



Dr N V Subba Rao M.Sc DSc Ph.D (F.N.A)
Professor of Organic Chemistry (Retd.)

Professor N V Subba Rao (born ~ 1916) obtained his DSc from Andhra University under the guidance of Padmabhushan Prof T R Seshadri FNA, FRS. To further satisfy his interest in research, he did his Ph.D in Agricultural Chemistry on residual analysis at LEEDS University London (an University committed to providing inspirational teaching and outstanding research) Professor N V Subba Rao got selected to Indian Service Commission and was brought to the Department of Chemistry Osmania University and was with the Department from 1953 till 1976. Following lines may give a glimpse of the great contributions of Prof Subba Rao.

Professor Subba Rao was an “Acharya”, an accomplished academician, an extraordinary administrator and above all a visionary par excellence who laid the foundation for excellent teaching, research and development of this august department. His colleagues and students remember him for his exceptional personality.

Prof Subba Rao initiated natural product research in Osmania University, determined the structures of several compounds, and engaged in improving and modernizing teaching techniques.

During Prof Subba Rao’s tenure as Head, the department made rapid progress in all the branches of Chemistry- Inorganic, Organic and Physical. In this period the Department received financial assistance from various funding agencies like UGC- COSIP and SAP, CSIR, ICAR, ICMR, GUFIC, EXCEL Industries.

Professor Subba Rao believed that only teaching makes people to realize what was understood. His efforts in this direction made UGC sanction the College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP) - the University Leadership Project (ULP) in 1970-1971. The COSIP (which ended in 1981) helped the department to develop the expertise in teaching Chemistry. Under this programme, various teaching methods were initiated and adopted simultaneously to impart the best in teachings of Chemistry. Numerous activities like summer institutes to improve teaching skills of staff, departmental conferences, modernization of curriculum, many workshops and innovative programs, were initiated to enable quality teaching and research. Senior teachers from university were sent to constituent and affiliated colleges in the city and districts every year for a

day or two to give lectures to B.Sc students and to discuss with the staff members on various problems connected with teaching in Chemistry. Teaching aids-books, equipments, charts, manuals of lecture demonstration experiments were supplied. Model lectures were recorded and maintained in the department as film library which were borrowed free of cost from the department for showing it to students. COSIP news letters were printed to give information about the activities of COSIP-ULP and were distributed to all the colleges for the benefit of teachers.

Professor Subba Rao tried to enrich the research activities by inviting UGC Commission and eminent researchers and displaying the rapid progress made in the fields of natural products, synthesis and reactivity of heterocyclics chemical kinetics, mechanistic photochemistry and coordination chemistry. It is in recognition of this UGC gave special assistance programme SAP in organic chemistry to the department in 1972 along with sanction of few teaching posts. The first phase of assistance got sanctioned for a period of five years (1972-1979) and later got continued till 1990. SAP not only gave a boost to the above research areas but also to many others.

Professor Subba Rao invited several world renowned scientists viz., Prof Linus Pauling, Prof H Rappaport, Prof A W Johnson, Prof T A Geissman, Prof Haslam, Prof M Tamres, Prof W T Lippincott, Prof R B Clapp, Prof An Kost, Prof Gensler, Prof N S Wulfson, Prof Albert Padwa, Prof W A Waters, Prof Martel, Prof George Porter, Prof Atkinson, Prof Von C Sontag, Prof Martin Diemuth to deliver lectures on topics related to their teaching and research. Padma Bhushan Prof T. R. Seshadri FRS of Delhi University, the most eminent natural product chemist was a visiting professor of the department.

Professor Subba Rao shaped the carriers of many students and staff members of the department till 1976.

Professor Subba Rao organized a number of summer programs for the benefit of teachers in collaboration with National Science Foundation, U.S.A and the U.G.C New Delhi. In this regard it is worth to mention about the invaluable services by Prof. W. T. Lippincott, Prof M. Tameres, Prof C B Clapp and others in modernizing teaching methods and techniques.

Under Professor Subba Rao's leadership the department acted as a host for the symposium on the synthesis of heterocyclic compounds of physiological interest in 1964, convention of chemists held in 1968 and for the Indian Science Congress sessions in 1954, 1969..