

K. M. Sivanandaiah (1931–2011)

K. M. Sivanandaiah, an eminent teacher and an internationally renowned peptide chemist, from the Department of Chemistry, Central College, Bangalore, passed away on 2 October 2011 in Bangalore.

Kadlebal Matada Sivanandaiah (affectionately called as KMS) was born on 13 February 1931 at Kondajji in Davanagere, Karnataka. He obtained his M Sc with gold medal from Mysore University in 1953.

Despite many well-trained people leaving for jobs elsewhere in the world, India has maintained its richness in highly trained and educated people. This has been possible because of visionaries who toiled with minimal facilities to initiate programmes in India several decades ago. KMS was such a visionary. He wanted to establish Bangalore as a centre for peptide research at a time when it was difficult to even purchase amino acids. Indeed, his dream was realized during his lifetime. Bangalore can now boast of supplying numerous scientists who are well trained in peptide chemistry, structure and function.

In 2007, the Indian Peptide Society recognized his contributions to the peptide chemistry and awarded him with a life-time achievement award. However, KMS himself did not attend this meeting. His talk was delivered by one of his old students and the award was received by his successor in Central College, V. V. Sureshbabu. On enquiring about his absence at the meeting, the highlight of which was his award, his reply was, 'that a Peptide Society has been formed in India which conducts international meetings in the field of peptide research is the best award any one can bestow on me'.

After obtaining his Ph D degree from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore under D. K. Banerjee in 1961, KMS joined as a postdoctoral fellow at Clark University, Massachusetts, USA. He then

moved to the Cleveland Clinic Foundation to work with F. M. Bumpas, where he was introduced to peptide synthesis. During that period, KMS synthesized analogues of angiotensin, a hypertensive peptide.

After returning to India, KMS joined Bangalore University and began research in peptide chemistry in 1967. He concentrated on developing new synthetic methodologies. His important contributions include the introduction of catalytic



transfer hydrogenation (CTH) as a new technique for the removal of benzyl-type protecting groups. This marked the beginning of the usage of CTH in peptide synthesis all over the world, as an alternative to the cumbersome processes practised at that time. Other contributions involve the use of hydroxybenzotriazole-mediated active esters in solid phase peptide synthesis. Oxytocin was synthesized successfully using this method, which incidentally became the first biologically active peptide to be synthesized in India. The work initiated by KMS has been continued by others in Central College to

augment the research in the area of peptides and peptidomimetics.

KMS has guided more than 13 Ph D students. Most of his students are now working in well-recognized universities and laboratories abroad. His students attribute their successful careers mainly to their in-depth knowledge of peptide chemistry gained during their stay at Central College. He was an able teacher who has inspired several groups of students for their Master's degrees through his insightful lectures. During his 70th birthday felicitations, KMS admitted that he had assigned a difficult project of synthesizing a peptide containing 18 amino acid residues to one of his students, knowing quite well the limitations in Bangalore. This was a blessing in disguise for the student, because this student made it as his career to synthesize 18 amino acid peptide analogue for the last 25 years. It so happens that an 18 residue peptide is undergoing evaluation in humans as a possible agent to cure several inflammatory diseases. The credit goes to KMS. The best tribute to him would be to ensure that peptide research of high caliber continues to be practised in India and in Central College.

KMS lost his wife Shanta a few years ago and is survived by two sons, Suresh and Prakash.

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