 disabled and more than 8000 disabled have been able to get polio and corrective surgery which costs more than Rs. 10 crores. His hospital provides services totally free of cost to the needy and disabled.



## PADMA SHRI 2020

The Viklang Kendra is a super speciality world class Centre for Prosthetics & Orthotics as well as Corrective and Innovative Surgery for O.H. Group. His establishment is fully equipped with P & O, Orthopaedically handicapped surgery unit, Physiotherapy centre with state of the art technique facility. He has also been instrumental in creating awareness about Organ Donation since last five years and has put his endeavours behind the noble cause of voluntary donation of Netra Dan and Ang Dan. With their humble team efforts now the number of voluntary donations have increased and a sizable number of citizens have taken pledge for Netra Dan and Ang Dan throughout Bihar and Jharkhand. He was also a strong activist of J.P. Movement in 1974. During Emergency, he brought out and published 'LOKVANI' news magazine which helped organise the youth throughout Bihar.

### SHRI BIMAL KUMAR JAIN

SOCIAL WORK | BIHAR

**SESSION** - Eradication of physical disability and organ donation for suffering humanity

#### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

He is a Recipient of Man of the Year – 2002 by American Biographical Institute, Inc., USA and Seva Pursakar from noted organisation NIRMAL. He was also conferred Man of the Year – 2001 by Chairman, Thakur Lal Sonu Lal Charitable Trust, Patna.

Ignited by his passion to serve the Indian waters glided Shri S. Ramakrishnan to the deeper waters of society. His vision to serve the underprivileged section of the society post the debilitating mishap during an obstacle test of the Indian Navy brought to the fore the real champion through his work- Amar Seva Sangam. Shri S. Ramakrishnan's ambition was to serve the Indian Navy. He appeared for the Naval Officers Selection interview at Bangalore. While doing the Naval recruitment exercises, he had to undergo obstacles test for physical fitness where he fell down and suffered multiple spine injuries resulting in complete paralysis below the neck and total amnesia below C3 and C4 rib cage.



### SHRI S RAMAKRISHAN

SOCIAL WORK (DIVYANG) | TAMIL NADU

**SESSION** - Rehabilitation of Divyang- through his Amar Sewa Sangam based out of Tirunelveli.

#### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

He was awarded with the IBN7 Super Idols, Lifetime Achievement Award 2007, Dr. Mary Verghese Award for excellence in empowering ability 2012, Rotary Club of Madras, Life Time Achiever Award 2015, Times of India Amazing Indians Award in the category 'Unstoppable Indians' 2016 and was awarded the Padma Shri in 2020.

He was treated both at the Air Force Command Hospital, Bangalore and then at Pune Military Hospital, Kirkee. However, in spite of this severe setback to a budding career, Shri Ramakrishnan did not lose his courage and enthusiasm. After overcoming the initial feelings of helplessness and self-pity, he resolved to do something concrete and really useful for the under-privileged section of the society in his area. At the age of 21 during the International Year for the Disabled, 'Amar Seva Sangam'- an Institution named after his mentor/doctor saw the light of the day. He also started a school, namely Sivasaraswathi Vidyalaya, in his native village, Ayikudy in Tamilnadu which began with only 5 children but has now grown up into a good High School with 657 boys and girls, guided and taught by 23 dedicated teachers.

#### INSPIRATION BEHIND AMAR SEVA SANGAM

At Pune, Shri S. Ramakrishnan underwent rehabilitation for 10 months under orthopaedic physician Air Marshall Dr. Amarjit Singh Chahal, who motivated him. "In 1981, when I started Amar Seva Sangam in Ayikudi, Tamil Nadu, I named it after him", says Ramakrishnan.

