



Dr. K. Ramamurthy
(1915-2001)

Dr. K. Ramamurthy was one of the dedicated teachers that the department of Geography, University of Pune had the privilege to have on its faculty. Almost from its inception Dr. K. Ramamurthy taught, did research, and trained a genera-

tion of students for over twenty-five years, before retiring in 1977.

Dr. Ramamurthy passed away on 19th December 2001, at Hyderabad, following a heart failure, in the presence of Ms Ramamurthy and his son Dr. Muralidharan by his bedside. He is survived by his wife, a daughter, a son and several grand and great grandchildren.

Ramamurthy was born in a village called Naikuppam, in the North Arcot district of Tamilnadu, on the 1st of October 1915. After his primary school education which he finished at his ancestral village, he joined P. S. High School, Mylapur, at Madras, and later moved to Loyola College, Madras, from where he obtained his B.A. (Hons.) in Mathematics. At this stage Dr. Ramamurthy changed tracks and came to geography, earning first a P.G. Diploma in geography, then an M.A., followed by an M. Litt. in geography, all from the university of Madras. He got his Ph.D. much later, while teaching at Pune.

Dr. Ramamurthy started his career as a teacher in a Teachers Training College, Sidapur, Madras. Later, he taught geography at Vivekanand College, Madras, and finally joined the University of Pune as a Lecturer, in the newly opened department of geography, in 1954. He was appointed Reader in the same department and continued in this position until his retirement. Dr. Ramamurthy's area of specialisation was climatology though he taught quantitative techniques and agricultural geography for much of his say at Pune. But his deep and abiding

interest was in Maps and Map Interpretation. He loved maps, cared for maps, interpreted maps, and made the best use of maps in his writings. His area of research ranged from Regional Synthesis (seen in his regional account of districts in the revised district gazetteers of Maharashtra) to climatology, the subject in which he got his doctorate, to Quantitative techniques. His two publications: the first, 'Rainfall Regimes in Tamilnadu' and 'Rainfall Regimes in India' both published from the university of Madras, are still relevant and widely consulted and speak eloquently for his scholarship.

Dr Ramamurthy was very much influenced by Prof. B.M. Thirunaranan of Madras, and later came under the spell of Prof. N. Subramaniam, while teaching at the Teachers Training College.

Dr. Ramamurthy was an intensely dedicated teacher looking for aids and examples to make his lectures interesting. Residing on the campus of the University, he spent much of his time in the department, teaching and guiding students. He was very forthright in his views and sometimes even temperamental, calling a spade a spade. He was fond of his students and respected their views, and suggested to them and their colleagues the latest arrivals in the library. The writer of this note was a beneficiary of his advice on matters pertaining to books and periodicals. Dr. Ramamurthy lived a simple and unpretentious life. His motto- 'Work is worship when you work, and worship is work when retired' says his son Dr. Muralidharan, Head, Crop Protection Division, Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad. After his retirement Dr Ramamurthy first worked as a Retired Scientist affiliated to Bangalore University, and before his death, living by his principles, he spent his time reading Vedanta and Shankara's philosophy.

The Department of Geography will ever remember Dr. Ramamurthy as one of its early pillars known for his simplicity and commitment to geography and its teaching.

K.R. Diksit