

Shri Jaywant Gangaram Mathkar

Recipient of the Award for Outstanding Contribution in the field of Constructive Work - 2012

Born: November 6, 1940

Dedicated and a selfless visionary are synonym to Shri. Jaywant Mathkar. Since his teenage Shri. Mathkar got associated and followed the well known Konkani Gandhi Appasaheb Patwardhan. For more than six decades, since then, Shri. Mathkar has been involved in Sarvodaya movements. He brought development in his native Sindhudurg as well as in Maharashtra through many Gandhian organisations. Also at all India level to some extent Shri Mathkar helps in policy designing and bridging various social barriers.

Through the efforts of Shri Mathkar and his associates, migration of peasants, landless people to cities outside Sindhudurg is stopped. As the Vice President of Gopuri Ashram, Shri Mathkar strives to bring an overall development of the village community. Under his leadership, invented and installed smokeless chulhas in 2010 in 274 homes, conducted cleanliness drives in villages and installed biogas plants in homes. It supports several Gram Panchayats that have won the state and central government's Model Village awards. Gopuri Ashram has worked on sanitation initiatives since Shri. Patwardhan's time and moving ahead Shri. Mathkar has contributed significantly with constant efforts to further strengthen the initiative. He has also helped set up several women's self help groups. In 2010-11, Shri. Mathkar promoted 35 SHGs involving 350 women who have been empowered.

He addressed the issues of lack of livelihoods by creating food processing opportunities in Sindhudurg. In the nineties, he encouraged farmers to plant more of the traditionally grown cashew trees. The Ashram developed various 100 per cent natural cashew products, including the traditional barfi, modak, sharbat, etc. To set up these processing units, the Ashram has provided loans to the farmers. Today through this activity some farmers have made record turnover of over Rs. 2 crores. Employing 70-75 women in these units, these processors through a cooperative provided cashew trees to women's self help groups. For that they have donated land too. The established farmers and the Ashram's team travel around the country to train farmers on cashew processing.

In addition, the activities of Gopuri Ashram include farming, banana/cashew plantation, nursery and natural medicine production and sales of festive food items and Goseva. Gopuri Ashram has played vital role in the areas of cleanliness, energy, water conservation, agricultural industry, education and textile industry. The Organization has played a very important role especially at the onset, to give it a good start, soon after which the same work has become the people's work. As a result people on their own encourage others for the fulfillment of objectives of the Organization and thus they are helping it grow with their mind, soul and resources.

Shri. Mathkar strongly believes in providing education to girls which led to setting up a primary and secondary school for school dropout girls in 1979 in Kudal village of Sindhudurg. It is worth noting that the building was made utilizing the donations received from the community and teachers. It now has 250 children of landless labourers, workers etc. Many of these children are receiving scholarships that are raised by donations by teachers and the community. Emphasis is also laid on non formal education. The mothers of the school children are involved in preparing the Midday meal.

Shri Mathkar believes in people's participation. This is conspicuous when you see involvement of each and every person at all level associated with a particular activity. The team members and the

beneficiaries are well versed with basic principles, values, and ethics of the Organization ie Sarvodaya.

The indefatigable Shri. Mathkar, spends long hours traveling in public transport to reach and monitor several other Gandhian institutions and initiatives. Among the most successful of these is his khadi unit, in Solapur. He set it up to make and sell khadi without the support and involvement of the government. It is among the few such large units today. From spinning, weaving and dyeing to selling khadi, each activity is conducted independently and several lakhs worth of khadi is sold every year.

An ardent Sarvodaya worker, Shri Mathkar in 1962 trained himself in Gramdan, Gram Swarajya and Shanti Sena. Subsequently he joined Bhudan - Gramdan movement with Vinoba Bhave. Shri Mathkar vigorously worked in this movement getting several thousand acres of land donation and distributed it to the landless through Gramdan Nav Nirman Samitee. In the process he got about 20 villages registered for Gramdan, the well known one is Vinobaji's birth place Gagode, in Raigad. Shri Mathkar also worked to strain hard for Bhangi Mukti campaign under the leadership guidance of Appashaheb Patwardhan. He founded the Mahatma Gandhi Lok Seva Sangh and installed 500 Ambar Charkhas in Satara, Sangli and Nasik districts.

During 1982 to 1989 Shri Mathkar served as the President of the Maharashtra Pradesh Sarvodaya Mandal. He is the Joint Secretary and Trustee of Shantivan Ashram situated near Mumbai, running an old age home, nature cure and serving the disabled and the Leprosy patients. At all India level Shri Mathkar is well known in the Sarvodaya fraternity, working as organiser of Khadi Samitee of Sarva Sewa Sangh. Here he organised Charkha Yagya inviting 55 spinners from all the states of India to raise voice and advocate for their genuine demands. Shri Mathkar also successfully organized the Kargha Yagya (Weavers Congress) which addressed and tabled the concerns and difficulties of weavers on the floor of the Government.

With a khadi bag slung over his shoulder, Shri. Mathkar keeps going, ever ready to serve the needy. Bubbling with new ideas, he defies age in every way. Shri Mathkar acts Locally and thinks Globally. He is a simpleton, down-to-earth personality, who is in every way doing his bit silently for the benefit and development of the rural people and community.

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