

Anna Modayil Mani – A tribute

Miss Anna Mani, former Deputy Director General of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), died on 16 August 2001. Born in 1918 in Travancore, she was the seventh of eight children of a prosperous engineer. She graduated in 1939 from the Presidency College in Madras with a B Sc honours degree in physics and chemistry and went on to do research on the optical properties of ruby and diamond, under the Nobel Prize winner C. V. Raman. The results were published in five scientific papers.

Anna Mani was then awarded a government scholarship to study meteorological instruments in Britain where she spent the next two years, mainly in the Meteorological Office at Harrow. On returning to India in 1948 she started her IMD career in the Instruments Division in Pune, where she was largely responsible for arranging for meteorological instruments, hitherto imported from Britain, to be manufactured locally. By 1953, she had been promoted to be head of the division with 121 men working for her – an unusual situation in India at that time. She was transferred to Delhi in 1969 as Deputy Director General.

On retiring from IMD in 1976, Anna Mani joined the Raman Research Institute in Bangalore as a visiting professor, her first task being to organize a series of sophisticated meteorological observa-

tions needed in the selection of a suitable site for a new millimetre-wave telescope. For the next 20 years, until her activities were forcibly curtailed by a distressing progressive illness, she devoted herself to assessing the energy potential of wind and solar radiation in India. This involved the design of new instruments, establishing and operating many new wind monitoring stations, and the assembly and publication in the most suitable form of wind and radiation data.

Over the years, Anna Mani had many associations with the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the International Association for Meteorology and Atmospheric Physics (IAMAP). In 1967 she spent three months in the WMO Secretariat, revising the Guide to Meteorological Instrument and Observing Practice, while in 1975 she served as a WMO consultant in Egypt, to advise on the development of a national radiation centre, a radiation station network and research on radiation. She was an enthusiastic member of several WMO and IAMAP commissions and working groups and took a leading part in international comparisons of various meteorological instruments. She was also influential in the selection of Davos as the World Radiation Centre.

Anna Mani was keenly interested in research on atmospheric ozone. It was for

her work in this field, extending over more than 30 years, that in 1987 she was awarded the K. R. Ramanathan Medal by the Indian National Science Academy, of which she herself was a Fellow. Her Medal Lecture is an excellent review of the then state of knowledge about atmospheric ozone¹.

Further information about Anna Mani can be found in articles by Taba² and Abha Sur³. Let me conclude by quoting from the introduction which I wrote for Taba: ‘“You can but do your best”. This is the precept which I associate with Miss Mani: she not only quotes it, she also lives up to it. And, in her case, the best is an enviably high standard of honesty, loyalty, hard work and achievement’. I would only add that Anna was greatly loved and admired by her worldwide circle of friends, for all of whom her infectious laugh will long be remembered.

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1. Mani, A. M., *Proc. Indian Natl. Sci. Acad.*, 1988, **A54**, 234–265.
 2. Taba, H., *WMO Bull.*, 1991, **40**, 287–297.
 3. Sur, Abha, *Meridiens*, 2001, **1**, 95–127.
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