

Title : Need to release commemorative stamp on the birth centenary of Dr. Soundram, a freedom fighter, falling on 18th August, 2005.

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SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (DINDIGUL): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Dr. Soundram was born on 18th August, 1904 to the hard working and legendary industrialist T.V. Sundaram Iyengar and his wife Lakshmi Ammaiyar. A bright, beautiful and courageous child from her childhood days, she was noticed for her outgoing nature to help lesser privileged people.

When Gandhiji announced the Quit India Movement, Dr. Soundram and her husband Ramachandran spearheaded the Movement in Thiruvananthapuram.

She was asked to set up a rural institution in a remote place to serve the most deprived of people, to provide them with skills and support to revive village industries and thereby strengthen the rural community and their self-confidence and so, Gandhigram was launched by her on 7th October, 1947 in our Dindigul constituency.

Today, Gandhigram Trust takes care of the health, welfare and educational initiatives while the Lakshmi Seva Sangh and the Gandhigram Khadi Trust manages employment generation programmes through khadi and village industries. The prestigious Gandhigram Rural Institute was declared as a deemed university in 1976.

She has also served as a Deputy Minister of Education in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet. It was during her tenure that primary education was made free all over India.

She was awarded with Padma Bhushan in 1962. Pandit Nehru visited Gandhigram in 1964.

Dr. Soundram passed away on 21st October, 1984. As this is the centenary year of Dr. Soundram, it would be more fitting if the Government of India releases a postal stamp to honour this blessed daughter of India.