

OBITUARY

Professor A. Ramesh

(1938-1999)



Professor A. Ramesh is no more with us. He died of cardiac arrest on 13 December, 1999 leaving behind his wife, mother, two daughters and a large family of relatives, friends, students and admirers.

Born on July 11, 1938 in Attar village in South Kanara district of Karnataka in a family of priests, Attar Ramesh had his early schooling at Coimbatore. He graduated in geography from the Presidency College, University of Madras in 1961. He had his research training at the Banaras Hindu University and was awarded the Ph. D. degree in geography in 1965. He joined the university of Mysore in 1966 and was initiated in inter-disciplinary research by Professor R. P. Misra at the Institute of Development Studies. He came to the Department of Geography, university of Madras as a lecturer

in 1968, and was elevated to the post of Reader in 1972, Professor in 1976 and senior Professor in 1998. He retired from the University in June, 1999.

Ramesh had a distinguished academic career. He was a conscientious teacher. He planned his lectures meticulously, using slides transparencies and other usual aids. His excellent communication skill made him a very effective teacher. His lectures would be interspersed with jokes and anecdotes and even after long sessions, the students would still be longing for more.

The research interests of Ramesh were diversified. His first love was urban geography, primarily because of his training at the B. H. U. School. He published a number of research papers on individual cities in Tamil Nadu and

on the process of urbanization in the regional context. Later on, he developed interest in thematic cartography and associated with R. P. Misra to bring out 'Fundamentals of Cartography' in 1968. In association with P. S. Tiwari, he published the widely acclaimed 'Basic Resource Atlas of Tamil Nadu' in 1984. His long academic association with B. Hyma of the university of Waterloo, Canada, led him to geography of health, and he published a number of studies on disease ecology, spatial aspects of health care delivery and traditional medical systems of India. He conducted an international symposium on infectious and chronic diseases in association with the I. G. U. in 1981. In recognition of his seminal contributions to geography, particularly medical geography, he was conferred D.Sc. degree by the Free University, Brussels and was honoured with the membership of the Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences , Belgium in 1989.

Apart from urban geography, cartography and geography of health, Ramesh has made valuable research contributions in the fields of Environmental Impact Assessment, Water Resource Management and computer applications in geography.

Ramesh distinguished himself also as an administrator. He guided the destiny of the

Department of Geography at Madras university for three decades. Under his stewardship, the Department blossomed into a centre of excellence in geography and was selected for Special Assistance programme of the University Grants Commission in 1994. His style of functioning was informal. The secret of his success lay in his capacity to carry the entire faculty with him and motivate them to contribute their best for the advancement of the Department. He was the architect of the academic partnership between the university of Madras and the university of Waterloo, Canada, which provided valuable resources and expertise to equip the Department. Associated with most of the national committees on geography in the last two decades, Ramesh shall always be remembered for his efforts to modernise geographic education in this country.

Ramesh was an excellent human being. He was simple, unassuming and ever ready to help others. He had an endearing personality and a well-developed sense of humour. He had mastered the art of making people happy. He was very popular among his students, colleagues and friends spread all over the world. With his sad demise, Indian geography has lost one of its best exponents.

— P. S. Tiwari,