

OBITUARY

S. SUBBA RAO

1936—1978

The sudden and premature demise of Dr. Suryadevara Subba Rao, Reader in the School of Studies in Geology, Vikram University, Ujjain, M.P., on the 21 January 1978 came as a great shock to his many friends and colleagues.

Dr. Subba Rao was born on 1st July, 1936 in Sekuru village of Guntur district in coastal Andhra Pradesh. He had his early education in Tenali and Guntur. Later, he took his Masters degree from the Andhra University in 1956 obtaining First Rank. He took his Ph.D. from Saugar University under the supervision of Professor W. D. West on the 'Geology of the Igneous Complex of the Girnar Hills, Gujarat State'. His Doctoral thesis was commended by Prof. J.E. Richey, F.R.S.

Soon after his M.Sc., he joined Gauhati University as Lecturer in Geology for a short period (April to July 1957), and left the post to join Saugar University as a Govt. of India Research Scholar. After completing his research work, he joined the Vikram University in July 1961, became Reader in 1969 and worked as Head of the Department for two years.

Dr. Subba Rao spent three months in the U.K. under the YSES Programme.

His important contribution relate to (1) Regional study of Deccan Traps with specific reference to the nature of igneous activity, petrology and economic aspects, (2) Petrological studies of the carbonatites of India, (3) Mineralization in relation to the chemical composition of basement rocks and tectonism, (4) Exploration of mineral deposits along the Narmada River Valley in M.P., (5) Agro-geological surveys and environmental geological problems in Malwa region, (6) Land-Water resources of different regions in M.P. His book-writing project on the Deccan Traps was nearing completion at the time of his death.

He started the course of Agricultural Geology at the M. Phil level. This was a new course of study and research introduced for the first time in the curriculum. He realised that Agricultural Geology was a field wherein we could make use of our scientific knowledge for the betterment of our countrymen. He had received encouragement from Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, in this endeavour. He made great efforts for the Introduction of Geology at the Higher Secondary School Level and to have it as a common subject in the Graduate Course. He always laid emphasis on research studies of practical importance and of an inter-disciplinary nature.

The confrontation of the traditional culture of India with the worldliness of modern civilization became his deep concern. He was an idealist who could not readily tolerate what he considered to be the lapses in conduct that he saw around him, and he resorted to self-imprisonment in his Department for several months. The strain and tension proved fatal and he suffered a cerebral haemorrhage.

A generation of geology and non-geology students from Vikram and Saugar Universities mourn his loss, for he was always interested in their work and welfare and helped them in every possible way. His straightforwardness, unbounded generosity, transparent sincerity and self-effacing modesty marked him out as a man of noble and outstanding character.

P. SATYANARAYANA