Amar Seva Sangam started as a school for disabled kids on a piece of land donated by Ramakrishnan's parents. From the beginning, the focus was on disabled people. At that time, awareness was poor. Things actually started changing with the passing of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995. "It was then that the government started taking note of the issues faced by disabled people. But there is a long way to go. Even today, facilities like ramps and low platform buses are not provided. This is the case even in Delhi. This means wheelchair users cannot move around independently. When there are such buses at airports, why can't they be provided to everyone?" - S Ramakrishnan, Founder-Director, Amar Seva Sangam.

The Padma Shri award, he believes, is an acknowledgement of the growing presence of the disabled community. Shri S. Ramakrishnan hopes that the award will lead to greater government support.

#### AMAR SEVA SANGAM WORKS CLOSELY WITH TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT

Amar Seva Sangam has been working in many villages and the Tamil Nadu government has also granted Rs. 2.36 crores to the institution for expanding their activities to 23 blocks in the State. With this fillip, Shri S. Ramakrishnan plans to scale the early intervention programme. Part of this includes going door to door to peoples' homes and teaching them how to look after their disabled kids, conducting police camps, etc. He credits his wife and the secretary Shankar Raman for Amar Seva Sangam's considerable presence today. "My wife has helped develop the activities tremendously. Also, Shri Shankar Raman who is a chartered accountant and is also affected with muscular dystrophy, has helped us expand the nature of our work."

An educator, philanthropist but most importantly a good human from his whole heart and soul, Shri Javed Ahmad Tak was inspired by his grandmother, Smt Zaiba Banoo, a community worker who made homemade medicines to cure the victims of their burn wounds. It was her selfless attitude and humility that inspired Shri Javed Ahmad Tak. He holds a two year special B.Ed. and one year Diploma in Human Right and Computer Applications from Indira Gandhi National Open University.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

Owing to a bullet injury during unrest in Kashmir in 1997, he lost complete activity in his lower body, but his perseverance never died. He was determined to fill himself with more humility to help people out.

### CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS EDUCATING THE SPECIALLY ABLED IN J AND K- UPLIFTMENT, MEDICAL FACILITIES AND EDUCATION

Post the tragedy he suffered in 1997, he established the Humanity Welfare Organisation for upliftment of less privileged women through provision of medical facilities and so on. He established Zaiba Aapa Institute of Inclusive Education in Bijbehara, a town in Anantnag district of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, for providing free education to specially abled children. He also received major backlash by the parents when the idea of sending specially abled children to school was proposed by his organisation. However, he and his team were determined to overcome this challenge by actively participating in national festivals and cultural celebrations in association with many childcare institutions to establish a communication with the parents. His organisation also sent out leaflets and posters throughout the Kashmir valley promoting their vision. No stone was left unturned by Shri Javed Ahmad Tak and his organisation to overcome social and financial constraints. The campaigns and the awareness programmes proved to be of assistance to the parents and broke the shackles of a closed mindset of the people who started sending their children to the institute.



### SHRI JAVED AHMAD TAK

SOCIAL WORK ( DIVYANG WELFARE ) |  
JAMMU & KASHMIR

**SESSION** – Social Worker working for the specially abled children of Kashmir for 2 decades

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### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Shri Javed Ahmad Tak was honoured with Padma Shri in 2020.

## PADMA BHUSHAN 2020

Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi also known as the 'Mountain Man' is a green activist who set up the Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO) in 1981 for the preservation of the environment. He has initiated the celebration of 'Himalayan Day'.

He holds a Ph.D in environmental science and started his career as a lecturer. Belonging to the hilly areas, he decided to contribute towards preservation of the Himalayas.

As an Ashoka fellow, he has authored over 80 research papers and 10 books dealing with sustainable development of the Himalayas through various means.



### DR. ANIL PRAKASH JOSHI

SOCIAL WORK | UTTARAKHAND

**SESSION** – Environment Conservation –  
Himalayan Environmental Studies & Conservation

#### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

JawaharLal Nehru Award by the Indian Science Congress in 1999, Social Science Award for 2001 from Shri Ram Washshran Devi Bhatia Memorial Charitable Trust, Declared Man of the Year 2002 by the popular magazine "The Week", awarded the Sat Paul Mittal Award for 2004 are few of the many recognition awarded to Shri Anil Prakash Joshi. He was honoured with the third highest civilian award in 2020 after being awarded Padma Shri in 2006.

