

It was with dreadful shock and sadness that all who knew and admired him learned that IDRC's Governor, Professor Nayudamma, lost his life in the recent Air India disaster. Those of us who were privileged to enjoy his friendship over many years feel an immense sense of personal loss.

It is indeed a bitter irony that so gentle a man, who dedicated his life to demonstrating how science and technology can and should be used for human benefit, was struck down by an appalling and abominable abuse of technology. For more than a decade and a half I had heard him advance the concept of "technologies for humanity" of the need "to apply high level science and technology to ground level problems", "to bring modern science to bear upon the problems and needs of the rural poor."

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#### A PRACTICAL TECHNOLOGIST

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Though internationally recognized as an organic chemist, specializing in the complex polyphenol-protein interactions upon which leather manufacture is based (in 1965 he received the K.G. Naik Gold Medal for his research), he was truly a practical technologist. "There's little point in understanding the chemistry if you don't know the practical technology," he often remarked.

Professor Nayudamma was raised in the leather industry. After graduating in industrial chemistry he worked in the Institute of Leather Technology at Madras. Impressed by his exceptional aptitude and intellect, the Government of Madras sent him overseas, first to study leather technology at the Northampton College of Technology in England, then on to Lehigh University in the U.S.A. where he earned his MSc and PhD.

A "dirty hands approach" is often used to describe those whose disposition tends more towards the practical application than to the theoretical consideration of scientific principles. In no industry are dirty hands more evident than in a tannery. During his training both in Britain and the U.S.A., Professor Nayudamma worked in many tanneries learning the practical technology on the factory floor.

He returned to India early in the 1950s as a scientist in the Central Leather Research Institute in Madras. His contribution to the structure, planning and organization of CLRI in its formative years was such that, in 1958, he was appointed its Director, a position he held until 1971 when he was promoted to become Director-General of the Indian Council of Scientific Research and Industrial Development and Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Science and Technology. The Director-General's position in CSIR must surely be one of the most demanding in the world of science. CSIR, an organization that embodies over 40 specialized research institutes employing 20 000 people, embraces almost all the industrial technologies of India and the scientific disciplines upon which they depend.

The Director-General of the International Rice Research Institute, Dr M.S. Swaminathan, was a colleague of Professor Nayudamma and says of his work: "As Director-General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research he will always be remembered for initiating an integrated rural development program in the Karim Nagar district of Andhra Pradesh based on a detailed understanding of the natural resources of the area. He was a pioneer in the field of compilation of resource inventories with the help of aerial photographs."

# PROFESSOR YELAVARTHY NAYUDAMMA

## A GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF A DEAR FRIEND

JOSEPH H. HULSE



*The late Dr Yelavarthy Nayudamma.*

*"He was a man of unusual tolerance and compassion."*

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Throughout the period he was Director

of CLRI and Director-General of CSIR, Dr. Nayudamma found time both for academic and international activities. For many of these years he was Honorary Professor and Head of the Department of Leather Technology at the University of Madras. The students to whom he lectured and those whose thesis research he supervised are to be found not only throughout India, but in more than 30 developing countries. In 1981, a year before he accepted the invitation to join IDRC's Board of Governors, Professor Nayudamma was appointed to the highly prestigious position of Vice-Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

For almost twenty years Professor Nayudamma was a senior consultant and adviser to various United Nations technical agencies, first to FAO then UNDP, UNIDO and UNESCO. Though leather technology and the efficient use of animal by-products remained his dominant interest, his advice was sought by the UN agencies and more than 50 developing countries over a wide range of issues relating to science and technology policy, and industrial and human resource development. One of the UN agencies makes special reference to "his statesman-like advice on conceptual and innovative approaches to technology policy and development."

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#### SPEARHEADED MOVEMENT

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In recent years Professor Nayudamma brought his remarkable talents to the direction of the Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries. Dr Swaminathan says: "As President of COSTED he spearheaded a movement for the appropriate integration of traditional and emerging technologies." COSTED, established in 1966 by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), was described by Professor Nayudamma as the "conscience of ICSU and the central instrument to catalyze, coordinate, collate, collaborate and synchronize activities of ICSU in developing countries; its goal is development; its tool is technology; its objective is to catalyze growth and to propel progress."

It would require a lengthy book to describe his many and varied accomplishments, and the extraordinary range of intellectual, philosophical and tangible benefits for which we are indebted to him. He was a man of unusual tolerance and compassion. He deplored religious and racial bigotry and was justifiably proud of having within his household at least five different religious faiths.

Pascal wrote: "The strength of a man's virtue should not be measured by his special exertions but by his habitual acts." Nayudamma's habitual acts were acts of gentleness, generosity, thoughtfulness and caring about the needs and concerns of others. As Dr Swaminathan says, "He was a true Karma Yogi in the ancient Indian tradition and found personal joy and spiritual fulfillment in a job well done."

He was indeed a good man. We shall not look upon his like again. □

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*Joseph Hulse is IDRC's Vice-President, Research Programs.*