



MR. K. JANARDANAN PILLAI

Recipient of the Award in the Field of Constructive Work - 1989

Born: 1917

It is not often that men in their youth discard the promise of a prospective job and voluntarily opt for a life of struggle and sacrifice. Pillai did precisely that. Inspired by his meeting with Gandhiji, he launched into the freedom movement and made pioneering efforts at mobilising popular support for India's freedom struggle in the then princely State of Travancore & Cochin. He also tried to pass the torch to many others of his age by establishing students' settlements for motivating them for community service and leading a value-based life.

The years after independence saw Pillai emerge as a leader of many sterling qualities like initiative and innovativeness, vision tempered by circumspection, and idealism moderated by a hard practical sense. Serving the Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi in various capacities during the last four decades, including as its Chairman, Pillai expanded the sphere to activities of the institution in making it one of the best branches of the all India body. This is evident from the large number of centres and an active band of workers developed by the institution.

It is to the credit of Pillai that he has faithfully applied the Gandhian technique of all-round village development which believes in people-based and people oriented planning. The range of Pillai's activities is far-reaching: from new varieties of crops to new systems of irrigation, from village industries to large scale afforestation, from community health and prohibition to Harijan and tribal welfare-in fact, almost the whole gamut of the Constructive Programme of Mahatma Gandhi.

A true believer in decentralised planning, Pillai formulated a plan for full employment and a District Development Plan for Trivandrum. Being committed to people's power, he encouraged the setting up of Gram Sabhas and Planning Committees at the village level.

He led a simple life bordering on austerity and has endeared himself by his modesty and affable manners. His long and dedicated services in the cause of the people of Kerala have really made him a veteran Gandhian of South India.

By conferring the Jamnalal Bajaj Award for outstanding contribution in the field of constructive work on Janardanan Pillai, the Trustees of the Foundation feel happy in honouring his quietly efficient services and long experience in field work in the cause of Sarvodaya movement.

