

Dr. GUTTA MUNIRATNAM

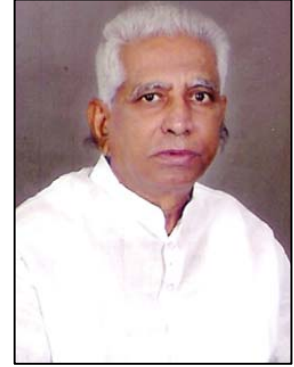
(Fonder General Secretary, Rashtriya Seva Samithi (RASS), Tirupati, India)

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Dr. G Muniratnam (b. 1936), founder General Secretary of RASS, symbolises a strong and resonant Gandhian method of addressing problems of rural and semi-urban Indian poor. The de-industrialisation of traditional Indian economy during the colonial rule prompted many Indian leaders to search for alternatives. Out of this churning emerged the concept of village self-sufficiency through revival of rural economic and social life. This vision was presented by Gandhi with a message that village reconstruction needs a peaceful and non-violent approach. Dr. Muniratnam belongs to this Gandhian school and spared no efforts in trying to translate this vision into some perceptible reality in South India. He had been instrumental in proportionately mixing Gandhian spirit and tools of modern day development.



Dr. Muniratnam's evolution was shaped by three broad strands: first, an unflagging zeal to be with rural population and work for them as part of Gandhian village reconstruction in the post-independent era; secondly, fructification of his mission under the guidance of stalwart Gandhian leaders like Vinoba Bhave, Prof. N G Ranga, Ms. Nirmala Deshpande and P Rajagopal Naidu; thirdly, widening of mental horizon and canvas of his social action through close association with country's rural development programmes over last three decades.

Dr. Muniratnam represents a break with past on different counts. Responding to the call given by Gandhi to join his mission of *Gram Swaraj*, young people like him associated themselves with the Gandhian programmes. The area where Dr. Muniratnam inaugurated his efforts through RASS was a boiling pot during early 20th century, and the region was fragmented by narrow sectarian aspirations of influential social sections during the Justice Party movement. His plunge into this kind of geo-political atmosphere was a daring step and, he succeeded in roping in various social sections into his programmes without fear, hatred and suspicion. Under his leadership, RASS matured its vision into one that visualizes itself as an areligious and secular peoples' initiative for rural development.

Dr. Muniratnam's interventions into social and economic development programmes are never stand-alone. Rather, they were given an innovative treatment by slotting them into the notion of secular and Gandhian modes of social work. An insight into his work spanning over four decades brings out this important aspect of his programme designs.

Dr. Muniratnam basically subscribes to the belief that poverty breeds isolation (of women and children) and, in the process the role of NGO was crucial, but not total. His disbelief in the overarching and eternally self-imposing role of NGOs into people's problems had a direct relation to Gandhian ideas. He helped RASS in etching an institutional mandate with an innate message that it would take reflective indulgences towards strengthening indigenous socio-development processes. The organisation sees poverty as a social phenomenon. These basic ideas emanating from accumulated wisdom and cumulative efforts of Gandhian workers like Dr. Muniratnam paved way for RASS to evolve as an agency driven by a historical conscience, contextual considerations in the process of development continuum, a clear perspective on the role for *self* and *other*, and faith in democratic action and legislative support.

1. POSITIONS CURRENTLY HELD

- ✚ Vice-President, All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, (Founded by Mahatma Gandhi during 1932) Delhi.
- ✚ President, Akhil Bharat Rachanatmak Samaj, New Delhi (An umbrella organization for Gandhian Institution and Sarvodaya Workers, Founded by Late Dr. Nirjala Deshpande, Sarvodaya Leader)
- ✚ Founder Member and Hon. General Secretary, Rashtriya Seva Samithi, a voluntary service organization (NGO) since 1981 - a premier voluntary developmental and service organization working for the welfare of the weaker sections in general and women, children, physically handicapped and the aged in particular in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa and Delhi.
- ✚ Member, Expert Group, Voluntary Cell, Planning Commission, Government of India.