#### HIMALAYAN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND CONSERVATION ORGANISATION (HESCO)

Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi, till now has devoted 36 years of his life for mobilisation of community and to sensitise them on Resource Based Development. He pays attention to the issues pertaining to urbanisation and believes in inclusive growth of community by economy and ecology both.

He and his team of HESCO have been working on consistent development of rural Himalayan areas with the help of their knowledge of environmental sciences and by the usage of simple technologies. He believes in the concept of 'Self Sustenance' where usage of local resources is encouraged for the development of the economy. This sustainable change with their ecological and innovative solution has brought excellent results which also earned them nationwide recognition. HESCO has served 10,000 villages and five lakh inhabitants across the mountain states. Watermills were provided to underprivileged villages near the borders of Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir and issues relating to soil erosion and landslides were solved. Around 125 water springs and many rivers/streams have been revived in three states serving more than 300 villages currently.

#### UPLIFTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

He popularised the concept "Local need meet locally" across and established a Community Research Centre (Vigyan Gram) to develop innovative technologies with community participation in Uttarakhand. Close to 38 villages in Uttarakhand have been developed as "Model villages" in different agro-climatic zones. Along with this, an ideal village concept for Schedule Caste Community was also developed. A total of 32 SC villages have been developed across the country.

Another initiative was related to the upgradation of the Rural Artisans where platforms were established in Uttarakhand assisting around 950 artisans currently.

## RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi has been felicitated with Dr. T.N. Khoshoo Memorial Award in Conservation for his contribution to social upliftment, Jamnalal Bajaj Award in 2006, honoured as one of the Silvers of the Year 2007 achievers named by Harmony Magazine 2007, Real Heroes Award, CNN-IBN and Reliance 2008, National Award for women's development through application of science and technology, Heroes of Hopes by Times of India, Vishwakarma award, Biotechnology Social Development Award 2016, Achievers Award 2018 by India Eye International Human Rights Observer, Award for excellence in public services 2018, by Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and JP International Award for distinguished contribution in the field of Environment 2020 by Loknayak Jayaprakash International Studies Development Centre (LNPISDC). He was awarded Padma Shri in 2006 and was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2020.

A mechanic by profession but an environmentalist and a nature lover by passion, Shri Himmata Ram Bhambhu, who hails from Sukhwasi village district of Nagaur in Rajasthan, is a person of sheer will and commitment. He realised his affinity to nature in his late teens in 1975. His source of inspiration was his grandmother who had planted a sapling of a peepal tree and had asked him to take care of it. This instance of his teens increased his love for nature and urged him to become an environmentalist regardless of the challenges posed at the grassroot levels.



## SHRI HIMMATA RAM BHAMBHU

SOCIAL WORK | RAJASTHAN

SESSION - Environment  
Conservation & Plantation

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

A recipient of UNESCO Award 1999 for environment conservation, he has been also awarded with Rajasthan State Amrita Devi Vishnoi Award, 2003 and Rajiv Gandhi Environment Protection Award 2014. He was honoured with the fourth highest civilian award 'Padma Shri' in 2020 for his contribution in the field of social work.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

### CONTRIBUTION TO NATURE IN TERMS OF AFFORESTATION AND WILDLING

Being a supporter of afforestation, using his own capital and a six acre land, he has developed a unique integrated agro-forestry plantation and biodiversity conservation centre. He has planted five and half lakh saplings out of which three and half lakh are trees. This also includes a forest on the land owned by him. It has sincerely contributed towards the rehabilitation of rare flora and fauna of the region. He has also utilised salt water for afforestation. Additionally, he promotes nature conservation in many areas of Rajasthan namely, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Sikar, Ajmer etc. His efforts in the field of conservation have been widely appreciated by the Central and state government. Further, he is also associated with Smt. Maneka Gandhi's programme on People for Animals. He has also played a vital role in getting Gogelao and Rotoo designated as conservation reserves.

