

N. Anand (1947–2018)

Professor Narayanaswamy Anand, former Dean of Research, and Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS) in Botany, University of Madras, Chennai passed away on 22 December 2018. He also served as the First Vice-Chancellor of VELS University at Pallavaram, Chennai.

Anand who was among the pioneers of phycology in India was born to A. Narayanaswamy and Rajam on 28 December 1947 in Muvattupuzha, Kerala. After his schooling from Sir Ramasamy Mudaliar Higher Secondary School (Ambattur erstwhile Madras) he graduated in botany from Loyola College, Chennai in 1967, and obtained his M Sc degree in botany from Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, Tamil Nadu with first rank and gold medal in 1969. In 1970, he joined the University of Madras for a post-M Sc Diploma in Algology, which became the mainstay of his research contributions. Anand completed his doctoral degree from the University of Madras in 1976, under the guidance of Prof. T. V. Desikachary – the eminent phycologist and legend who established the study of modern phycology in India. In 1972, Anand joined the CAS in Botany, University of Madras and served as a lecturer until 1983. Then worked as a reader (1984–89), and Professor from 1990 to 2003. In 2003, the University awarded him the D Sc degree for ‘Contributions to the taxonomy and biology of blue-green algae’.

While working as a lecturer, Anand was awarded the Royal Society of London Commonwealth Bursary in 1983 and had an opportunity to work with Prof. William D. P. Stewart at University of Dundee, Scotland, UK. He visited many leading laboratories in the UK and the experience that he acquired during this trip influenced his later research directions. The following year, he attended the Nitrogen Fixation Conference at Nordwijkerhout, The Netherlands (erstwhile Holland). In 1992, he visited the famous Pasteur Institute in Paris and the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands as a visiting scientist. The same year he was awarded the Fulton Fellowship by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, UK, to work with Prof. J. R. Gallon at the Department of Biochemistry, University of Wales,

Swansea. Anand was among the invited speakers at the 8th Biennial Botanical Conference on Plants for Human Welfare in 1994, held at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.



A brilliant phycologist, Anand progressed to become the Director of CAS in Botany in 2003 and served in that position up to 2007. During his tenure he also served as the Dean of Research from 2004 to 2006. Not only was Anand a dedicated researcher, but also an erudite teacher who handled various subjects from plant sciences to ocean life sciences, as well as industrial microbiology. The 36-year-long career of this ardent teacher and researcher produced 25 Ph Ds and 26 M Phils, who are working in different facets of academia. Anand's hard work, leadership and enthusiasm helped him maintain the CAS status of the Department for 5 years from 2004 to 2009. In 2004, he represented the University of Madras at the NAAC Conference on ‘Best Practices in Higher Education’ held at Goa University, and also at the Research Advisory Council meeting of the Tamil Nadu Forest Department in Chennai.

Anand's research findings have been summarized in eight books which contain information on the taxonomy and biology of freshwater algae, especially Cyanobacteria of South India. He also published more than 200 research articles in reputed national and international journals. The thrust areas of his research were blue-green algae of South Indian rice fields, the biology of microalgae of South Indian mangroves, modulation of nitrogenase in non-heterocystous Cyanobacteria, restriction endonucleases and periplasmic nucleases in Cyanobacteria,

the taxonomy of algae, documentation of medicinal plants of Tamil Nadu and microbes of the Tamil Nadu forests.

During his tenure as the Director of CAS, Anand also held many other positions in various colleges and universities, both in and out of Tamil Nadu. He was a member of the Major Research Project Committee of UGC; subject expert in the project screening committee of UGC, CSIR, DST, DBT and Department of Ocean Development, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India; Advisory Committee member of the Tamil Nadu Council of Science and Technology; Expert Committee member of Teachers Recruitment Board of the Government of Tamil Nadu; Chairman of the Question paper-Setting Committee of Public Service Commission in Jammu & Kashmir and Manipur; Chairman or member of the Board of Studies for more than 10 universities and colleges across the country and external examiner for Ph D theses of 28 universities in India, including Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, and Indian Agriculture Research Institute, New Delhi. Anand was a member of the Internal Quality Assurance of University departments, and member of the Standing Committee and Advisory Committee of the Academic Council of many colleges in Chennai. He was the convener of the Ph D Recognition Committee for the Asthagiri Herbal Foundation, Chennai; Gill Research Institute, Chennai; Orchid Chemicals Research Laboratories, Chennai and Loyola College, Chennai. He was also a member of the delegation to the Universities of Calcutta and Mumbai (2005) for planning inter-university collaborative programmes in teaching and research, as a part of which he also participated in the 150th year Founding Day of both these universities in 2006. Anand attended more than 70 national and international symposiums, seminars and conferences, sharing his knowledge with the research community worldwide.

This highly enthusiastic human being had been a member in many scientific organizations such as the National Academy of Sciences (Allahabad), International Society for Tropical Ecology, Seaweed Research Utilization Association and Indian Science Congress Association to name a few. He was President

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of the Limnological Society of India from 2003 onwards, Vice-President of the Indian Phycological Society, Vice-President of the National Academy of Biological Sciences, and Chief Editor of PHYKOS, the online journal of the Indian Phycological Society. Anand was honoured with many awards like the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Academy of Biological Sciences, Award of Excellence in Academic Records by the Madras Educational Trust

in 1995, and Fellow of the Madras Science Foundation (2006). After superannuation from the University of Madras, Anand served as the Vice-Chancellor of VELS University in Chennai for two years, where he was also the Chairman of Advisory, Planning, Academic and Development Committees of the university.

While we sadly miss him, we at CAS in Botany, University of Madras proudly carry forward Anand's incredible legacy,

with dedication, adding further to what he has left with us. His name shall forever remain alongside the timeless icons of modern Indian phycology.

S. NAGARAJ

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