

Parshuram Patwardhan (1935–2006)

Parshuram Patwardhan, one of the pioneer lichenologists in India, from the Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, passed away on 15 May 2006 at the age of 71. He was born on 17 June 1935 in the small city of Amalner in Maharashtra. After graduation, he moved to Pune for post-graduation. While teaching as a lecturer in a college at Pune, he also did his Ph D in mycology under the guidance of the renowned mycologist M. N. Kamat at ARI. On invitation by the Director of the institute, he joined ARI in 1963 and later became the Head, Department of Mycology. Patwardhan also headed the institute as an officiating director for a period of one year. He retired in 1995. He was elected as Fellow of the prestigious Linnean Society of London (FLS).

It was in the early 1970s that ARI had developed as a centre for research on lichens in India with extensive exploration of South-Western Ghats of India for lichens by Patwardhan under the PL-480 funds (USA). Subsequently, under various sponsored research projects, Patwardhan made a significant continuing contribution to lichenology through his exploration of the lichen mycobiota of India and its island dependencies. A large collection of lichens was deposited by Patwardhan in the Ajrekar Mycological Herbarium (AMH), ARI.

During his visit to Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, USA and also to London to work at the British Museum, Patwardhan developed friendly relations with several lichenologists. His association and friendship with Mason E. Hale is well known. His contacts with lichenologists worldwide through extensive correspondence and exchange of lichen literature and lichen specimens have contributed greatly to the development of lichenological studies in ARI and India. We are grateful to Patwardhan for the

deposition of his personal collection of lichen literature to help the younger generation of lichenologists working at the Department of Mycology at ARI.

Under the leadership and able guidance of Patwardhan, ARI has made substantial contributions in the field of Indian lichenology and has played a significant role in furthering taxonomical investigations, particularly microlichens. We are grateful to him for his useful accounts of several difficult genera, contributing in a major way to the understanding of many



difficult microlichen genera. The most notable of these publications are the comprehensive morphotaxonomic accounts of the genera *Arthothelium*, *Cryptothecia*, *Ditremsis*, *Laurera*, *Ocellularia*, *Porina*, *Pleurotrema*, *Stirtonia*, *Trypethelium* and members of families Astrotheliaceae, Graphidaceae and Thelotremaaceae as also his series of publications on the lichens of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, one of the most difficult places in India to collect lichens. These islands were interestingly explored by him immediately after his recovery from a brain tumour operation when one of his eyes was damaged in 1985, and later in subsequent years.

Besides this, Patwardhan carried out studies on the development of ascocarps and the cytology of ascus in two species *Dermatocarpon moulinisii* and *Phaeographina halei*, reporting that the spermatia and trichogynes were non-functional and that dikaryotization probably took place through somatogamy. In addition, he carried out studies on antibiotic activities in lichens; qualitative and quantitative determination of amino acids from Indian lichens belonging to *Parmelia* and *Lepetogium* and reported two new depsides, namely 4-O-demethylsuperconfluent acid and 2'-O-methylnorsuperphyllinic acid in *Stirtonia ramosa*.

Patwardhan was not only a deeply committed lichenologist as is well known to many of us, he also had a great interest in botanical literature.

He was a thoughtful, kind, helpful and happy colleague to have in the mycology department. He will be remembered for his good handwriting.

Patwardhan was particularly happy to see the younger generation of students growing around him, even after his retirement in 1995 when tragically he lost his vision due to brain tumour and had to stop his work. His ability to quote chapter wise names of authors, and dates of publication of earlier literature was astounding.

One link in the chain of lichenology worldwide is broken, but Patwardhan leaves behind a rich legacy for all of us to remember and appreciate. We all have a store of fond memories of him to keep his presence and his contribution to lichenology fresh in our minds.

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