

Chockalingam Srinivasan (1938–2023)

Professor Chockalingam Srinivasan passed away on 24 January 2023 in Ahmedabad at the age of 85 years, after a brief illness.

Srinivasan was born on 22 October 1938 in Shencottah, Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu, India. His early days were spent initially in Virudhunagar and later in Chidambaram, where his father was working in Annamalai University. In 1958, Srinivasan received the Viscount Goshen Chemistry (Honors) Prize from Annamalai University for completing his B.Sc. Honors with first class and first rank, and he repeated the same distinction in M.Sc. also in 1959. He did his Ph.D. in chemistry from Annamalai University, during its golden era, under the guidance of V. Baliah, an illustrious chemist. After a brief teaching career at Annamalai University as a Lecturer, Srinivasan worked as a Senior Lecturer and PG Professor at VHNSN College, Virudhunagar from July 1968 to April 1971. From 1971 to December 1983, he worked as a Reader at Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU), first at VOC College Turicorin (till 1976) and then at School of Chemistry, MKU. He became Professor and was then promoted to Senior Professor in January 1994. After his formal retirement in June 1999, he continued as Emeritus Professor at the Department of Materials Science at MKU.

As a highly respected teacher and inspirational role model, Srinivasan's meticulous clarity, simplicity and thoroughness in the subjects he taught was admired by his students, who went on to occupy high positions worldwide in academics, research and industry.

In a brilliant research career spanning more than four decades, Srinivasan had guided 25 Ph.D. students (including the present authors) and more than 50 students completed their M.Phil. degrees under his supervision. It is not an exaggeration to mention that he acted as a catalyst in sowing the seeds for promoting an ambience for quality research and for publishing scholarly research articles at the School of Chemistry at MKU. Srinivasan has published more than 130 papers in international journals. As a renowned chemist his research contributions involved studies in sulphur chemistry, mechanistic organic photochemistry in TiO₂, native and surface-modified semiconductor nanoparticles, zeolites and cyclodextrins as well as photophysical studies. He completed seven funded projects as a Principal Investigator from UGC, AICTE,

DST and CSIR. He visited various countries, including Hungary, Germany, Japan and Taiwan for academic interactions; in particular, his academic interaction with Kuang-Lieh Lu of Academia Sinica, Taiwan is noteworthy. With his penchant for popularization of science concepts, Srinivasan contributed more than 25 popular science articles on a wide range of topics in both English and Tamil.



Srinivasan was the recipient of numerous honours and awards. In 1992, he received the 'INSA-DFG Award' from the Max Planck Institute for Strahlenchemie in Mulheim, Germany and in 1994, the 'Best Administrator Award' from MKU. In 1993–94, Srinivasan received the 'Dr Radhakrishnan Best Teacher Award' from the Tamil Nadu Government. In January 2007, he received the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from the Indian Society for Radiation and Photochemical Sciences at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, in view of his initiatives and motivating younger colleagues and scholars who aspired to work in photochemistry.

During his tenure, Srinivasan was instrumental in setting up the Department of the Materials Science at MKU. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first department among State Universities in South India. He also played a stellar role, as its founder Head, in establishing the Department of Future Studies at MKU, well appreciated for its pioneering initiatives, and subsequently approved by UGC and the Government of Tamil Nadu. With his deep sense of commitment to quality research and growth of the University, Srinivasan was instrumental in recruiting many outstanding faculty members in the School of Chemistry at MKU. He also played a pivotal role in uplifting the University Service Instrumentation Centre. His efforts in the Industrial Consultancy Group had resulted

in interactions between several industries and MKU. DSIR, New Delhi, impressed by his activities, recommended the establishment of a Technology Business Incubator Centre at MKU. Srinivasan worked as a consultant for SPIC, Fenner, Kothari Fine Chemicals, ISRO Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (Mahendirakiri), Indian Syntans and other companies on the selection and analysis of import substitutes, raw materials and the analysis of monomers used in polymerization. He was member of the Indian Council of Medical Research, Ethical Committee of Aravind Medical Research Foundation, Aravind Eye Care System, Madurai for three terms. During this period, Srinivasan had contributed immensely to the ethical issues pertaining to research involving human patients.

Besides his brilliance in academics, Srinivasan was also an astute, sincere and committed administrator. In 1989, as the local Secretary, he organized the 76th Indian Science Congress at MKU along with T. J. Pandian. He was Special Officer (Planning and Development at MKU), and his tenure was marked by the setting up of many Centres/Chairs, and also for the administrative reforms and visionary initiatives implemented at the University. It is relevant to note here that the guidelines for the total financial autonomy of extramural projects (a unique, first-of-its-kind initiative) were prepared and implemented during his tenure as Special Officer at MKU. He was also Dean in Charge of the College Development Cell and Research Coordinator. (His tenure as the Research Coordinator was notable for many scholar-friendly initiatives, and quick and transparent processing of these, which are still followed in the University.)

He is survived by two sons, two daughters and grandchildren. Apart from his committed academic life, spanning nearly 50 years, Srinivasan loved to listen to Carnatic music.

His memory will live forever in the hearts and minds of his family members, friends and colleagues, and in the hundreds of students he taught and inspired.

S. RAJAGOPAL^{1,*}
K. PITCHUMANI^{1,2,*}

¹*School of Chemistry,
Madurai Kamaraj University,
Madurai 625 021, India*

²*Manonmaniam Sundaranar University,
Thirunelveli 627 012, India*

**e-mail: rajagopalseenivasan@yahoo.com;
pit12399@yahoo.com*