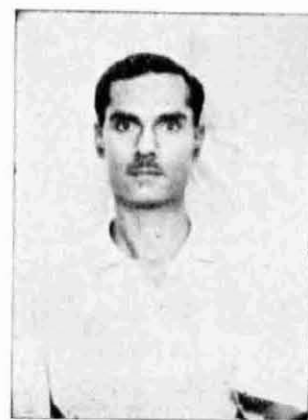


IN MEMORIAM

Against the general back-ground of peaceful and fine record of scientific activities in the Botanical Survey of India, the few incidents that so unexpectedly befell the department, coming as too much of shocking events, tended to marr the otherwise calm and genial atmosphere. On 21.4.1970, Dr. R. P. Varma, Editor of Publications, Botanical Survey of India died at his Calcutta residence, after a brief illness resulting in a nervous breakdown which abruptly took over his life.

Born on 21st October, 1925 to an illustrious and highly talented, respectable family at Trivandram in Kerala State, Ravi Prasanna Varma had his early education in Trivandram. He had a brilliant academic career. He took his B. Sc. degree from the Kerala University in 1946 with Botany main and Zoology as subsidiary subject, securing first class and first rank. In 1948, he took his B. Sc. (Hons.) degree of the Madras University, again securing the first rank and winning the University Gold Medal for proficiency in Botany, which was soon to follow with a Research Scholarship from the same *Al'ma Māt'er*. During 1948-1952, he did original researches in Plant Pathology and Mycology under Prof. Dr. T. S. Sadasivan in the Madras University Botany Research Laboratory which led him to the Doctorate Degree for his thesis on "*Fusarium wilt of Tomato*". During his research course, Dr. Varma also qualified himself in Modern European Languages by taking the diploma in German in the Madras University.



DR. VARMA [1925-1970]

In 1952, Dr. Varma was offered the post of Associate Professor of Botany in the Annamalai University, in which capacity Dr. Varma served for nearly three years.

Dr. Varma, however, did not continue long in the Annamalai University. In 1955, Dr. Varma joined the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute at Mandapam Camp in South India, as Algologist. He made significant contributions, as he conducted extensive explorations along the Indian coasts from Dwaraka on the Arabian Sea-coast to Orissa on the Bay of Bengal coast. He also conducted intensive planned survey in the Gulf of Manaar, from Dhanushkodi to Hare Island, to assess, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, the wealth of economic sea-weeds. This survey proved to be the pioneer effort in these directions in India. Under the F.A.O. scheme, Dr. Varma also studied the deep-sea flora of Pearl-beds, off Tuticorin, actively participating in deep-sea Pearl-bed diving operations with the aid of *aqualung*, under the direction of Dr. Salvadori, the F.A.O. foreign expert. Dr. Varma has quite valuable scientific papers to his credit, based on his own field surveys and investigations; the erection of a new genus of the Lophothaliaeae from India would merit commendation.

During 1960-61, Dr. Varma went on deputation to Japan under the Colombo Plan, to study the utilisation of marine algae in relation to Industries and Commerce. While in Japan, he worked in different research institutions attached to various Prefectures such as Aichi, Mia, Wagano, Giju, Schizuoka, Hiroshima, Shimane, Hokkaido and others. He also visited during this study tour,

Izu Islands and Izu Peninsula, Tokyo Bay, Hawaii University and institutions in Philippines, Borneo, Java etc. During these tours, Dr. Varma did valuable work on Pearl-culture as obtained in Japan, and culture of *Porphyra*, *Monostroma*, *Enteromorpha*, and other sea-weeds. He also studied the process of manufacture of Agar-agar, Alginic acid and other marine algal products. He worked on the ecology of *Prasiola*, *Gracilaria*, *Laminaria*, *Undaria*, *Gelidium* and other species. Besides, he also studied the various aspects of Pond-culture, Oysterfarming, economic and commercial potentials of marine products and application of C^{14} technique in evaluation of Oceanic productivity.

Dr. Varma's practical experience and intimate knowledge of the technicalities of scientific publications in the Marine Research Institute enabled him to accept the offer of appointment as Editor of Publications in the Botanical Survey of India. He joined the Survey on the 1st February, 1964, and he held the post till his untimely death.

The range of problems handled by Dr. Varma in his Printing and Publication section of the Botanical Survey of India, is impressively diverse. Very soon he built up the Publication section to its pre-eminent position in the Survey through an admirable display of speed, flexibility and imagination. New features were incorporated in the matter of scientific publications to cater to diverse interests in Botany; several new types of publications were got through the section by way of special and distinctive series, such as "Chapters on History of Indian Botany", fascicles of "Icones Roxburghianae", "Phycologia Indica", and the series of Records, Reports and Bulletins of the Botanical Survey of India. Dr. Varma, not only designed his Printing and Publication section, but also built up the proper atmosphere to yield the maximum results. In this process, he developed both impressive improvements on the existing standards of the publications—some entirely original innovations—and an excellent team-spirit which is bound to prevail and keep many of the characteristics of its humble origin for years to come.

To the officers in the Survey, Dr. Varma was a delightful companion, who had spent so many years, working for all classes of scientific officers in the department; and in matters relating to their publications, no detail is left to chance by him, whereby he won the confidence and the friendship of all. He was an accomplished artist, being a good musician and modeller. His high sense of humour, self assurance, polished arguments, continued confrontations as occasion demanded, wit and gaiety, his great sense of hospitality, his generous impulses and ever helping attitude and many other attributes will portray the true picture of Dr. Varma, and each and every one who came under his influence could find a true friend in him. Having had the good fortune to know Dr. Varma very intimately and having had the pleasure of working with him for the Printing and Publication section for several years, I am naturally moved to give impressions of this gifted and dedicated colleague-friend, and as a fitting tribute to him, may I inscribe my deep-felt appreciations with the candid expressions that "indeed his work was his greatest memorial".

Dr. Varma is survived by his wife and two minor sons. May late Dr. Varma's soul rest in peace.

23 Sripuram, Tirunelvely
22nd June, 1970

K. S. SRINIVASAN