

BOOK REVIEW
GENESIS OF INDIAN AEROBIOLOGY
(1873-2017)

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Tracing the origin and evolution of Aerobiology in India and its gradual consolidation into a formal discipline is a complex subject for a monographic documentation. As the materials and sources for mapping the course of progress of this specialized scientific domain in India have remained largely scattered and as its evolutionary journey is markedly interrupted, only a person engaged in sustained investigations in this field, who has not only been a witness to this growing area but could also holistically encompass the seemingly divergent trends in aerobiological investigations in the country and elsewhere, can do justice to this kind of historiographic exercise. With the longest duration of active stay on the progressive platform of aerobiology and monumental contribution to its content and refinement, Prof. S. T. Tilak happens to be the fittest person to possess the most authentic first hand information on the rise and growth of aerobiology in India.

The book GENESIS OF INDIAN AEROBIOLOGY is a meticulous endeavour to compile prolific information and data on the pioneering research contributions and collective organizational initiatives that have led to the evolution and diversification of Indian Aerobiology. The book is aptly divided into five chapters of which the first three are devoted to the Indian aerobiological scenario comprising the frontline organizational activities, contributions of notable Indian aerobiologists and the essence of research activities carried out at more than forty well recognized centres of Aerobiology spread over 16 states of India. Monographs and books published by some eminent Indian aerobiologists and proceedings of the select conferences of the Indian Aerobiological Society (IAS) are significant inclusions in these chapters. Emerging trends in aerobiological investigation and new frontiers of this discipline covered in a separate chapter is the most valuable addition to this monograph, especially for the new entrants to this field.

The task of encapsulating the whole gamut of information traceable over a period of more than a century and its showcasing into a coherent synoptic treatise must not have been so simple, as many of you would readily agree; rather it seems to have necessitated an untiring effort to achieve a nicety of the kind this monograph reflects.

The idea of bringing out this compendium was formalized at the 18th National Conference of IAS at Tumkur University, Tumakuru (Karnataka) and it was consensually agreed to prepare an authentic sourcebook displaying a precise account of the aerobiological activities in India from its inception to the present and also of the projected direction for the future. This was conceived to serve as a dependable reference for the practitioners of aerobiology and for the posterity aspiring to have a panormic view of the Indian Aerobiology.

The stupendous task of preparing this technical publication deserves special appreciation because the author (compiler) must have been confronted with several obscurantist oddities and lethargic responses to his request for providing the desired information from various regions of the country. As the author unhesitantly admits, the perusal of published materials was compellingly resorted to as the last recourse to achieve the goal of inclusiveness of this monograph, and to make it a true panoptic formation.

The author has done full justice to this entrusted mission by incorporating every small or big conceivable aspect of Indian Aerobiology. The very first chapter of the book dwells upon all those facts and events which have never been documented so systematically at one place in any of the previous publications on Indian Aerobiology. The unique aptitude and skill of compilation and presentation which the author is endowed with have led to the creation of a compendium which exudes a rare blend of the elements and characteristics of a Historical Portrayal, Aerobiology Information Manual, Directory of Indian Aerobiologists and their Lifetime Achievements, a Bibliographic Sketchbook, a Handbook of Developmental Discourse on Indian Aerobiology, an Illustrated Pictorial and everything else that I don't find words to describe. Some rare and memorable photographs included in this manual add a special flavour and beauty to its content. No aspect or dimension of the Indian Aerobiology seems to have been ill-founded or obscured at all in this publication. Even the abstract features are well conceived. A spotlight on the expanding horizons of aerobiology such as Nanotechnology and Aerobiology, Nanopollution, Bioinformatics in Aerobiology, Astrobiology, etc., add special significance to this monograph.

By sponsoring this publication, Bharati Vidyapeeth (Pune) has done a commendable service to the Indian Aerobiology fraternity.

Despite some sporadic errors and typographic mistakes which need to be corrected in the next edition, the overall layout and schematic arrangement of the contents stimulate a pleasant reading. In view of the magnitude and dimensions of the Indian Aerobiology covered in this monograph, it must be reaching the shelves of the libraries of all Indian universities and colleges and enriching the personal collections of all aerobiology researchers.

The author must be congratulated for this selfless service to the Indian Aerobiology.

Mahesh Roy
Editor
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