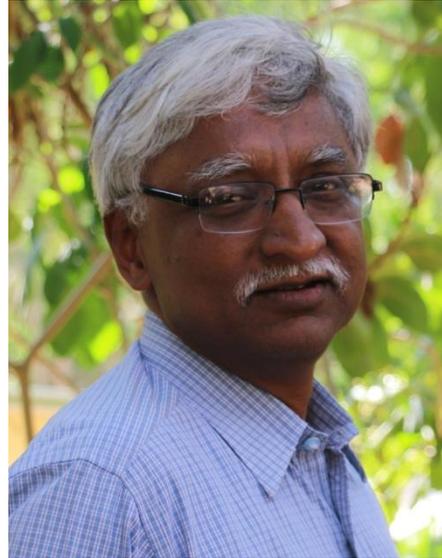


Professor K Chandrashekara (1957-2021): A passionate insect ecologist with a penchant for wasps

Professor Chandrashekara Krishnappa (KC) was one of the versatile entomologists of his generation. His contributions in the behavioral aspects of primitive eusocial wasps and exploring the ant diversity of Western Ghats stand out. He passed away due to long-term lung ailment and covid complications on April 03, 2021, aged 63. His passion for science and nature was reflected in every aspect of his life. We remember him with immense love and gratitude, since he enriched our knowledge of insect science.

I had been his post graduate student; the news of his demise sends by his son in the early morning of 4th April thrown me into agony and down the memory lane of those beautiful days of a decade ago. Prof KC was keen on studying the antimicrobial peptides (AMPs) from insects those days. When I joined as a post-graduate student in his lab, Dr. Jayappa was working on insect AMPs for his doctoral research. The same line of work was decided for me to explore the AMPs in dung beetles. Prof KC was curious to unravel the cellular and innate immunity of dung beetles as they are living in a microbial-laden environment. Dr. Jayappa's thesis has become the foundation for consecutive nine theses that came out of Prof KC's lab on the different aspects of the insect AMPs. Often, I had been among his group of science enthusiasts such as Professors Ganeshiah and ARV Kumar sitting with a cup of coffee around a table laid outside GKVK canteen. I use to astonish the depth of knowledge Professor



KC had on different aspects of evolutionary biology. Now this canteen table must be missing these stalwarts' daily gathering and their creative discussions.

Prof. KC was born on 26th November 1957. He had his early education in Varanasi, received M.Sc (Agri) degree in 1983 from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, and a Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore in 1991 under the guidance of Dr. Raghavendra Gadagkar. Prof KC's doctoral research was unique in examining the social organization and individual behavioral profiles of female wasps of the species *Ropalidia marginata*. By extensive statistical analysis of activity time budgets of *R. marginata* individuals, he discovered three behavioural castes in them with strikingly different division of labour. This revealed that the behavioural patterns in such primitively eusocial insects were likely to be moulded by a complex

interaction between selection at the individual and colony levels. Subsequently, he contributed in diverse aspects of insect ecology and diversity research

Professor KC's style of teaching and communication of science in a simplified manner was unique. He strongly emphasized creative thinking and vast reading. He holds the attention of the students for two to three hours without letting them get bored because his classes were more of discussions and debating. He taught entomology in the light of evolutionary biology. His classes on interpretation of experimental results with complicated statistical analysis in a simplified manner made students understand and induced them to think and discover further. He insisted us to explore the library and even he used to teach simple things such as how to search research paper, how to read. He taught us how to hypothesize research problems, how to design experiments and how to interpret results. He always stressed that right framing of hypothesis with clear cut objective is half the thesis done. In addition to the students of GKVK, the Research scholars from IISc and NCBS Bangalore used to attend his thought-provoking lectures. He actively arranged special weekly and monthly lectures by eminent biologists from different parts of the country and abroad.

Prof KC played key role in the establishment of Butterfly Park at Bannerghatta National Park, Bengaluru. He was the mentor for many outreach activities like Insect exhibition, Coleman lecture series, Moth Day, and *Keeta Vismaya* in GKVK Krishimela. These programmes crowd pullers and created awareness about insects among school kids and the public. Apart from the core subject, he used to teach

how to communicate science with the public and how to follow research ethics.

Prof. KC was always affectionate towards insect science. He was a great teacher, mentor and inspired many young minds to follow science, especially into the world of insects. Prof KC will be missed by his students, friends, and colleagues. I wish he would be alive, so that he would guide me the same way whenever I had a personnel or professional problem. Rest in peace my dearest professor, your contributions to the field of insect science will be eternal.

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