



Sakala Vidya Vachaspati

Prof. S.R. Govindarajan

Principal (1966-1978)

&

The First Head of the Department of Physics
Dwaraka Doss Goverdhan Doss Vaishnav College, Chennai

Sikkalnaickenpettai Rajagopalan Govindarajan

Prof. S. R. G.

- *A dedicated teacher par excellence who lived a life of service*

Good morning and warm greetings to one and all present on this momentous occasion!

Indeed a proud moment for me to have been bestowed with the privilege of presenting to this august assembly, the *Life and Works* of a great yet simple, unique yet mixing freely with others, high profile yet humane inside out, outstanding personality Shri. S.R.Govindarajan who adorned the exalted seat of Principal from 1966-1978 and covered the same with glory. Prof. S.R.Govindarajan, a dedicated teacher par excellence who lived a life of service! A splendid personality, whose life was dedicated fully to the shaping of the minds of thousands of his students. We dedicate this presentation to this genius visionary!

He was a doyen among the Principals whose guidance lighted the blossom of our College during his tenure as the Principal.

Shri.S.R.Govindarajan was born on 10th August 1917, at Kumbakonnam to Shri. S .S. Rajagopala Iyengar and Smt. Pattammal as eleventh child. Shri. S.R.Govindarajan had his schooling at the Town High School, Kumbakonnam, the same school that the Mathematics Genius of our country Ramanujan attended and then at Bishop Heber High School, Tiruchirapalli. He was a favourite student of his teachers.

He became a student of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchi. Education at Tiruchirapalli shaped this young man. At Tiruchi , Rev. Fr. D' Souza mentored him throughout, moulded him into a dreamer of dreams and a performer on his dream projects. Rev. Fr. D' Souza's guidance continued and brought him to the Dept. of Physics, Loyola College, Chennai in later days.

Shri. S.R.Govindarajan did his Post graduation in the Dept. of Physics, Annamalai University which was the knowledge centre to learn Physics during his times. No wonder, Shri.S.R.Govindarajan born and brought up in the banks of river Cauvery developed interest in fine arts and especially, Carnatic Music.

Even during his post-graduation days, his interest in music made him take up a research project in *Sound in Carnatic music* under the great guidance of Carnatic musician *Tiger Varadhachari*.

With in-born affinity towards teaching, with a gifted silver tongue, an excellent orator, with an orientation towards sharing knowledge, a person with concern for others, Shri. S. R. Govindarajan without any hesitation took to teaching.

This genius in Physics started his career at Pachaiyaapa's College, the then Madras. He shifted to Loyola College under the guidance of his teacher Rev. Fr. D'Souza. At Loyola, Sri. S.R.Govindarajan made a mark as a teacher, earning for himself a great name. He was an able exponent of the intricacies of Physics. He authored many text books in Physics, these books even today serve as a reference text for many teachers and research scholars. After a short stint at Loyola, Shri S.R.Govindarajan moved to Head the Dept. of Physics at A.M.Jain College. His innovation and dynamism transformed the Department into a model Dept. of Physics for other Colleges to follow.

He was a great visionary, a teacher par excellence and a person of exemplary life. All these outstanding qualities made the management of Dwaraka Doss Goverdhan Doss Vaishnav College to make an invitation to Head the Department of Physics and also to serve as Vice-Principal. He had the extreme goodness and accepted the invitation when the College was incepted in the year 1964. Thus, Shri. S.R.Govindarajan became our Vice-Principal to help Adhyapaka Ratna Shri. T. Totadri Iyengar, the first Principal of the College and the most respected teacher of our former President of India, Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam. Two years later, that is in 1966, S.R.Govindarajan became the Principal of our College.

Shri SRG's faith in God is at once innate and intense. The first thing that he did on assuming the Principalship of the College was to have a prayer, to mark the beginning of every working day in the College. Shri S.R.Govindarajan's inborn sense of music and knowledge made him request the great vocalist Shri. Sandyavandanam Srinivasa Rao known for his rich knowledge in Sanskrit and his majestic voice to render the College prayer. The practice of reciting the same prayer is being continued even today.

A believer of Gandhian principles, Shri S.R.Govindarajan thought, apart from imparting book based knowledge, students must be given hands-on training, must be presented with skill sets that can help them to live in the real world. Accordingly, he started Vocational centre, Radio club, Camera club and Fine arts society in our college which attracted large number of students.

Gokul, our campus journal was yet another idea of his visionary, which he thought would help our students pick up the rudiments of journalism.

During his tenure, that is from 1966-1978, Shri S.R.Govindarajan along with the then Correspondent and Joint Secretary Shri.Haridas Purushotham Doss well known for his dynamism, the college introduced many innovative schemes to benefit the students of the college. To name a few, the *Student benevolent fund* of the well-to-do boys of the college to meet the cost of many other students, *Midday-meal scheme* for deserving and meritorious students, *earn-while you learn scheme*. Meriting the exemplary administrative ability of Shri. S.R.Govindarajan, the University of Madras made him President of World University Service Centre. He was able to raise a huge grant to the extent of Rs.1.8 million from Danish Government for constructing the building for World University Service Centre. This note-worthy diplomacy in securing grants humbled the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Anna Durai and the C.M. was pleased to donate the land upon which the World University Service Centre stands today.

Shri.S.R.Govindarajan , a leader of matchless abilities joined the Rotary movement in 1960 as a member of Madras South Club. The vigour and extraordinary interest with which he pursued the Rotarian goals saw him elevated as the President of the Rotary Club in 1963 subsequently, as the Charter President of Madras West Club in 1965.

During his Chairmanship, aid from all corners of the world in general, Australia, Canada and America in particular, had flowed in for meeting the costs of several community welfare projects, such as, dental camps, eye clinics not only in Tamil Nadu, but also in other Indian states.The Rotary movement elected Shri.S.R.Govindarajan as District Governor in 1977-78. When the mother Nature let loose its fury in Andhra and Tamil Nadu, S.R.Govindarajan whipped up a high degree of activity seeking to provide relief to the cyclone victims.The Canadian International Development Agency, came forward to give 4 million dollars to meet the cost of hundred of projects in his District, including rehabilitation of mentally challenged mothers. He started and conducted free polio drop campaigns in our state with the help of Canadian Government.

Even after his retirement, Prof. S.R.Govindarajan was instrumental in sending 32 scholars abroad for higher studies, encouraging student exchange programs.

On the occasion of his 60th birthday, an open air theatre in the college premises was dedicated and named after him.

Prof. S.R.Govindarajan was the person behind setting up of Kothari Institute for women and Elite school of Optometry, a wing of Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai.

Not surprisingly, the Jeer of Ahobila Mutt had thought it fit to confer on S.R.Govindarajan, the title of Sakala Vidya Vachaspathi.

Shri S.R.Govindarajan a great humanist in every sense of the term has touched the life of many youth and turned the same into more meaningful, resourceful and all the more purposeful. Prof. S.R.Govindarajan legendary of all times and affectionately known as S.R.G, left his imprints on all things, on all men and on all matters that fell into his sphere of influence.

A sincere attempt has been made in this presentation to capture and present only the glimpses of Prof. S.R.G's works and life, as it would be a difficult task to show the entirety of his comprehensive, complete and all time great S.R.G!

PRANAM!

We thank Shri.SRGovindarajan's family and friends for their valuable inputs.

A presentation by

Dr.S.Narasimhan, Principal

Dwaraka Doss Goverdhan Doss Vaishnav College, Chennai

during the launch of

Prof. S.R.Govindarajan *maiden* Endowment Lecture

organised by

Department of Physics

on the National Science Day,

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