

OBITUARY



PROF. G.C ASNANI (1922-2016)

May the Sun, the circumambient divinity and dispeller of darkness, grant us delight. May the Wind, carrier of rain, grant us delight. May You, O Thunder and Clouds, sharpen our intellect and may all the forces of nature be favorable unto us”

Prof. Asnani chooses these lines of Vedic hymn to start his three volume mammoth treatise named Tropical Meteorology whose revised edition he published in 2005. He signs it off at the end by conveying that he —felt Happiness and Inspiration for the study of Tropical Meteorology. Kindly mark the word Happiness in place of Satisfaction as would have been in case of most authors. The subject of Tropical Meteorology appealed immensely to his inner self so much so that it filled seven decades of

his life with different shades of involvement covering operational work, research and teaching. His book reflects his life’s experiences with a basic desire to bring knowledge to the service of society. He himself was its publisher so that it could be pitched at an affordable price for students. Prof. Pisharoty wrote its Foreword thus: —I wish to thank him on my behalf and on behalf of the meteorological community, young and old, for the difficult job of presenting his knowledge, duly distilled in the form of this Book.

Yet, we remember him for a multitude of additional personal charms. The IMS mourns his death (which occurred on 15th March 2016) on losing a Fellow - affable and composed, inspirational in his quiet display of scientific

passion and meticulous in all dealings including his impeccable sense of attire. Two generations of meteorologists took his presence for granted at all weekly map discussions at Pune. The mentally agile nonagenarian appeared conspicuously reflective only during the last few weeks of his life. That was his only sign of ageing.

Prof. G.C Asnani was born on 7th of April, 1922 in a village named Mithiani, in the province of Sindh of undivided India. He completed his M.Sc in Applied Mathematics from Karachi and joined the India Meteorological Department at Ahmedabad in 1945. He moved on to Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata and Pune during course of his forecaster's job. He did his PhD from Mumbai University under Prof Pisharoty. One of the early birds in computing he was a regular visitor to the TIFR during those heady days of advent of Main Frame computers. This was followed by a visit to UCLA during 1962-63. He was, all this while preparing to launch himself into a teaching career which was to come a few years later. In the meanwhile he joined IITM at Pune and worked in the NWP group of the Forecast Research Division. With Dr K.R Saha at the helm and in the company of illustrious colleagues in Dr R.P Sarkar, Dr. O.N Dhar, Dr S.K Mishra, Dr Keshavamurty and others this nascent division laid stress on creative thinking. Prof Asnani published several research articles in reputed journals on predominantly three themes. Foremost being the simulation of the march of the annual cycle over Tropics driven by a prescribed heating pattern. Secondly, and this was perhaps his most original concept, he tried to explain the equatorial subsidence by squeezing in another meridional cell between the two Hadley cells. He called it the three and a

half cell global circulation. Lastly, he was also engaged in studies of the vertical structure of Tropical atmosphere and proper estimation of Scale Height. Then came the break. He was selected by the WMO in 1974 as an expert to teach at the Institute of Meteorological Training and Research of KMD at Nairobi. He devoted himself to teaching and writing in the most exemplary fashion spanning an entire decade. He was a close associate of Prof Obassi, who later on went on to become the Secretary General of WMO. On his return to Pune he persuaded the University of Pune to commence a course on Atmospheric Science and lectured extensively himself. He was Guru in the traditional Indian tradition supporting and encouraging several students. After retirement he worked from office at his own residence and engaged assistants for meticulous documentation of all his works. A seer of Indian Meteorology, his convictions stemmed from a deep respect in the oldest of our ancient scriptures viz The Vedas, Aranyaks and Vedanga. He was spiritually active too and regularly participated in discourses and lectures. Probably his unmistakable equanimity was a result of a faith that justice ultimately prevails in this world. We would love to remember him as a grand old man of Indian Meteorology. He will continue to inspire us all. May his soul find its true destination.

- B. Mukhopadhyay

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