



MR. S. JAGANNATHAN

Joint Recipient of the Award in the Field of Constructive Work - 1988

As a student and, later, in his youth, Jagannathan worked in various places and gained the vital experience of organising meetings and conferences, holding camps, and leading demonstrations. A potential leader of masses was being born. He was also fortunate to have met Gandhiji and other eminent men like Rev. Keithan, from whom he derived inspiration for constructive social work.

For the last 4 decades, Jagannathan has devoted himself to finding out a permanent solution to the land problem in the country. He involved himself actively in all the major movements concerned with that problem. Studious that he is and a keen observer of events, he emerged as a leader of vision and substance.

Not only did he, along with wife Krishnammal, spearhead the Bhoodan and Gramdan Movements in Tamil Nadu successfully, he also contributed to the Total Revolution Movement of Jayaprakash Narayan. Together the couple restored several acres of land from the oppressive landlords and the temple authorities and distributed them among the landless. They also brought about a great awakening among the illiterate, ignorant, and poverty-stricken people, especially of Tamil Nadu and Bihar, about the Gandhian technique of peaceful, non-violent Satyagraha.

Although Jagannathan was deeply immersed in the various land movements, he was dispassionate enough to understand the inadequacies of the effort. The Bhoodan, Gramdan movements banked merely on gifts of land and their equitable distribution among the landless. Jagannathan was among the few who realised the need for developing these lands and bring about their comprehensive all round development. He has been devoting his energies to this task over the last 20 years. The Association of Sarva Seva Farms (ASSEFA), which Jagannathan and others established for this purpose, has made a great headway by spreading their projects in many States and attempting an agro-based village development. Jagannathan deserves much credit for infusing the spirit of professionalism in ASSEFA's work.

All his work for the cause of the land question has been founded on the conviction that Gram Swaraj is the basis of a just and happy social order. No wonder then that his life-long struggle seems to have culminated in undertaking a countrywide movement for establishing Gram Swaraj.