Shri Kalyan Singh Rawat is an educationist as well as a social activist hailing from Uttarakhand. As a teacher of biology, he has spent most of his life encouraging natives of Uttarakhand on environmental conservation and tree plantation. Presently, he is the founder secretary of the Maiti Organisation and had pioneered the 'Maiti Movement' in 1995 for promoting forestation.



## SHRI KALYAN SINGH RAWAT

OTHERS | UTTARAKHAND

**SESSSION - Environmental conservation & Plantation**

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

He has been conferred with Godfrey Bravery Award, CII Green Award, Uttarakhand Ratna, Garh Gaurav, Garh Vibhuti, Parvat Shree, Vriksha Mitra Award, Best Science Teacher Award by National Science Academy, Life time achievement Award, etc. He was honoured with the fourth highest civilian award 'Padma Shri' in 2020.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

### PIONEER OF MAITI MOVEMENT

A tree plantation movement, Maiti Movement, began from the small town of Gwaldam of Chamoli District and in such a short span of time became popular throughout the country. Shri Kalyan Singh Rawat believes, "Trees are like our daughters so we must raise them with love." Therefore, the practice of planting a sapling by the bride and groom upon the girl's marriage started gaining popularity in the village. The mother of the bride took the responsibility of nurturing and protecting the plant, hence, making the wedding memorable.

With this ideology, Shri Kalyan Singh Rawat has been successful at having helped plant 5 lakh plants through weddings. The increase in public awareness has led to a tree plantation not only in weddings but also on other special occasions. For instance, to commemorate India's 50th year of Independence, villages in Uttarakhand planted 1000 trees in the memory of the Kargil Martyrs.

Today, with his ideology's popularisation, this revolution has spread across 3000 villages in the State and has also been adopted in other States and Union Territories like Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

In addition to this, Shri Kalyan Singh Rawat also established "Himalaya Vanya Jeev Sansthan" at Gopeshwar, Chamoli in 1976 which aimed at conserving very rare wildlife species belonging to the Himalaya. With the help of numerous awareness programmes, he has been able to protect more than 5000 wild animal species from the poachers.

One of India's leading wildlife conservationists and herpetologist, Shri Romulus Whitaker, has contributed in preserving the biodiversity majorly in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Tamil Nadu. Born an American but an Indian at heart, he moved to India at a young age of eight with his family. His fascination with reptiles and wildlife as a child led him to devote his entire life to it.



## SHRI ROMULUS WHITAKER

OTHERS | TAMIL NADU

SESSION – Wildlife Conservation

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

A recipient of several eminent awards such as the Rolex Award for Enterprise, Whitley Fund for Nature, Emmy Award and Salim Ali Award, besides the prestigious Padma Shri Award in 2018.

## PADMA SHRI 2018

### CONSERVATION OF REPTILES

India's first reptile park, The Madras Snake Park, was founded in 1972. It was set up by obtaining land on lease from the Tamil Nadu Forest. The Madras Snake Park's main aim is to conserve reptiles by captive breeding and spreading awareness about them. The park is the nodal point of captive breeding of endangered pythons in the country.

He also founded the Madras Crocodile Bank in 1976 to protect India's dwindling crocodile population. A captive breeding programme for freshwater turtles and tortoises in 1981 was developed and they successfully bred the Critically Endangered gharial in 1989 for the first time. The Gharial Ecology Project was initiated for the conservation of gharials. An increase from 200 gharials to 3000 wild gharials were reported. Today the Croc Bank is home to 2000 reptiles including 15 species of crocodylians from all over the world, along with hundreds of turtles, snakes and lizards. Here they also mobilised the Irla Snake-Catchers' Co-operative where they extract and freeze-dry snake venom and then sell it to laboratories for the production of anti-venom which helps in saving thousands of lives and is presently the largest venom producer in India.

### ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ENVIRONMENTAL TEAM

ANET was established in 1989 with the objective of facilitating and promoting ecological and social science research. ANET has made many interventions at the ground level which are centred around the preservation of biodiversity, waste management & improving livelihood. Agumbe Rainforest Research Station was set up in Karnataka which has undertaken intensive research for the preservation of King Cobras and rainforest habitat based on their habits, range and conservation needs.

### OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

He released his renowned book Snakes of India - the Field Guide in order to reach out to the public. In alliance with National Geographic, Discovery and BBC Natural World, his films found a way to reach millions of people across the country.

Shri Pawar Popatrao Bhaguji is a Sarpanch of Hivare Bazar of Ahmednagar district which is a drought prone area. Prior to claiming office in 1989, the village was experiencing numerous issues like drought, low agricultural yield, lack of resources, migration of the natives to urban areas, scarcity of water, problem of alcohol addiction, etc. Under his leadership, the village turned into a self sufficient town in every aspect and is now considered a model for rural and urban governance.

## PADMA SHRI 2020

### HIWARE BAZAR- A MODEL VILLAGE

Under Shri Popatrao Pawar Bhaguji, a new model village programme -Adarsha Gram Yojana was launched in Hiware Bazar. An integrated 5 year plan was introduced with water conservation at its core. This was completed in only 2 years which was a result of enhanced peoples' participation, convergence of several departments of the government, works in different sectors ranging from watershed development, village infrastructure development, agriculture, environment conservation to dairy development, innovative and water budget based agricultural production. The project was a huge success and proved to be a miracle for the village. The "Sapt Sutras" also known as the 7 principles of social discipline were also adopted viz. family planning, ban on alcohol, ban on tree cutting, ban on free grazing, voluntary donation of labour, ban on open defecation, ban on borewell for farming.

### HOW WAS THIS ACHIEVED

Around 40,000 contour trenches were built around the hills to conserve rainwater and recharge groundwater. A water budget was introduced to institutionalise water sharing. The village introduced a practice of water budgeting. Lakhs of trees were planted by the villagers which reduced pastoral grazing in forestland and also resulted in about one lakh litres of water being saved from Mumbai and 25,000 litres of water from Pune daily. The village has now got a makeover with zero families below the poverty line, complete alcohol prohibition, reverse migration, increase in per capita income from Rs. 830 to Rs. 30,000 and also, creation of the first defecation free village.

Shri Pawar Popatrao Bhaguji has transformed Hiware Bazar into an ideal town model which is demonstrated as a successful model with effective implementation of Government Schemes.



## SHRI PAWAR POPATRAO BHAGUJI

SOCIAL WORK | MAHARASHTRA

**SESSION** – Water conservation and Transformation of village into a role model of Gram Swaraj

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

He has been awarded with 1st International CSR Award, Amazing Indian Award by Times Now, Vibrant Gujarat's AgriGold Award. He is the Executive President for Model Village Committee and a member of National Level Grameen Reform Committee. He has tie-ups with universities like Oxford, Stockholm, Tokyo, and London for research on management of water. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2020 for his contribution in the field of social work.

A spiritual leader, social reformer and a renowned environmentalist, Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal, also known to many as Welfare Baba, has devoted his life to the field of public service. His works were also credited by former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam as one of the nine major technological achievements of India. Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal has worked in several domains ranging from conservation of natural water resources including rivers, beins, drains, wetlands, developing underground sewerage, development of roads in remote and backward areas and tree-plantation in wastelands.



## SANT BALBIR SINGH SEECHEWAL

SOCIAL WORK | PUNJAB

**SESSION** – Environment Conservation

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

International Time Magazine acclaimed Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal as “The Hero of Environment”. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2017 for his exceptional work as an environmentalist.

