

## Prof. K. Ramakrishna Rao

B. Sambasiva Prasad<sup>1,2</sup>

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Born in 1932, Prof. Koneru Ramakrishna Rao is a distinguished teacher, researcher, educationist and administrator. He was the Chairman, Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) for two terms from 2006 to 2012. He passed away in Visakhapatnam on 9 November 2021 at the age of 89. His areas of interest are Parapsychology, Consciousness Studies, Yoga and Mahatma Gandhi. He has published extensively in these areas. His writings are lucid in style and profound in ideas.

Prof. Rao obtained his Ph.D. degree in philosophy and D.Litt. in psychology. He served as the Professor and Vice-Chancellor at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, (AP). He worked at Duke University and taught at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and the California Institute of Human Science. He also served as the Executive Director of the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man in USA.

In the government of Andhra Pradesh (AP), Professor Rao served as the Advisor to Govt. of Higher Education. He was also the Vice-Chairman of the A.P. State

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✉ B. Sambasiva Prasad  
b.sambasivaprasad@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> GITAM Gandhi Center, GITAM University, Visakhapatnam, India

<sup>2</sup> S.V. University, Tirupathi, India

Planning Board during 1994–1995. Prof. Rao was the Former Chancellor of GITAM University, Chairman of the GITAM Center for Gandhian Studies and National Fellow of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR).

Prof. Ramakrishna Rao published 20 books, about 50 book chapters and 300 research papers in national and international journals. Several of his books were published in abroad, and some of them were translated into Japanese, German, Italian and Spanish. Among his books are *Cognitive Anomalies, Consciousness and Yoga* (2011), *Gandhi and Applied Spirituality* (2011), *Cultivating Consciousness: An East–West Journey* (2013) and *Gandhi's Dharma* (2017). Prof. Rao was honored with numerous academic awards like Fulbright and Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships and honorary doctoral degrees by Andhra University, Acharya Nagarjuna University and Kakatiya University. He received “Padmashri Award” from the President of India in 2011.

Prof. Rao was one of the leading Gandhian scholars. His work began with his doctoral dissertation on Gandhi. Subsequently this was published under the title *Gandhi and Pragmatism: An Intercultural Study* (1968). His later books *Gandhi and Applied Spirituality* and *Gandhi's Dharma* are outstanding works. He was also the Chairman of the *GITAM Journal of Gandhian Studies* (GJGS).

Prof. Rao's contribution to higher education is noteworthy. As the Vice-chancellor of Andhra University, and later as the Chairman of AP State Commissionerate of Higher education and Advisor to Andhra Pradesh Govt. on Education and Chair of a number of state and national level committees, Prof. Rao left an indelible imprint as a crusader for reforming education for all round development of the person and to make education reach the widest possible sections of the society. Following Prof. Rao's recommendation, the Andhra Pradesh became the first state to establish the “State Council of Higher Education” as an autonomous body to guide the development of higher education.

Prof. Rao published nearly 4000 pages during the last 5 years, including books. His life and work shows that age is no bar for making academic contributions. His demise left a great vacuum in the felids of Gandhian Studies, parapsychology and higher education.

**Funding** No external source of funding was used.

## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** The author declares no conflict of interest.

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