

Professor Subramaniam Natarajan – *Brief Resume*



Professor **NATARAJAN**, son of Thiru S.Subramaniam was born in an agricultural family in 1950 in Sulur village of Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in Agriculture from Annamalai University, Master's and Doctoral degrees in Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. He got his PG diploma in Remote Sensing at Indian Institute of

Remote Sensing, Dehradun. He underwent eight different training programmes in soil survey and resource management. He specialized in the fields of soil survey & classification, remote sensing and GIS, natural resource management and agricultural planning. He served for more than 37 years, twelve years in the Department of Agriculture and twenty five years in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

Professor Natarajan's service at the Department of Agriculture (1972-1984) includes Agricultural Officer (Research) (9 years) and Assistant Agricultural Chemist (Group I Research Officer) (3 years). He carried out soil resource inventory and management studies during his tenure in the Department of Agriculture. He prepared thirty four soil survey bulletins for the use of farmers, extension workers and policy makers. The soil resource maps prepared by his team were helpful to the State Government in getting grant-in-aid from World Bank for modernization of Periyar-Vaigai Scheme (1975-76) and also from European Economic Community for modernization of irrigation tanks (1983-84) in Ramanathapuram district.

Professor Natarajan served in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University from 1984 to 2010 in different capacities viz., Assistant Professor (4 years), Associate Professor (7 years) and Professor (11 years) and Director (Soil and Crop Management Studies) (3 years). He served as undergraduate and postgraduate teacher, researcher and extension worker at different periods. As a teacher, he introduced innovative methods in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. He designed curriculum for the new courses introduced viz., soil resource management, remote sensing and GIS and pedogenesis. His notable contributions as a scientists include the establishment of Department of Remote Sensing and GIS, Soil Reference Centre, Mineral Water Plant in TNAU. With his efforts, thirty three funded schemes with a total budget outlay of Rs.14 crores were secured. Twenty one M.Sc.(Ag.) students and twelve Ph.D. Scholars guided by him got their junior and senior research fellowships respectively through the schemes secured by him. He was able to provide employment opportunities to fifty undergraduates (JRFs), thirty two postgraduates (SRFs) and eighteen Ph.D. Scholars (RAs).

Prof. Natarajan developed six research methodologies, five research processes, five adoptable technologies and three products for the use of extension and scientific personnel. Among them, the findings on alternate cropping system in Cauvery delta zone, soil spatial variability and precision farming, agro-eco specific land use models for coastal regions in India, GIS for developing management strategies for increased

sugarcane production, soil and land degradation maps (for whole Tamil Nadu state) and digital soil database for farm planning have more applications value. He organized 13 training programmes and 10 symposia / workshops pertinent to soil resource inventory, land use planning and soil health enhancement. After his assumption of charge as the Director, Centre for Soil and Crop Management Studies, scientists of the six constituent disciplines namely, Agronomy, Agro Climate Research Centre, Crop Physiology, Central Farm, Environmental Sciences and Soil Science & Agricultural Chemistry were geared to make progress in education, research and extension. Number of funded schemes increased from 53 in 2006-07 (with financial outlay of 6.6 crores) to 85 schemes in 2008-09 (with financial outlay of 30 crores).

Through Professor Natarajan's coordination efforts, package of practices for 11 crops viz., sugar beet, sweet sorghum, moth bean and novel crop cultivation strategies such as pit method of sugarcane cultivation, paired row planting in sugarcane and aerobic rice cultivation were developed. Programmes on 11 new initiatives including climate change, agri-weather bulletin, environmental observatory, fertilizer products from organic wastes and block level soil information system were successfully implemented. Patents for six crop growth promoters were filed. Commendable improvements were made in the University Farms, particularly in scientific crop planning, cropping intensity, seed and fodder production, goat and turkey farming, water and energy conservation, farm mechanization, effective recycling of farm wastes and maintenance of farm. Farm receipts were increased by twenty seven per cent through his concerted efforts.

