

Professor N.D. Paria (1950-2023)



Professor Nanda Dulal Paria (Ph.D.) was faculty of the Department of Botany, University of Calcutta, and was actively engaged in teaching and research in angiosperms taxonomy, biodiversity and conservation, biosystematics, palynology, ethnobotany, medicinal plants, and seed morphology.

Prof. Paria passed away in the USA on 15th January, 2023 after a short illness. He was 72 and is survived by his wife (Mrs. Kalpana Paria) and his only daughter (Mrs. Nandina Paria) and son-in-law (Mr. Partha Pratim Pal). In his passing away, an excellent teacher of Taxonomy of Angiosperms has been lost. He will be remembered for his valuable contributions to botany of India. Prof. Paria, born in 1950 in the district Purba (East) Medinipur (previously Medinipur), had obtained his B.Sc. (Hons.) in Botany and M.Sc. in Botany from the University of Calcutta in 1970 and 1972 respectively. He was awarded his Ph.D. degree from the same university in 1983 under the supervision of Prof. S.C. Dutta. Prof. Paria joined as Herbarium Keeper of the Calcutta University Herbarium (CUH),

Department of Botany, University of Calcutta, in 1974 and continued in the post till 1983, and handled the diverse Indian flora for about nine years at CUH. In 1983, he joined the department as Lecturer of Botany and successively held the positions of Senior Lecturer, Reader, and Professor. In connection with annual botanical excursions to different parts of India for the Post Graduate students of Botany, Prof. Paria became familiar and acquainted with the incredible floristic diversity of the country. He completed successfully a major research project on the floristics of Hazaribagh District, Bihar, and the work was published by the Botanical Survey of India in two volumes entitled “Flora of Hazaribagh District, Bihar (2000, 2005)”. His pioneering research contributions in the field of Indian botany for more than two decades in association with his research group earned him national and international recognition.

Prof. Paria served as the Vice-Chancellor of the Vidyasagar University for about a year in 2011. Later, he rejoined the Department of Botany, University of Calcutta. He served the Netaji Subhas Open University for about one year in 2020. He also served as Head, Department of Botany, University of Calcutta and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, Music and Home Sciences, University of Calcutta.

Prof. Paria was initially associated with the Botanical Society of Bengal and had served in different positions for more than four decades including editor of the *Journal of the Botanical Society of Bengal* and secretary of the society. He also served as editor of the *Indian Science News Association*.

Prof. Paria from the very beginning taught the Taxonomy of Angiosperms and Biosystematics; and also taught subjects like: Anatomy, Ecology, Biodiversity and Conservation, Palynology and Ethnobotany. He contributed to the publication of “*Medicinal Plant Resources of South West Bengal*”, published by the Directorate of Forests, Govt. of West Bengal. He was also the contributing

author for the botany part in the voluminous work published by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research “*A Treatise of Indian Medicinal Plants* (vols I-VI). He was a pioneer in developing the research area of seedling morphology and continued this work till 2022. He tried to use seedling morphology as a taxonomic character for the identification and interrelationship as well as interpretation towards evolution, and also emphasized its applicability in the field of forestry.

Prof. Paria was the recipient of several awards and honours for his contributions in plant taxonomy. He was the recipient of the Finnish Government Post-Doctoral Scholarship (1986), V.V. Sivarajan Gold Medal (1999) from the Indian Association of Angiosperm Taxonomy and S.K. Jain Gold Medal (2007) from the Association of Plant Taxonomy. He was a Fellow of the Linnaean Society, London, Indian Botanical Society, Indian Association of Angiosperm Taxonomy, Association of Plant Taxonomy, and West Bengal Academy of Science and Technology. He was life member of the Botanical Society of Bengal, Indian Science Congress Association and Indian Science News Association, and also a member of the West Bengal Biodiversity Board.

Prof. Paria was awarded a Finnish Scholarship for six months by the Ministry of Education, Finland and worked on peat land vegetation in the Department of Silviculture, University of Helsinki, in 1986, in collaboration with the University Grants Commission and University of Calcutta. During this period, he studied the boreal flora and vegetation of Finnish Lapland and Aland Islands. He had the opportunity to visit the botanical garden of Linnaeus in Uppsala, Sweden, Palynological Laboratory of Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet (Stockholm), and the Institute of Systematic Botany (Uppsala), V.L.

Komarov Botanical Institute, Leningrad, former USSR, Jodrell Research Laboratory, Royal Botanic Garden and Herbarium in Kew, British Museum of Natural History, London, Museums, Libraries, Plant Science Laboratory and Herbarium in Department of Botany, University of Reading, United Kingdom, in collaboration with the British Council, Calcutta and London, Rijksherbarium and several Research Laboratories in Leiden, Netherlands.

Prof. Paria has published more than 100 research articles in journals of national and international repute. He had also published 10 books and very recently had published one textbook, entitled “*Plant Taxonomy and Biodiversity*” (Santra Publication, Kolkata, 2022). He had supervised the research works of 21 students for their Ph.D. degree. He had participated in many national and international seminars and symposia as well as workshops and presided over many technical sessions.

Prof. Paria will remain alive within the hearts of his students. New generation of researchers will continue to further advance our understanding in the field of seedling taxonomy.

The students, researchers and plant lovers and whole fraternity of plant taxonomists deeply condole his demise and pray Almighty to give enough strength to his family and the near ones to bear this irreparable loss.

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&
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