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SCIENCE NEWS

DST WORKSHOP ON 'BIOSYSTEMATICS OF INSECTS OF IMPORTANCE IN AGRICULTURE, MEDICINE AND FORESTRY'

A DST-sponsored workshop on the above theme was conducted from 27-30th April with participation by senior entomologists from nearly 20 Universities and an equal number of young scientists. Inaugurating the workshop, Prof. S. Krishnaswamy, Vice-Chancellor, Madurai Kamaraj University, exhorted the participants to profitably use the emerging techniques in biosystematic studies so as to have a better and proper understanding of the species. The twenty-five papers presented related to the role of ultrastructure, karyology, biochemical parameters, ecobehaviour and biogeography which sufficiently emphasised the need for such an integrated approach in order to be able to meaningfully assess the increasing variations in the natural population of insects of agricultural, medical and forestry importance, more noticeably in such pest species or vector species tending to exhibit what has come to be known as 'biotypes' 'siblings' etc. Of particular interest were the special lectures on 'Molecular biology and biosystematics of insects' by Prof. Kunthala Jayaraman of the Anna University;

'LDH system as a tool in biochemical systematics' by Prof. Kamalakar Rao of the Pachaiyappa's College, Madras and 'Raciation in *Drosophila* as demonstrated by laboratory experiments' by Dr Ranganath of the Mysore University, which discussed the emerging trends in the field of biosystematics. The plenary lecture by Prof. T. N. Ananthakrishnan of the Entomology Research Institute on 'The dimensions of species' highlighted the need for indepth investigations on various aspects involving diverse methodologies, to have a meaningful understanding of the concept of speciation, more particularly in view of the dynamics of the species.

Demonstration sessions on methodologies involving ultrastructure study, electrophoretic studies for LDH and proteins, karyology etc were also included.

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