

An outstanding electrochemist

An obituary of S. Sathyanarayana (1931–1992)

S. Sathyanarayana was born on 15 August 1931, and had his early education in Mysore. He received the Diploma of the Indian Institute of Science in 1956 and served as a Faculty member in Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay where he received his Ph D degree in 1965. He was associated with the Department of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore for more than twenty years (1971–1992) and shouldered the responsibility of the Chairman of the Department during 1983–85.

Sathyanarayana's research interests spanned a wide spectrum of topics such as electrode kinetics, electrochemical energy conversion, corrosion and electro-synthesis. His work elegantly combined the ingredients of both fundamental and applied aspects including system design to solve electrochemical problems of practical importance. Among his many splendoured achievements, mention must be made of the successful development of a manufacturing process for sodium perchlorate and design and fabrication of hermetically sealed nickel-cadmium

battery for space applications in collaboration with Vikram Sarabhai Space



Centre, Trivandrum. Also his research work led to the indigenous production of magnesium-manganese dioxide batt-

eries by Bharat Electronics Ltd. Important among his fundamental contributions are the development of a non-destructive technique (based on transient galvanostatic polarization) for the determination of the individual electrode impedance parameters of sealed electrochemical power sources and the discovery of two-dimensional condensation of camphor, camphene and other terpenes on electrode surfaces which even today evokes considerable interest worldwide.

In the sudden and unexpected death of S. Sathyanarayana on 6 November 1992, we have lost an outstanding electrochemist of our country. He is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son.

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