

IN MEMORIAM

PROFESSOR GEORGE KURIYAN (1907-1983)

Professor George Kuriyan, a veritable bastion of Indian geography, died on 22nd August 1983 at Madras. He was 76. In his death, the country has lost an able and enlightened citizen and the Indian geography one of its pioneers.

Born at Trivandrum on November 11, 1907, Dr. Kuriyan had his schooling at Trivandrum, University education at Madras from where he graduated in 1927 and his doctorate from the University of London. During his long association with University education that spanned over a period of more than four decades he held many important assignments, both at home and abroad. He joined the University of Madras as a Lecturer in 1931 and rose steadily to the position of a Reader and then to a Professor, a post he held till his retirement from the University in 1967. While holding a permanent position at Madras, Dr. Kuriyan was invited to organize and develop the department of Geography in the University of Delhi as its chairman, and by virtue of his office worked as a Director of the Delhi School of Economics for over a year.

Internationally known in the field of geography Dr. Kuriyan had the rare distinction of being the first Indian to be elected as the Vice-President of the International Geographical Union in 1948, and enjoyed the honour of being on the Social Science Council of UNESCO for five consecutive terms. A recipient of the Smith Mundt and

Fulbright fellowships, the latter twice, Professor Kuriyan was offered visiting professorship by Syracuse and Indiana Universities, during his tenure at Madras, and by New York State University and the School of Oriental and African Studies after his retirement.

A scholar of eminence, he was widely known for his interest in, and writings on, Indian geography. He wrote several research papers on the food and energy resources of the country and edited, for long, the Indian Geographical Journal. He was also one of the editors of 'Land and People of India' series of the National Book Trust.

More than an academician and geographer of repute, Prof. Kuriyan affectionately called by his friends 'George', was an excellent conversationalist and known among his colleagues, friends and admirers for the human touch he carried; the suave temperament he possessed and the wit he used to disarm his friends and adversaries. A man of impeccable manners, he was well at ease among the people coming from different backgrounds. His colleagues and students enjoyed his association and loved him for his scholarship, forthright advice and a human approach.

The Institute of Indian Geographers deeply mourns his death and pays homage to this departed doyen of Indian geography.

Editor