

G. P. ChannaBasavanna (1920–2000)

An obituary

The growth of acarology in India during the last three decades can be attributed to a few landmark events: organization of two training programmes and founding of the Acarological Society of India in the seventies, organization of the VII International Congress of Acarology and implementation of the All India Coordinated Research Project on Agricultural Acarology by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in the eighties. One personality behind all these events was G. P. ChannaBasavanna (GPC). In the seventies when very few biologists in this country were working on mites and ticks, programmes organized by GPC were successful in training several young biologists of the time in acarology and many of them later took up the study of mites and teaching acarology.

The Acarological Society of India under the presidentship of GPC has published the *Journal of Acarology* (formerly *Indian Journal of Acarology*) and *Acarology Newsletter* which were edited by him. He organized five national symposia under the aegis of this Society. His aim to strengthen acarological research in the country by establishing a network of acarologists was achieved when the ICAR approved his proposal to set up the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Agricultural Acarology with centres in eight universities spread across the country. GPC's main contribution was to our understanding of Eriophyidae (tiny four-legged mites frequenting flower and vegetative buds and many causing galls or erineae to which the recently invaded dreaded coconut mite belongs) and Tetranychidae (spider mites) and house dust mites.

GPC's interest by no means was confined to mites, he also made important contributions to the study of insects, rodents, birds, etc. He was respected among the scientific community for his extensive knowledge on various insect groups. Many of his students worked on taxonomy of insects and mites. It is for this reason that the Department of Entomology at Bangalore is identified with taxonomic research in the country. He was also a strong advocate of Integrated

Pest Management and initiated studies on the management of cabbage pests as early as 1975.

Among the entomologists of this state, M. Puttarudriah and ChannaBasavanna were almost household names during the middle of the last century. Puttarudriah, a student of Paul DeBach, was a strong opponent of modern pesticides whereas GPC was a moderate, proposing need-based usage of pesticides. Both these personalities taught entomology for undergraduate students in the Agricultural College, Bangalore. Several of the students of that time recollect the courses in entomology taught with devotion by GPC



and Puttarudriah even to this day. During his tenure as Head of the Department of Entomology, GPC started the post-graduate course in sericulture, he also initiated research on honey bees. His efforts to popularize bee-keeping resulted in the starting of the Bangalore Beekeeper's Association of which he was the founder President.

Gulur Puttappa ChannaBasavanna or GPC as his students and colleagues fondly called him was born on 8 September 1920 to a modest family in Gulur. His early schooling was at Gulur and at nearby Tumkur. In 1937, he obtained a degree in Zoology at Central College, Bangalore. He served in the State Depart-

ment of Agriculture for a brief period. His assignment during this period was to visit coffee estates in Chikkamagalur to ensure the estate owners undertook control measures against the white stem borer. In 1946, he joined as a lecturer at Hebbal Agricultural College, Bangalore. He worked on insect morphology under the tutelage of Mashood Alam at Aligarh Muslim University from 1951 to 1953 for his master's degree. Later, he was involved in teaching entomology and economic zoology to under-graduate students and studying insects. His pioneering works on ladybird beetles (Coccinellidae), areca mites and sorghum mites during this period are referred to even today. Later in 1960, he took up taxonomy of eriophyids for his doctoral degree at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi under the guidance of Ramdas Menon. His doctoral dissertation was published as a bulletin entitled 'Contribution to the Knowledge of Indian Eriophyid Mites'. It includes descriptions of 70 species of eriophyid mites of which 44 were new to science. In 1970, he took over the reins of the Department of Entomology from Puttarudriah and during the ten-year period as Head, the developments in the department were remarkable. A post-graduate programme in Sericulture was started, apiculture research was strengthened, an All India Multi-location Project on mites was initiated, research on rodents was given a boost, and a project on house dust mites funded by the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi, was initiated. After retirement in 1980, he was designated as Professor (Emeritus) by ICAR till 1985. Later, he served as a visiting professor of Entomology, Chief Advisor to AICRP (Agricultural Acarology) and Indo-Dutch project on Uji fly management.

His energy knew no bounds. He was disappointed that his health did not permit him to participate in the workshop of AICRP (Agricultural Acarology) this April, at Kalyani. He had unfailingly participated in all the workshops of the above project in the past. He had extensively toured in Europe, USA, Japan and Philippines. He participated in the III–VI International Congresses of Acarology

and chaired sessions at the sixth and seventh Congresses.

He served as member on the Entomology/Nematology Scientific Panel of the ICAR and as chairman or member of quinquennial review teams (QRT) set up by the ICAR. As a member of the Editorial Board of the *Indian Journal of Entomology*, *Indian Journal of Sericulture* and *Mysore Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, he helped in maintaining high standards.

In recognition of his lifetime contributions to entomology and acarology he was conferred the 'Rajyotsava Award' by the Government of Karnataka in 1992 and was recognized as 'Emeritus Acarologist' by the Acarological Society of India.

GPC will be remembered by the students of science through his more than 200 publications and three books on agricultural entomology and acarology. After

a brief illness GPC died on 1 May 2000. He is survived by his wife, three sons and six grand children.

B. MALLIK
C. A. VIRAKTAMATH

*Department of Entomology,
University of Agricultural Sciences,
GKVK, Bangalore 560 065, India*

CURRENT SCIENCE

Special Section on Surface Characterization

(25 June 2000)

Guest Editor: M. K. Sanyal

Progress in scanning probe microscopy: High resolution force microscopy and spectroscopy

Ragnar Erlandsson and Peter Apell

Neutron scattering for surface characterization

J. Penfold

X-ray reflectivity and diffuse scattering

A. Gibaud and S. Hazra

Grazing incidence X-ray diffraction

Pulak Dutta

Investigations of semiconductor surfaces and interfaces by X-ray grazing incidence diffraction

Ullrich Pietsch

X-ray scattering at liquid surfaces and interfaces

Jean Daillant

Surface physics at Saha Institute

S. Banerjee, S. R. Bhattacharyya, P. Chakraborty, A. Dutta, D. Ghose,
S. Kundu and M. K. Sanyal

Aspects of surface and interface characterization by X-rays:

The research programme at IOP, Bhubaneswar

B. N. Dev

Surface and interface studies at IUC-DAEF, Indore

B. A. Dasannacharya, Ajay Gupta, S. M. Chaudhari, V. Ganesan and T. Shripathi

Twenty years of surface science in the Department of Physics, University of Pune

S. K. Kulkarni

Surface analytical facility at NPL, New Delhi

B. R. Chakraborty, Pardeep Mohan, S. M. Shivaprasad, D. R. Sharma,
C. Anandan, A. C. Gupta and A. K. Raychaudhuri

Surface characterization of thin film devices and optical elements

N. K. Sahoo, D. Bhattacharyya, S. Thakur, Dinesh Udupa, R. P. Shukla,
N. C. Das and A. P. Roy