



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

## Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) (India)

(1996)



*...for its major contribution to a model of development rooted in social justice and popular participation.*

Narayanan and P K Ravindran

The foundation of KSSP, which literally means Science Writers' Forum of Kerala, can be traced back to that of a Science Literary Forum in 1957 by a group of concerned activists and science writers. KSSP was established in 1962. By 1968, having made touch with scientists from Kerala working all over India, KSSP was a well-defined organisation with a focus on the popular communication of science in Malayalee, the local language, and had become a movement for the mass dissemination of science in Kerala.

By 1976, KSSP had a membership of 2,600 and the following year it started to organise All India Workshops for science activities. In 1987, at one of these workshops, the All India People's Science Network was born. People's Science Movements, inspired by KSSP, have now sprung up all over India. In 1996, the organisation itself had 60,000 members organised in about 2,000 units and was engaged across the whole range of development issues. These include:

**Education:** With 10,000 teachers among its members, KSSP runs in-service teacher training, assesses curricula and textbooks, promotes pedagogic innovation, publishes science books and journals for children and runs massive Children's Science Festivals and Teacher Exchange Programmes. KSSP was a major force behind the programme through which Kerala achieved total literacy by 1991.

**Environment:** One of KSSP's objectives is to raise the environmental awareness level of the entire Kerala society, through campaigns, education and popularising good environmental practice.

**Development:** KSSP has been involved in building up models of sustainable development, campaigning for decentralised democracy, initiating local field experiments and empowerment initiatives, analysing the 'Kerala model' of development (high human development despite low income) and seeking its improvement, and publishing studies of development. KSSP and its R&D Centre, the Integrated Rural Technology Centre (IRTC) have developed a participatory resource mapping (PRM) methodology as well as a methodology for the preparation of watershed based master plans to help the local bodies in their developmental programmes.

**Energy:** Half a million homes have installed KSSP's high-efficiency wood-burning stoves, saving an estimated 0.6-0.8 million tonnes of firewood per annum. KSSP also has a programme to replace a substantial portion of 20 million 60-watt light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps, and is helping local governments to install small-scale hydro stations.

**Communication:** KSSP is India's largest science publisher, having published 1200 books and

producing 30-40 new titles per year. In 1994 its income from this activity was Rs. 2.4 million, and in 2004 Rs. 15 million, nearly 90 per cent of its total income (KSSP receives no foreign aid). Much effort goes into selling the science books from house to house, a kind of fundraising pedagogy. In addition, KSSP excels in other communication media, with massive lecture campaigns and the development of an entirely new theatre medium, 'Kala Jatha' or 'Art Caravan', through which it pursues the mass literacy campaign, which reached 60-70 million people.

KSSP is providing training to rural people, especially rural women, on small scale soap production, mushroom farming, studio pottery and the like and helps them set up small scale production and marketing facilities.

KSSP also has substantive programmes in the fields of health, women's issues and research and development. Its Executive Committee has 65 members and at local levels there are more than 10,000 office bearers. KSSP has received a number of awards, including UNEP's Global 500, the Vriksha Mitra and the King Sejong (UNESCO) award.

### **Quotation**

*"KSSP values human resources as the greatest promise of a nation's future. The best test of a country's future is the edifying impact of the classroom, the extramural attainments and the scientific temper generated in the youth."*

P.K. Ravindran

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