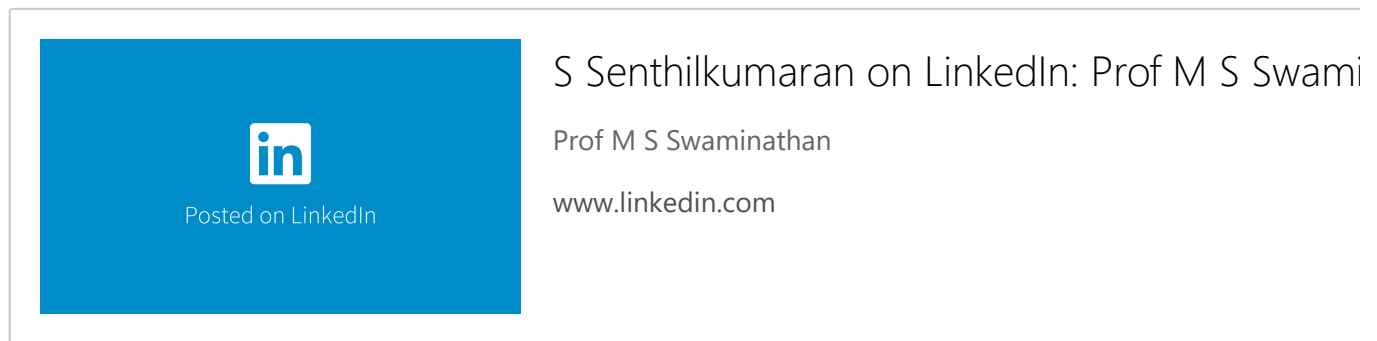


From: Senthilkumaran.Krishnan@reliancefoundation.org <Senthilkumaran.Krishnan@reliancefoundation.org>
Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 8:58 PM
To: Executivedirector-MSSRF <executivedirector@mssrf.res.in>
Subject: Small Tribute - Prof M S Swaminathan

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/senthilrural_activity-7113893352873353216-UVLj?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop



Prof M S Swaminathan ji – Eternally identified various developmental problems and provided solutions. His solutions were at least 20 – 25 years before their time.

Importance of Mangroves – Coastal Systems Research – now discussed in Disaster space under 'Nature-based Solutions'.

Discussing and connecting the then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi, Shir Vikram Sarabhai and finding out solutions for addressing root wilt disease in coconut trees in Kerala through satellite images – extensively using technologies to reach the targeted communities.

Year 1960 - semi-dwarf high yielding varieties of wheat and rice – information dissemination through All India Radio – Radio.

Introducing Varieties – supporting many countries to achieve the sustainable food production – He was deputed to Vietnam in 1975 along with a team of experts, soon after its unification, to help develop two research institutes – one for rice in the Mekong Delta (considered the 'rice bowl' of Vietnam), and another for buffalo, so that Vietnam can increase its rice and milk production. As a result, Vietnam today is not only self-sufficient in rice, but has become the second largest exporter of rice in the world. source - "M. S. Swaminathan: a journey from the frontiers of life sciences to the state of a 'Zero Hunger' world" – Current Science paper 2014 explained this aspect beautifully.

He encouraged and guided researchers, developmental sector programme implementers - connecting policy makers, scientists and targeted audiences for getting common solutions – including many policy recommendations – he is an exemplary example of listening to various inputs patiently and provide guidance and way forward.

He built various world class research institutions – brought out so many innovative programmes – eg. 'Krishi Vignan Kendra', 'Every Child a Scientist' – 30 years before initiated the concept of "Information Village" – addressing different levels of information asymmetry to improve the farmers, livestock farmers and marine fisher folk lives – he encouraged his colleagues to pilot small experiments and convey concrete results. He was really adept at creating attention at policy levels

My personal experience – I was fortunately part of the experiment called "Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs)". This small experiment is mentioned in Page 37 - BJP-IT-Vision-January-2009-Lok Sabha Election. This experience also led to ISRO Village Resource Centre programme using satellite connectivity to facilitate interactions between experts and rural communities to improve the livelihoods. using satellite connectivity. The then Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh, launched the 'Village

Resource Centre' – October 2006, a single window facility to provide a number of services for rural population emphasising the importance of modern science and technology in removing mass poverty. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Dr M S Swaminathan Research Foundation have jointly set up these Village Resource Centres, which provide at a single window, a number of facilities of particular relevance to the development of the rural population.

His staunch belief was that “Unless we take the benefits of modern science and technology to our villages, we cannot get rid of mass poverty which has afflicted millions and millions of our people”

During the Budget Speech 2005 – 2006 – Speech of Shri P Chidambaram, Minister of Finance – February 28, 2005 – mentioned – A Knowledge Centre in Every Village - 56. The National Commission on Farmers has recommended the establishment of Rural Knowledge Centres all over the country using modern information and communication technology (ICT). Mission 2007 is a national initiative launched by an alliance comprising nearly 80 organizations including civil society organizations. Their goal is to set up a Knowledge Centre in every village by the 60th anniversary of Independence Day. Government supports the goal, and I am glad to announce that the Government has decided to join the alliance and route its support through NABARD. I propose to allow NABARD to provide Rs.100 crores out of RIDF. - This experiment also multiplies in Africa and Latin American Countries in the name of “Telecentres” and also several articles are available on the web. - This experiment also led to nation-wide set up of Common Service Centres (CSCs).

14 years before he was also instrumental in developing “Fisher Friend Mobile Application” to address fisher folk issues.

He is a man who demonstrated and proved that any sincere attempts (even very small) – will be achievable and scalable and garner attention at policy level.

Most leaders never have cordial relationship or don't listen or are simply not approachable easily or don't allow them to experiment – and simply micro-manage. Prof Dr M S Swaminathan was entirely different. Usually most major decisions are finalized in group discussion particularly on Sundays along with dhai vada and sweets in a very informal and friendly, non- hierarchical gathering. He would personally even make trips to Grand Sweet, Chennai (Sweets & Savouries Shop in Adyar Chennai) and bring Somasa for all gathered.

He allowed colleagues to do many experiments – and the success could be individually owned. At the same time, he would take responsibility for any failures and encourage individuals to move forward.

Professor as we would all address him allowed and facilitated youngsters, researchers and colleagues to present or share their views in many international and national forums – including allowing them to brief their work to Chief Ministers, Union Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors, International Scientists, Foreign Countries Ministers, Presidents, etc.

He encouraged and personally remembered names of each colleague, intern partner organisation, farmers and even their family member. We have all without any restrictions interacted with him. He would climb up the staircase almost till his age of 95 and come over to our desks and take inputs. Indelible fond memories of his overflow.

He loved Carnatic music – particularly M S Subalakshmi.

He showed and shared many ways of personal growth (moral & ethical) and how to address issues in developmental sector – inclusive way – particularly rural women empowerment – some of the recent media reports also show how some of the empowered rural women travelled to several international forums from their remote village and share their developmental approaches.

He may have transcended from this world on Anant Chaturdashi – September 28, 2023 but his guidance and the demonstrated path are still being paved by him to move India and many more countries up by many notches on Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index.

Anybody who has entered “M S Swaminathan Research Foundation Science Ashram” and where ever they are now, globally, would never be able to forget each and every moment spent with him.

I am that one drops from the ocean of people whose life has been touched and changed forever.

Senthilkumaran

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Reply

Forward