

V. Krishnamurthy (1921–2014)

Vasudeva Krishnamurthy, an eminent botanist and a pioneer phycologist in India, who laid the foundation for advanced research in the field of Indian marine algae died on 9 May 2014 at Chennai. He was the distinguished student of M. O. P. Iyengar, the father of Indian Algology.

Krishnamurthy was born on 14 August 1921 at Valavanur, Villipuram District, Tamil Nadu. His father was R. Vasudeva Sharma (a renowned Sanskrit and Tamil Scholar) and his mother was Meenakshi-sundari. As a scion of well-educated family, his academic records were excellent. He got his basic schooling at Puducherry. He completed B A degree with botany as main subject from St Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli under Madras University in 1940 and B Sc (Hon's) degree in botany from the Presidency College, Chennai in 1942. He was awarded the Pulny Andy Gold Medal by the University of Madras for obtaining first rank in the Presidency College. He earned M A degree in 1947 and M Sc degree in Botany in 1952 from the Madras University by submitting the thesis *Studies on some South India Algae*.

Being a scholar in botany, he started his professional career in teaching as a Lecturer in Botany at Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai (1943–1946). In 1946, he joined Presidency College, Chennai as Assistant Professor and later, he was deputed under the Colombo Plan to the University of Manchester, UK in 1956. Under the guidance of M. O. P. Iyengar, he obtained Ph D in 1958 in the field of marine algae. During 1959–1960, he worked as a Reader in Botany at the St Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli. He was appointed as Professor of Biology in Thanjavur Medical College in 1961 and then he joined the Department of Public Health Engineering in the College of Engineering, Guindy, at Chennai in the same capacity and worked till 1965. Later, he entered as marine algologist at the Central Salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute (under CSIR),

Bhavnagar, Gujarat and served there up to 1971. During this period, he published monumental work on the Indian seaweeds *A Checklist of Indian Marine Algae* (Krishnamurthy & Joshi, 1970) and reported several new genera and species of marine algae from the Indian waters. With his consistent efforts, the Marine Algal Research Station of CSMCRI was established at Mandapam in Ramana-thapuram district, Tamil Nadu. In 1972, he again joined as Professor of Botany at L.N. Govt College, Ponneri, and was promoted as college principal. He superannuated in 1979. Then he served as an Honorary Professor at Pachaiyappa's College, Chennai and as Emeritus Professor in the Presidency College, Chennai.



A scholar, distinguished teacher and vigorous scientist, Krishnamurthy contributed a lot and brought a revolution in the field of Indian algology, particularly in the field of marine algae (seaweeds). He founded Seaweed Research and Utilization Association in 1970 and Krishnamurthy Institute of Algology in 1991 for promoting the algae research in India, and worked as the Director of the Institute till the last moment. He was a Fellow of several Algal Research Associations and recipients of several medals. He was a good administrator and organizer. He organized more than 20 national and international seminars, symposia and workshops pertaining to the various aspects of the marine algae. He published more than 100 original research papers

on the Indian marine as well as fresh water algae in national and international journals. Besides, he authored and edited several books on the Indian marine algae, which are now considered as monumental works and as foundation for the modernization of Indian algal research. He was the chief editor of several Indian seaweeds journals like *Seaweed Research and Utilisation*, *Indian Hydrobiology*, etc. Krishnamurthy visited the USA, the UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Australia and presented several papers on the Indian algal research. Besides, he also conducted several training programmes and short-term courses on the Algal Research Methodology, Algal Products and Algal Taxonomy. He guided more than 15 Ph D students and more than 10 M Phil students.

During his long scientific career, Krishnamurthy published several monographs and popular books on the *Red, Brown and Green Seaweeds of India*. Some of his publications like *Rhodophyta, Parts I & II* (Desikachary *et al.*, 1990 & 1998), *Algae of India and Neighbouring Countries I. Chlorophycota* (2000), *Phaeophyceae of India and Neighbourhood*, Vol. I. (Krishnamurthy & Baluswamy, 2010), etc. are the foundations for the new generations of phycologists. He was busy in preparing the manuscript for the second volume of the *Phaeophyceae of India and Neighbourhood* at the time of his passing. His efforts in the last six decades to promote and popularize algal research in India and his thoughts and contributions are amazing and will be remembered forever.

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