

Sunhak Peace Prize: Reduce Starvation and Poverty, Build Peace

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Dr. Modadugu Vijay Gupta, Leader of the “Blue Revolution” **Feeding poor people through developing innovative fish farming technology**

Co-recipient of the Sunhak Peace Prize, Dr. Modadugu Vijay Gupta, also known as the “Blueprint for the Blue Revolution” and “South East Asia’s Saint for the poor” became a well-known Indian aquaculture scientist through developing innovative fish farming technology. Born in 1939, and after having graduated from the Calcutta University in India with a doctorate in biology, he went to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the United Nations Economic and the Social Commission for Asia, as well as the Pacific (UN-ESCP) and the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and invested his entire life into developing aquaculture technology. His contribution in greatly increasing the numbers of cultivated fish, thanks to improved farming conditions and technical innovation, was widely recognized, and he was therefore selected as a co-recipient of the Sunhak Peace Prize. He said, “My lifelong goal has been to reduce starvation and poverty and build a peaceful society. This award gives me new energy towards accomplishing that goal.”

He foresaw that the key to resolving humanity’s future food problems can be found in the sea. He saw that through aquaculture, animal fat protein could be supplied at a relatively cheap price. He especially poured out his heart and soul into eradicating East Asia’s starvation and resolving malnutrition. He developed eco-friendly farming technology using waste from farming and then gave it mainly to the poor people. He would go to the conflict zones even at the risk of his life. The propagation of his farming

technology became famous for not differentiating the time and place where it was supplied.

Farming Technology is the stepping stone for the Improvement of Women's social status.

Dr. Gupta's entire life has been in line with eradicating starvation in South East Asia. Since 1960, he has been making efforts to research and develop fish species that are best suited for South East Asia's hot and humid climate and lowland flooding environment. Fish species such as Tilapia and Silver Babu boast a high reproduction rate even in Bangladesh's murky and shallow water. In 1980, he discovered these fish species and succeeded in farming. As a result, Bangladesh's aquaculture production, which was a mere 170,000 tons in 1986, increased to 850,000 tons by 2005. He opened the revolutionary era of fish farming in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, in 1970, it was a popular time to develop farming of high-quality fish species such as shrimp to satisfy the appetites of the rich upper class. However, Dr. Gupta directed his attention towards farming that would help the poor people substantially. In order to do that, it was necessary to develop a technique which would allow low-cost farming. He came up with "fish polyculture" where several species of fish are cultivated together in one pond and "Integrate Aquaculture Agriculture," which is an eco-friendly method to integrating the aquaculture and agriculture.

He has also established regional community and partnership through the expedient of propagating the fish farming technology to the poor people. The Sunhak Peace Prize Committee revealed, "Dr. Gupta grouped five to 10 farmers who had no land and gave them the fish farming technology. He did not ask for initial startup costs, but instead gave them farming space free of charge, and helped them to establish a foundation to become self-sufficient."

By propagating his fish farming technology to women, he also played a key role in improving the social and economic status of women. Dr. Gupta met and reformed the religious leaders in the region who considered it taboo for women to be active in society. He also cooperated with regional organizations to offer women the minimal funds and land necessary for economic activities. Right now, 60% of Bangladesh's aquaculture industry workers are women. Since 2000, going beyond Asia, he is working to develop farming technology that is suitable for Africa, the bastion of world starvation.

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