IN MEMORIAM : DR. A. S. RAO (1924-1983)

Dr. Aragula Sathyanarayana Rao (A. S. Rao) was born on 10th January, 1924 & had his school education from Mysore and got his both B. Sc. and M. Sc. degrees with Botany, securing First Class from the University of Mysore in the years 1944 and 1946 respectively. He obtained his Ph. D. from Washington University, St. Louis (MO), USA for his work on the Revision of *Rauvolfia* L. in the year 1956.



During his academic career, he got Fulbright and Smith-Mundt scholarship from Cornell University, Ithaca (NY), USA ; Ciba Fellowship from Missouri Botanical Garden ; van Balcrom Scholarship and University Tution Scholarship from Washington University, USA and National Research Council of Canada, Post-doctoral Fellowship from the University of Toronto, Canada.

Dr. Rao worked as Lecturer in Botany, Head of the Deptt. etc. in University of Mysore, & in various Educational Institutions in Kornataka. Since 1961 and till his retirement in January, 1982 he worked in Botanical Survey of India in different capacities.. He joined as Consultant in North Eastern Council, Govt. of India, Shillong after retirement. He had provided what is perhaps the first statement in tabular form a list of rare, endemic or otherwise interesting plants of Assam (old Assam, now the N.E. Region) in his contribution : "The vegetation and phytogeography of Assam-Burma pp. 204-246 in Ecology and Biogeography in India (ed. Mani), The Hague 1974" This also includes photographs of several rare plants.

He had a special interest in the orchids and has, in a considerable extent contributed to the development of the National Orchidarium at Shillong, including the designing and completion of a large glass house. The Orchidarium now has a collection of nearly 5000 plants representing about 400 species.

He was responsible for the starting and development of Experimental Gardens at Shillong and Barapani in Meghalaya and of the High Altitude Garden at Pauri and a Nature Reserve at Khirsu (both in Garhwal Himalaya).

He had published about 80 papers, being the outcome on plant explorations. These include several aspects of Floristics and Taxonomic research. He had described 14 new taxa including 2 genera, 12 species, 2 varieties, as also a dozen new records. Among the floristic papers, mention can be made those covering Biligiri Rangan Hills.

He has guided the research of his colleagues and staff, who have published about 50 papers under his guidance and four have taken their Ph. D. under his guidance.

Apart from research papers, he had written numerous popular articles and spoken several time on the All India Radio. An illustrated book on the 'Orchids of India',

has been published by the National Book Trust, India.

He has served in various Committees and Boards of study in Universities, Government organisations and Autonomous Bodies. He was an active member of the Assam and Meghalaya Wildlife Board.

He was a member of the Indian Botanical Society, Indian Biological Society, Indian Society of Plant Taxonomists and Indian Science Congress Association. His name was included in the International Directory of Plant Taxonomists published by the I.A.R.T., Netherlands.

Due to an unfortunate accident at Madras during his official assignment, he bid farewell to this world in the year 1983.

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