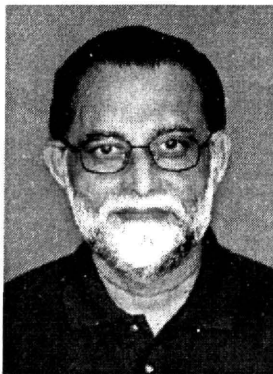


Obituary



Prof. R. Krishnanath
(1938-2007)

Prof. R. Krishnanath, the quintessential teacher and field geologist died on his 69th birthday, 22 April 2007, at Trivandrum, in Kerala. Prof. Krishnanath retired as a professor of geology, from the University of Kerala, where he taught for 30 years from 1968 up to his retirement in 1998. He was a true socialist in teaching and could perceive genius in every student he taught.

Prof. Krishnanath was born in the Manchanamadom family (which had its share of freedom fighters) of Chengannur, in the erstwhile state of Travancore in southern Kerala. He secured BSc from Alagappa University and MSc from Annamalai University in 1960 and again from Syracuse University, USA in 1978.

He joined the Govt. Engineering College, Trichur, as a lecturer in geology in 1962. Subsequently he moved to the prestigious University College, Trivandrum and later to the Dept of Geology, University of Kerala. His 1979 thesis with Prof. Burns at Syracuse University, on the '*Textures and microstructures of the high-grade metamorphic rocks of Kilimanoor-Chadayamangalam area, Kerala*' was amongst the first such in-depth studies on the Kerala Khondalite Belt (KKB). His classic paper (*JGSI, 1981, v.22 pp.235-242*) on the marbles of Ambasamudram in Tamil Nadu was the first analytical study on these humite-chondrodite-spinel-magnesian-calcite assemblages in the KKB. It received extensive citation even a quarter of a century later (Braun and Kriegsman, 2003, *Geol. Soc. London Spl. Publ., v.206 pp.169-202*). He proposed a meta-igneous origin for the rocks of the Nagercoil area, based on structural and textural studies. In 2000, with his doctoral student, he used the humite assemblages to reconstruct the Neoproterozoic E.Gondwana geometry (*Jour. Geodyn., 2000, v.29 pp.43-62*). His versatility is revealed by his publications in

sedimentology (*on selenite crystals from the mud banks near Alleppey, JGSI, 1971, v.12, pp.403-406*), in rock mechanics (*Identification and location of slide-prone areas of Western Ghats. Indian Geotech. Jour., 1996, v.26 pp.407-16*).

Prof. Krishnanath also worked on '*Slope processes along river channels and communication arteries of Western Ghats, Kerala*', which has the distinction of being the first study which addressed these problems from a rock mechanics point-of-view. He was co-convenor of the Indian National Working Group of an UNESCO-IUGS project.

For his students Prof. Krishnanath was a man who exuded warmth, with a genuinely open smile, always ready with a quip. He was a respected teacher, with a deep, mesmerising voice, that carried with it the courage of conviction and the softness of reassurance. His metamorphic petrology lectures were extempore, often dramatic, and his intense passion brought life to *P-T-t* paths and mixed volatile equilibria. Many of his students have gone on to achieve excellence in their own lives and careers, inspired by his ideals, attitudes, humane nature, writing style.

Prof. Krishnanath was a life member of the Geological Society of India. His passion other than geology was the Rotary Club, in which he went on to occupy top positions. His Rotary-based voluntary work in drilling borewells in Tirunelveli, setting up highway-based emergency rescue ambulances for accident victims in Kerala and in the post-tsunami palliative activities brought him the respect and recognition of society at large. Prof. Krishnanath is survived by his wife Kamala and their three children.

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