## PADMA SHRI 2017

### PRESERVATION OF KALI BIEN RIVER

He launched a programme for cleaning of the Kali Bein river, a tributary of River Beas in Punjab in 2008. Along with him, more than 24 villages joined this movement and together they successfully reclaimed the river by clearing the riverbed off hyacinth and silt, demarcating the area, fixing the banks with stones and constructing roads, plantation, electrification around the banks and by ensuring flow of pure water into the water body. Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal was also instrumental in reclaiming 6000 acres of land in Dasuya and Mukerian Tehsils of District Hoshiarpur and facilitated recovery of depleted water table in 1,35,000 hectares of land in Kapurthala district.

Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal has never shied away from putting in physical labour at the river banks. He also organised KarSewa of the holy Kali Bein river to make it pollution-free. Similar mass movements were organised under his guidance to create awareness and to stop pollution of Kala Sanghia Drain, Chitti Bein, Buddha Nallah, river Satluj and other rivers and streams of Punjab. In April 2009, an interstate march was conducted, referred to as the Chetna March, in Punjab and Rajasthan to make people aware of pollution of water resources. The same year was also celebrated as the Year of Environment. He has also aided in establishment of Water Treatment Plants and supply of treated water for irrigation of crops and planted nurseries in Seechewal and Kapurthala.

### SEECHEWAL MODEL

He instituted the idea of the Seechewal formula where water for agriculture would be derived from treated waste water of villages and towns. The water would be treated through a natural and economical procedure. This model by far has been implemented in 100 villages which lie around the Holy Bein. This has led to preservation and recycling of waste water. Being a spiritual leader, he has brought about harmony among the masses by explaining and preaching humanitarian teachings of the great Gurus at every religious and social function.

Smt. Chinna Pillai belongs to a village called Pillucherry near Madurai, Tamil Nadu. She has been responsible for transforming the lives of several hundred women in terms of financial independence through an innovative micro-savings and financial model. Surviving on a menial income of Rs. 20 per day on paddy fields, she realised the need for financial independence amongst women. She began with a small group of 15 women who pooled in a fraction of their earnings to provide credit to the group members through rotation of money.



## SMT MADURAI CHINNA

SOCIAL WORK | TAMIL NADU

**SESSION** - Micro-finance and Self Help Group.

### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Her perseverance and countrywide respect further shot up when she was honoured with Stree Shakti Puraskar in 1999 by Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who showed her immense respect while awarding her. Subsequently, she was also awarded the prestigious citizen award Padma Shri in 2019.

## PADMA SHRI 2019

This loan was then paid back with a marginal interest. The money pooled per head gradually increased and therefore, the continuous rotation of money came to be called Kalanjiam.

### CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS MICROCREDIT MODEL, POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND PROJECTS

It is due to the micro-credit and saving model formulated by Smt. Chinna Pillai that 130 Kalanjiam federation engaging 7000 women and several families across 12 states could be pulled out of poverty. Smt. Chinna Pillai, being an excellent negotiator, took the responsibility of bargaining with the employers for higher wages which proved to be fruitful for the group members. She is also known to have battled rich landowners in terms of local fishing contracts. She received the support of prominent foundations such as Dhan Foundation for availing loans. Smt. Chinna Pillai has emerged as a champion of women seeking empowerment and upliftment even though she faced caste as well as financial discrimination.

Labelled as the Gandhi of Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh, Shri Mahesh Sharma originally belonged to Ghonsgsi village of Datia district in Madhya Pradesh. Having pursued his B.A. from Jiwaji University, Gwalior, he based his operations out of Jhabua district in 1998 where he saw the scope for tribal mobilisation and co-operation for conservation related activities as well as for reviving the traditional techniques of conservation.



## SHRI MAHESH SHARMA

OTHERS | MADHYA PRADESH

SESSION – Rural Development

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### RECOGNITION RECEIVED

Shri Mahesh Sharma was the recipient of Padma Shri in 2019.

