

## Dr. Veeresh Kumar (1988-2021): An enthusiastic budding entomologist



First time I met Dr. Veeresh Kumar at my undergraduate campus College of Agriculture Raichur in 2007. He introduced himself, and started asking his doubts and queries about Entomology. I was surprised to see the knowledge he gained in agriculture and entomology in particular during his graduation. It is hard to believe that he is no more. Indian entomology fraternity has lost bright, talented, young entomologist at early age.

Dr. Veeresh Kumar was born on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1988 at Mukkumpi (Gangavati; Karnataka, India) and completed his primary education in his native place and went to Hosapete (Vijayanagara) for his Pre-University education. Later he joined B.Sc. (Agril.) at University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur in 2006, completed under graduation with merit fellowship. During this period, he was inspired by his teacher Dr. A. Prabhuraj and inclined towards insect science and chosen Entomology for his post-graduation.

In the year 2010, he cleared ICAR- All India Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) exam with 9<sup>th</sup> Rank and joined M.Sc. at University of Agriculture Sciences, GKVK, Bangalore. He worked on the thesis titled 'Insect pest dynamics of *Jatropha* a bio-diesel plant', where he documented the insect pests of *Jatropha*, their biology and developed management schedules under the guidance of Dr. C.T. Ashok Kumar. His research received a gold medal award for outstanding M.Sc. thesis. Later in the year 2012 he joined Ph.D. at the same university with a UGC fellowship. For his doctoral research, he worked on taxonomic studies of leafcutter bees (Hymenoptera: Megachilidae) of southern India under the guidance of Prof V. V. Belavadi. He described 49 species of leaf cutter bees from South India and also developed artificial nests for leaf cutter bees to conserve pollinator diversity.

Dr. Veeresh Kumar succeeded in Agriculture Research Service (ARS) exam with first rank and joined service in 2015 at ICAR- Central Agroforestry Research Institute, Jhansi. He started research profession with insect pollination studies in *Jatropha* (*Jatropha curcas*), Sunnhemp (*Crotalaria juncea*, L.), Niger (*Guizotia abyssinica*), *Butea monosperma*, and Donky berry (*Grewia flavescens*). Within a short span of his research career, he published 22 research articles in peer reviewed national and international journals. In addition to this Dr. Veeresh is a good orator and he inspired many students for preparation of

competitive exams like ICAR-JRF, SRF and ARS exams by his lectures. For the benefit students he started a YouTube channel "Veeresh Tutorials" where he was teaching basic agriculture and insect science to the aspiring agriculture students and entomologists. His YouTube channel becomes more popular and received lot of appreciation as it was crossed more than one million views within a year. Further, for his insect pollination research, he was awarded DST young scientist award and also selected for Fulbright fellowship for postdoctoral research under USIEF programme, due to his health issues he could not join the programme.

Dr. Veeresh was diagnosed with lung cancer in early 2019 it was shocking for all of us. With timely treatment, he was responded well, due to post covid complications he breathed last on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. I hope his contribution to pollination research in such a short carrier will pave the way for future advancements in the field of insect science. He will remain eternal in the hearts of many young, aspiring students, friends and entomologists.

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