

Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi

Recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Application of Science and Technology for Rural Development-2006

Born: 6th April, 1955

M.Sc in Botany

Ph.D in Environmental Science

Born in the village Kotdwar of Uttaranchal, Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi has devoted himself to resource-based rural development for the last 19 years. As a teacher, he guided 21 Ph.D students and motivated many more to work in the hilly areas using Science and Technology for solving the basic needs of the mountain people. Dr. Joshi quit his comfortable job as a Reader in Government P.G. College and plunged wholeheartedly into research and development work for the people. He set up an NGO, the Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO), which concentrated on need-based Science and Technology development and its application for the mountain regions, and has mobilised village communities to use their local resources in an effective, sustainable, income-generating way. With the support of agencies such as the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Bio-technology, etc. he took up small research projects with immediate application possibilities in the rural areas. Impressed by his performance and by his dynamic leadership qualities, the Department of Science and Technology approved core support grant for HESCO. Over the years, Dr. Joshi implemented extremely challenging and interesting projects and programmes such as "Women Technology Park" and "Technology Intervention for Mountain- Eco System".

In 1979, Dr. Joshi set about the task of checking the menace of land slides through botanical methods, controlling 30 major slides. The Border Roads Organization took his technical advice to check soil erosion land slides in Garhwal.

Another major intervention has been that of creating local resource-based employment through upgraded technologies. As many as 500 villages have been directly benefited with the training given in post harvesting technology by the use of fiber, aromatic plants, etc. An important local venture generated by him is the use of "Lantana", a known weed invading the forests and agricultural lands, for productive purposes. Dr. Joshi trained many rural people for making furniture and other products, thus providing an extra source of income for unemployed youth and women.

The most important contribution of Dr. Joshi for technology development in rural areas has been in the field of upgrading hundreds of water mills. He has been instrumental in bringing about a silent revolution in the villages located in the border areas of Jammu and Kashmir and also the North Eastern States by almost single-handedly introducing the improved water mills (traditionally called "Gharats") with some help and support from the army and other security forces. A simple ball bearing and a thin galvanised iron sheet were all that was needed to improve the efficiency of the water mill by over 60 percent. Water mills across the mountains and in the remote villages have sprung back to life. The intervention has resulted in the availability of electricity in locations where normal grid supply is unlikely to reach in the near future and it has opened up enormous opportunities for value addition to local agricultural produce of the area, and disposable income to the people.

Dr. Joshi also promoted the Ecological Food Mission in Mountain where traditional crops have been revamped proving the ecological importance of the crops, both for human and climatic needs. He motivated the Committees of the shrines of Badrinath, Gangotri and Vaishno Devi to

provide offerings, known as Panchamrit, made of local resource, thus generating local employment. In association with the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser, Dr. Joshi initiated a programme in Jammu and Kashmir to bring peace to deprived communities in the border areas through technology. The programme, popularly known as Technology Initiative for Peace (TIP), has electrified many villages in LOC of Jammu and Kashmir through water mills. He also initiated WISE (Women's Initiative for Self Employment), a common platform for women, to generate employment, provide market and tackle other related issues. About 1000 women from all over the mountains of Uttaranchal are members of WISE.

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

He was declared "Man of the Year" in 2002 by "The Week" Magazine. He has been awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Award by the Indian Science Congress in 1999 and has also received the Social Science Award in the year 2001 from Shri Ram Washeshran Devi Bhatia Memorial Charitable Trust. In January 2006, Dr. Joshi received the Padma Shri Award.