- ✚ Member, Sakshara Bharat, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- ✚ Member, CAPART, Regional Committee, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.
- ✚ Member, National Consultative Committee on De-addiction and Rehabilitation (NCCDR), Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India.
- ✚ Member, Governing Board, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Government of India.
- ✚ Member Executive Committee, Central Social Welfare Board, Government of India
- ✚ Chair Person, Acharya Ranga Krishi Vigyan Kendra, ICAR, Government of India sponsoring, since 1992.
- ✚ Chairman, State Resource Center, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India sponsoring, 2010.
- ✚ Member, GO-NGO Coordination Committee, Hyderabad, Government of Andhra Pradesh.
- ✚ Member, Advisory Council AP Vigilance Commission.
- ✚ Member, National Literacy Mission Authority, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- ✚ Chairperson, Jan Sikshan Sansthan, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- ✚ Chair Person, Balaji Bala Vikas, and a child integrated development programmes project, serving 2000 poor children, their families and immediate neighborhood.
- ✚ Chairperson, Orissa Tribal Development Project (6600 Child and Families) in Nandapur block and Livelihood through Watershed Project at Bandugam of Korput district, Orissa.
- ✚ Convenor, National Forum of Krishi nVigyan Kendras (NGO sector)
- ✚ Life Member, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai

- ✚ Life Member, Indian Red Cross Society, Andhra Pradesh
- ✚ Life Member, Youth Hostels of India, New Delhi
- ✚ Life Member, Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), Delhi
- ✚ Served on various Govt., of India committees since 1982.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS FOR Dr.G.MUNIRATNAM

Award / Honour	Instituted by	Presented by	Year
National Prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Manav Seva Award	Ministry of Women & Child Development, Govt. of India (for his outstanding work in field of Child Welfare and Disabled)	Shri Janardhan Dwibedri, Chairman Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Human Resources Development, GOI	2006
75 th Avatar Mahotsava Award	Kanchi Kamokoti Peetadhipatham, Kanchipuram	Swamy Jayendra Sarasawathi	2010
National Award	Dr. Paidi Lakshmaiah Memorial Award	Dr. PLN Sanjeeva Reddy, Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of rural development.	1998
The Nawab Mehdi Nawaz Jung – Best Welfare Worker Award	Indian Council of Social Welfare, Hyderabad (for outstanding social work in the field of child welfare)	Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh.	1996
Jamnalal Bajaj Award	Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation, Bombay (for application of Science & Technology for rural development)	His Holiness Dalai Lama	1995
Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa (D.Litt)	Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, A.P. (for contribution to Public Service & Social Development)	His Excellency Krishnakanth, Governor of Andhra Pradesh, India	1995

Award / Honour	Instituted by	Presented by	Year
Gem of India Award	All India Achievers Association, New Delhi (for outstanding contribution to society)	IIPFS, Bangalore	1992
Priyadarshini Indira Gandhi Award	International Institute of Peace and Friendship Society, Bangalore (for contribution to National Integration)	Shri Rabi Ray, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi	1992
Shiromani Award	Shiromani Institute, New Delhi (for contribution to National Development, Integration and Enrichment of Life)	Shri Arjun Sing, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India	1991
Indira Gandhi National Award	National Integration Council, New Delhi (for contribution to National Unity)	Shri Madhav Singh Solanki, Hon'ble Minister for planning & programme implementation, Government of India, New Delhi	1989
National Award	Government of India (for outstanding contribution to child development)	Shri R. Venkataraman, His Excellency the President of India	1989
Balabhandu Award	Government of Andhra Pradesh	Late Shri K. Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh	1993

INSTITUTIONAL

- ✚ India Rotary Award 2004 for outstanding work for enhancement employment opportunities in rural areas.
- ✚ The FICCI Award for its Outstanding Work in the Field of Rural Development (1997).
- ✚ The National Award for Excellent Work in the Field of Disabled Welfare (Govt. of India, 1994).
- ✚ The Jannalal Bajaj Endowment Award for its Services to Disadvantaged Groups and Rural Poor (Indian Merchants Chamber, 1989).
- ✚ The Government of India National Award for outstanding work in the field of child welfare (1984).

VISITS ABROAD

- ✚ Visited European Countries, USA and Asian Countries and presented papers on various subjects.