



**DR. S. N. Subba Rao**

**Recipient of the Award in the Field of Constructive Work - 2006**

Born: February 7, 1929

Dr. S. N. Subba Rao, popularly known as Bhaiji, started social work right from his student days. He started chanting devotional songs from the Geetha and the Upanishads even at the age of 10 at Ramkrishna Vedant temple in Malleshwaram, Bangalore. Influenced by Gandhiji, he started wearing khadi. On 9 August 1942, he shouted slogans against the British for which Subba Rao was arrested but was released in the evening because of his young age. He became an active member of the Rashtriya Sewa Dal and started an "Adult Education Centre" in the labourers' area. He came in contact with Dr. N.S. Hardikar, a prominent freedom fighter and social activist of the time, in the camp at Chitradurga in 1948. At Dr. Hardikar's behest, he came to Delhi to work for the All India Congress Sewa Dal in 1951 after completing his studies for the degree in law. He organized many training camps for Congress workers throughout the country. Late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other top leaders of the Congress were impressed by his organizational skills. He led several delegations of Indian Youths to various countries like Soviet Union, Egypt etc.

He was nominated the Secretary of the "Mass Contact Committee" of the National Committee for Gandhi centenary celebrations. Subba Rao conceived the idea of "Gandhi Darshan Train". He was nominated director of the project. Under his direction, the train traveled successfully all over the country during the year 1968-69. In 1969, on the invitation of Dr. R.R. Diwakar, Chairman, he joined the Gandhi Peace Foundation as its life member and conducted a chain of youth camps (Shram Shibirs) in the Chambal Valley. Thousands of men and women from all over India took part in these youth camps. In 1970, he established the Mahatma Gandhi Seva Ashram at village Joura in Morena District of Madhya Pradesh to train the youth in self-help and constructive work.

With the help of the Ashram, the local youth built several big roads in the Chambal valley. Along with other peace workers, Bhaiji worked hard to bring about the historic surrender of more than 600 dreaded dacoits of Chambal Ghati. In 1972, the Mahatma Gandhi Seva Ashram played host to the surrender ceremony, which took place in the presence of Jayaprakash Narayan. In 1976, with the efforts of Bhaiji in Bateshwar, Uttar Pradesh, and Talab Shahi, Rajasthan, dacoits surrendered in large numbers. The Ashram undertook different activities for the welfare of families of the victims and of the dacoits who surrendered. Many developmental works were carried out during 1976-80 in the Chambal Valley, and 34 National Unity Youth Camps were organised.

More than 15000 men and women participated. With a view to mobilizing the youth for powering nation building activities, Dr. Subba Rao founded the National Youth Project in 1971 under which hundreds of national level youth camps and other programmes were organized in different parts of India including Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Ladakh, Lakshadweep and Andaman. Camps were also conducted which had the effect of a soothing balm in communal riots-affected places like Bhagalpur, Godhra, Kanpur, Aligarh, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Jammu and Kashmir, etc.

Bhaiji is a specially gifted person who can speak and sing in all the 18 languages recognised under our Constitution. In 1993-94 in collaboration with the Government of India, Bhaiji launched the "Sadbhavana Rail Yatra" of 12 months' duration, touring the length and breadth of the country.

More than 2500 young men and women from 26 States of India and a few from outside, speaking different languages, having different religious faiths and political views, and coming from different strata of society, lived together for 12 months as members of the same family, transcending all differences. Their mission was to spread the message of love, peace, friendship, communal harmony and world peace.

Bhaiji has travelled all over the world, in America, United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Canada, Singapore, etc., to conduct Gandhi youth camps. At the centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda's address to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, Bhaiji gave a talk at that forum in 1993. He also took part in the Conference of World Parliament of Religions in South Africa in 2001.

Bhaiji has been honoured by several awards. The Madhya Pradesh Government gave him the Indira Gandhi Award in 2000. In 2001, in Mumbai, he was presented the Sane Guruji Individual Award. The Indian Merchants' Chamber honoured him in the year 1992 with an award of Rs. 1,00,000.

He received the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavna Award and the National Award for Communal Harmony in 2003. In spite of being a freedom fighter, Bhaiji has never asked for a pension. While assisting with the 300 people team at Uttarkashi during the terrible earthquake, he wore only khadi clothes even in severe cold. Today, at the age of 78, he continues to conduct youth camps tirelessly.

