



MR. CHUNIBHAI VAIDYA

Recipient of the Award in the Field of Constructive Work - 2010

Born: September 2, 1918

At 92, Chunibhai Vaidya is the senior most renowned Gandhian of Gujarat. His life is totally dedicated to upliftment of the poor and marginalized people.

Following Acharya Vinoba Bhave's advice Chunibhai undertook the publication of Sarvodaya literature at Varanasi as also that of Assamese, Naga and Manipuri language books for 12 years.

In 1974, he returned to Gujarat during Gramdaan movement and took up editing of "Bhoomiputra" during Jaya Prakash Narayan's movement and during the period of emergency. He openly defied the censorship and pre-censorship orders and was detained for 7 months.

As President, Gujarat Loksamiti in Ahmedabad, he successfully compelled the Rajasthan Government to close down liquor shop at Ratanpur. He also led movement in Gujarat for continuation of prohibition policy. He was successful in getting the MLA's pension law cancelled. He later joined the movement for providing drinking water supply to more than 352 villages.

Chunibhai led six yearlong movements and achieved Riparian rights of Banas and Sipu rivers downstream villages in Banaskantha district.

He got canals de-silted to supply irrigation water to a couple of villages and constructed 4 'gupta bandhs' (under ground check-dams), irrigating more than 8000 acres of land in 17 villages in Banaskantha.

He actively supported the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Project in public as also in the Supreme Court.

In 1997, he led a foot march, in co-operation with sister organizations, to oppose the MNC Cargill's advent in Gujarat. Ultimately, Cargill withdrew. He successfully opposed and got cancelled the Government of Gujarat's deal for 200 Bighas grazing land. Again he opposed the government's deal with MNC and stopped MNC taking possession of the land.

In 1998, Chunibhai led the movement against a mega-port project at Umargaon, He opposed the violence perpetrated against Christians in dangs and demanded legal action on conversions.

In 2000, during earthquake in Kutch, he organized relief work in the affected villages, worth hundreds of crores of rupees through Gram Swaraj Sangh.

Between 2000 & 2008, Chunibhai had to fight with the Government of Gujarat, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and the vested builder interests to stop the demolition of structures, the nursery of Khadi, built by Mahatma Gandhi. Finally the case was heard in Supreme Court. These structures were later declared National Heritage by the Central Government.

In 2002, when Ahmedabad was under curfew, he led a 1500 strong procession spreading the message of peace. He worked for rehabilitation of affected persons by rebuilding nearly 250 houses and providing means of livelihood like push carts, sewing machines, cash etc. to hundreds.

In 2005-2006, he opposed the Government of Gujarat's move to cancel its policy of allotting waste land free of charge to the landless. He thus caused to get 20000 acres of land allotted to 7000 beneficiaries.

He is presently actively running a movement to establish and get a law enacted that natural resources like land, forests, seas, rivers, water, minerals etc. belong to the society and not to the government.

No wonder that Chunibhai today is a synonym of "Resistance to Injustice" in Gujarat.

Chunibhai is the author of several books. His book "Assassination of Gandhi: Fact and Falsehood" was translated and published in 11 languages. More than one lakh copies of it have been sold as of now.

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