## PADMA SHRI 2019

### CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS TRIBAL MOBILISATION AND CONSERVATION

As a proactive member of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, he is said to have participated actively in several student-led movements during his initial years as a student. He became a member of the Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad in 2007 and assisted in several public welfare and awareness campaigns. The same year they also established a framework to fulfil a long-term goal of holistic rural development of Jhabua. He also co-founded Shivganga Samagra Gramvikas Parishad and became the president of the same. He realised the potential in revival of tribal culture and mobilisation of tribal youths to become the torchbearers of growth and sustainable development of their respective villages. He encouraged the tribal youths to promote prominent traditional practices of afforestation like Matavan and Halma which has resulted in co-operation amongst 1300 villages and planting of over a lakh trees in the whole Jhabua-Alirajpur stretch. He is said to have revived age-old traditions like "Parmarth ki Parampara" which means joining hands to work for others. He visited several villages and families to create awareness and motivation amongst all the villagers to join hands and mobilise to solve their own problems. The old tradition called Parmarth assisted with the mobilisation and unification of the community to undertake water and forest conservation projects. To date, he is applauded for his work by prestigious institutions like IIT, TISS and so on.



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**ives of Amar Seva Sangam**

**INTERVENTION WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: mVBI**

... and training - 787 children are getting benefited

- Center Based: 6 Centers
- Home Based: 8 Blocks
- 847 children with various developmental disabilities
- 120 children with various developmental disabilities

**9. Early identification through screening**

- FYC / Full screen / Jaagruk / Nursery school - 27,395 screened under the age of 6 years for delayed development with the help of IDSC.

**10. Awareness: sensitizing the stigma in various domains**

- Women Awareness: 8436 girls trained to have a healthy life.
- Community Awareness: 4766 able-bodied persons trained to reduce the burden of the mother of delayed development child
- Students awareness: 7316 students trained to support the peer group

**11. Other vital programmes**

- Parents training programmes
- Community based District/ Sessions Training Programmes
- Special and General Awareness Programmes







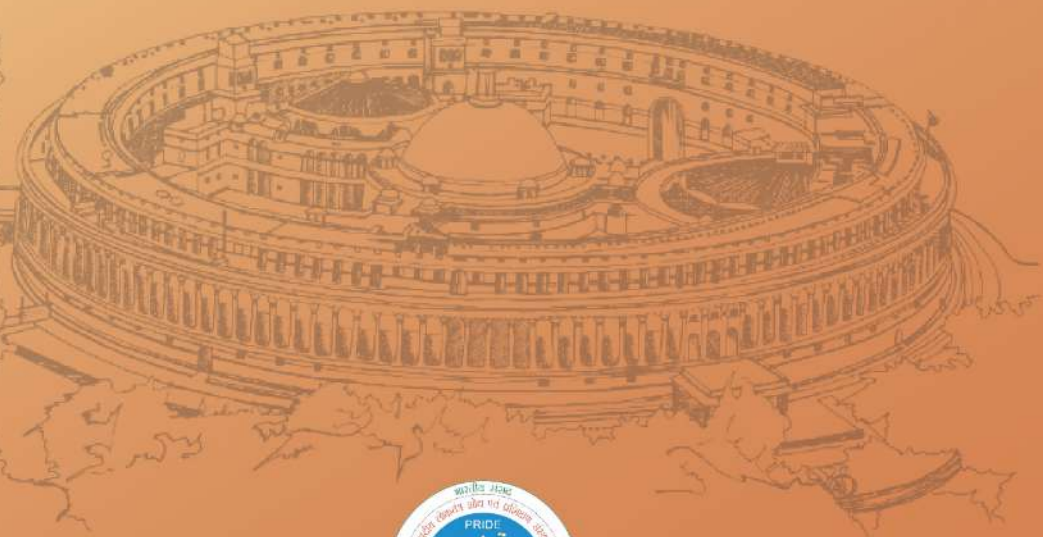




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## आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव



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