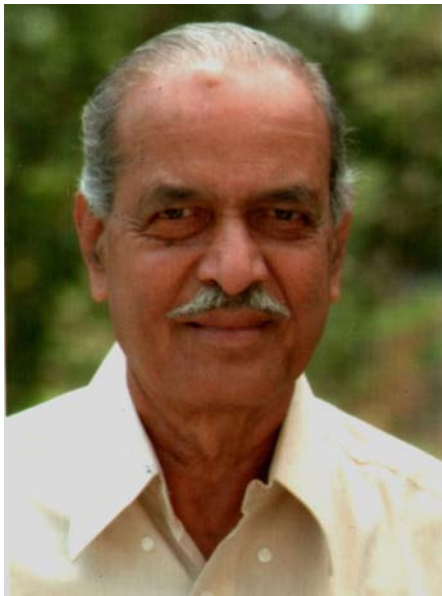


Obituary

Dr. Vasudeo Narayan Naik (20 June, 1933 – 19 October, 2012)



The botanical fraternity of India lost a great pillar of strength with the sad demise of Dr. Vasudeo Narayan Naik on 19 October, 2012. Born on 20 June, 1933 at Palam in Parbhani district of Marathwada (Maharashtra), Dr. Naik was the third amongst the eight siblings. His father was a *Raajvaidya* of Hyderabad Nizam. He graduated from Rajaram College, Kolhapur in 1955 and wanted to join the Indian Army, a wish remained unfulfilled. Later he joined Siddharth College of Arts & Science and completed his Master's degree from the University of Bombay in 1957. He then joined the Botanical Survey of India, Eastern Circle, Shillong and worked for about three years. Later, he joined as a Lecturer in Botany at Ramkrishna Paramhans College, Osmanabad in 1962. He got his Doctoral degree from the then Marathwada University (now known as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University) in 1969.

Dr. Naik was a self-disciplined dedicated teacher and researcher. His research work was mainly centred towards the plants of Marathwada region. He had 12 books and more than 75 research papers to his credit. His contributions to plant taxonomy include studies on Poaceae of Marathwada

region and revisions of genera such as *Alternanthera*, *Alysicarpus*, *Amaranthus*, *Blumea*, *Chlorophytum* and *Dipcadi*. He utilized anatomy, cytology, hybridisation, ecology and other subdisciplines of botany to address various taxonomic problems. One of his books, '*Taxonomy of Angiosperm*', published in 1984 by Tata-McGraw Hill is still the most popular book amongst the students and the botanists. The book has been reprinted twenty-seven times till date.

He continued his research work even after his retirement in 1993 which culminated in the publication of '*Flora of Marathwada*' in 1998 reporting 1645 species of angiosperms from the region. He was bestowed upon with Prof. Y.D. Tiagi Gold Medal in 2000 by the Indian Association for Angiosperm Taxonomy in recognition of his commendable contributions to taxonomy.

His penchant for plant collection did not confine him to Marathwada region but took him all over the country. He also exchanged plant material with various herbaria in India and abroad. Important herbaria from abroad include Aarhus University Herbarium, Denmark; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England; Rijksherbarium, Leiden, The Netherlands; Botanical Institute of Zurich, Switzerland, Göttingen and Helsinki. The deposited accessions in the herbarium of Marathwada University increased to a sizeable collection of more than 80000 specimens during his tenure. He felt fulfilled when the herbarium got indexed in the *Index Herbariorum* with an acronym 'BAMU' in 2009.

He has been honoured by the taxonomic fraternity by commemorating his name to a number of plant taxa such as *Alysicarpus naikianus*, *Crotalaria naikiana*, *Fimbristylis naikii* and *Utricularia naikii*.

He was a passionate botanist and a thorough gentleman who has inspired generations of botanists in the country, especially in Maharashtra. He is survived by three sons and six grandchildren.

Milind M. Sardesai, Aurangabad