In the capacity of Director (Soil and Crop Management Studies), Professor Natarajan organized seven national training programmes, two international symposia and three national workshops pertinent to natural resource management, soil health, organic farming, soil resource inventory, land use planning, environmental protection and climate change.

Prof. Natarajan made policy interface with Tamil Nadu Government on several programmes viz., soil health, organic farming, rain fed farming, water soluble fertilizers and wasteland development. He acted as an expert in the Cauvery Technical Cell and helped the Tamil Nadu Government in the matters related to Cauvery Water. He was also involved by the State Government for preparing the project proposals for getting grants from GOI under National Food Security Mission and National Agricultural Development Programmes. He acted as member of many advisory committees constituted by State Planning Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu and Government of India. He has developed linkages with nine international institutions and eleven national institutions. He attended sixty one seminars during his service. He delivered fifty one guest lectures in different scientific forums. He has a wide array of 225 publications including 9 books and 19 book chapters.

Prof. Natarajan obtained seven different awards for his academic and professional excellence including Best PG Teacher and Best Researcher Award by TNAU. He served as Expert Committee Member for carrying out Academic Auditing in the affiliated colleges of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. He has associations with "Noyyal Care" which has linkages with farmers and organizations to develop farm related activities. He visited foreign countries including Sri Lanka, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Canada, USA, Australia and Italy.

After a long stint of service for the cause of agriculture sector, Prof. Natarajan joined as Vice Chancellor of GRI-DU on 23rd May 2014 with the vision of contributing his

might to rural higher education. In the capacity of Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Natarajan was the driving force to get the Institute accredited by NAAC with 'A' Grade (3rd cycle) and in securing 79th place in the NIRF ranking done by MHRD, Government of India. The UGC Review Committee visited the Institute in December, 2016 and recommended the continuation of Deemed University Status to GRI, the due credit go us to Vice-Chancellor.

By the untiring efforts of Prof.Natarajan, the Institute was able to get recognized under Section 12-B of the UGC Act (which is a basic requirement for an university to get research grants from UGC) after 60 years of its long existence. During the Vice-Chancellorship of Prof.Natarajan, the Institute's publication profile attained prominence by securing H-Index of 63 and acquired excellence in research, leadership, specialized impact and higher level of academic collaborations in SCImago Institutions Rankings at the international level. Web of Universities ranked the Institute at 83 at the global level due to constant upgrading of website under the dynamic guidance of Prof.Natarajan.

The digitalization efforts of Prof.Natarajan especially in introducing cash-less transactions, staff and students portals, online admission, e-tender, e-auctioning, e-circulars, e-newsletters, surveillance through CCTV cameras etc. The administrative and academic reforms such as restructuring of departments and faculties into Schools of studies, incorporation of security features in the Students certificates, Venture Capital scheme, construction of outdoor stadium with 8 lane tracks, obtaining water supply under Cauvery combined water supply scheme from TWAD Board and streamlining of management systems are laudable. More importantly, Prof.Natarajan contributed richly towards vocationalization of rural higher education.

Being the Vice-Chancellor of GRI-DU, Prof. Natarajan initiated fruitful measures in the fields of water conservation and recycling, renewable energy, tree plantation and infrastructure development (renovation and construction of ladies and boys hostels, examination hall, health centre, university guest house, etc.) besides motivating the staff and students to adopt 73 villages under 7 village panchayats in Dindigul district for promoting model villages under Unnat Bharath Abhiyan of Government of India. Many more innovative ideas are already there in the agenda awaiting for the days to come to make GRI-DU as an Institute of Eminence.

Because of the untiring efforts of the Vice-Chancellor, the Institute has received Green Award from Tamil Nadu Government (2017) and Appreciation Award from the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) (2018) and TVN-KIDAO Award (2018) meant for Outstanding Educational Institutions from National Institution for Quality and Reliability (2018).