

PROFESSOR RAM UDAR

(1926—1985)

The untimely demise of Professor Ram Udar at the dawn of March 12, 1985 shocked the scientific community in general and the botanists in particular. In his death the country has lost an eminent bryologist and the void created would be difficult to fill.

Born on 1st December, 1926 in an orthodox Hindu family in village Bellari of district Basti (U.P.), Professor Ram Udar received his early education at Anglo Sanskrit High School, Basti and Government Intermediate College, Faizabad. He joined Lucknow University as an undergraduate student and completed his M.Sc. Botany in 1948 with First Division standing first in order of merit.

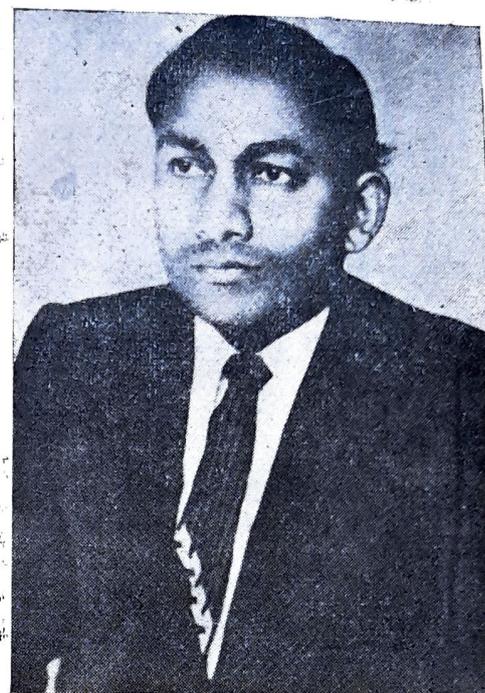
Soon after passing his M. Sc., he joined as Lecturer at Shia Degree College, Lucknow, and after a few months was appointed Lecturer in Botany in 1948 at the University of Lucknow where he became Reader in 1967 and Professor in 1981, a position which he held till his death.

Professor Ram Udar started his research career in Bryology under Dr S. K. Pande, who had been the pupil of Professor S. R. Kashyap, the father of Indian Bryology. He completed his Ph.D. in 1959 and by that time had already become an established worker in the field. Scientific recognition came to him early in his career. In 1965, he was invited by Professor P. Maheshwari, F.R.S. to deliver a specialist-lecture at the University of Delhi. He was elected Fellow of The Palaeobotanical Society of which he was the Vice-President for two terms. In January 1985, he was elected Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy. He organized the Indian Bryological Society of which he was the Founder-President till his death.

Professor Ram Udar continued the high traditions of bryological research initiated at Lucknow by his Guru, Dr S. K. Pande and with the result his laboratory became the leading centre of research in Bryology in India. He won international recognition through his wide ranging contributions in almost all the important journals of the world in his speciality. He published about 200 research papers, monographs and reviews. He also contributed two books entitled '*An Introduction to Bryophyta*' for undergraduate students, and '*Bryology in India*' highlighting the progress of research in Indian Bryology till 1976. His latest monograph on Palyno-taxonomy of selected Indian liverworts is shortly due for release.

He inspired a large team of research workers and ten students received their Ph.D. degrees under his guidance. Currently, he had two major research projects on bryology entitled 'Monographic studies on the liverworts of south India' and 'Liverwort Flora of North Western India' sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, respectively.

Professor Ram Udar worked extensively for over three decades and made outstanding contributions to the knowledge of Hepaticae and Anthocerotae. He instituted 63



new taxa to science and made many additions to the bryoflora of India. Among his major contributions may be mentioned the discovery of two orders : Calobryales and Buxbaumiales in the bryoflora of India, monographic studies on Indian Ricciaceae, Metzgeriaceae, Aneuraceae, Fossombroniaceae, Notothylaceae, Frullaniaceae, Radulaceae, Porellaceae, life histories of *Athalamia pinguis*, *Calycularia crispula* and *Plagiochasma intermedium*, sporeling development, regeneration and gemmaling development of many members of Marchantiales, Metzgeriales and Jungermanniales.

A true lover of nature, Professor Ram Udar was an enthusiastic field botanist. He organized and led many botanical excursions of the Department as well as of his own unit of bryology. During the past 22 years, I, as his research student and later as a teacher-colleague, was privileged to accompany him on many of these excursions. All these gave me an opportunity to learn from him not only a practical knowledge of bryophytes in the field but also from his profound scientific authority in discussing about the plants we had collected. I cherish many pleasant memories of my long association with him in the field and the research laboratory. He shall always remain to me a source of inspiration and scientific strength.

He was a rare combination of an excellent researcher and a brilliant teacher. True to his name, Professor Ram Udar was extremely '*Udar*' : generous and large hearted. He combined true scientific dedication and profound scholarship with great simplicity and modesty in his work and personal life. His amiable disposition and charming personality won him the love and respect of his students, colleagues and friends.

He had a very strong will power and determination with which he continued working in the Department despite being seriously ill for the last one year. His spirit of scientific devotion shall long continue inspiring the Indian bryologists in general and in particular his research students and colleagues at Lucknow University.

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