



**GOVERNANCE
AWARDS
2018**
30-11-2018

**EXCEPTIONAL
CONTRIBUTION AWARD**

Ubagarampillai Sagayam, IAS

(Vice-Chairman, Science City, Chennai)

For his fearless battle against the mining mafia and ensuring free and fair elections under the most difficult circumstances

A 2001-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, Shri Ubagarampillai Sagayam hails from a farming family in Perunchunai village of Pudukottai district and did his masters in social work and law. He was the first IAS officer in Tamil Nadu to publicise his financial information.

In 2011, the Election Commission of India posted him as Collector of Madurai - a district that had become known for bribing voters. Shri Sagayam thwarted multiple attempts at bribing voters; educated voters about the law; confiscated cash intended for distribution to voters; and even registered a case against M. K. Alagiri - a Union cabinet minister and son of then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi. During this stint, Shri Sagayam was also recognised as a friend of the poor. He started Uzhavan Unavagam (farmers' food court) where poor farmers could sell traditional dishes.

In May 2012, Shri Sagayam investigated reports of illegal granite quarrying in the vicinity of Madurai. His report accused several senior officials of collusion with illegal granite miners, causing losses to the state of several thousand crore rupees. Four days later, he was transferred as Managing Director of Co-optex. However, his report was leaked to the press, prompting a public outcry that compelled the government to pursue the matter. Under his successor, Anshul Mishra, a number of arrests were made in January 2013 and several officials were allegedly found colluding with illegal granite mining operations. In June 2013, Mishra too was transferred. In July 2014, in response to a citizen activist's petition in Madras High Court, Shri Sagayam was appointed Special Officer-cum-Legal Commissioner to investigate all mining operations in Tamil Nadu. Against all odds he carried out a probe which revealed looting of high-value granite from private and government land, destruction of water bodies, diversion of rivers and irregularities in the export of granite.



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