



Dr. Dasika Durga Prasad Rao (April 23, 1939, to July 14, 2022)

The remote sensing community in India and abroad mourn the sudden loss of Dr. D. P. Rao, a distinguished researcher, academician, and of inspiring personalities, who passed away on July 14, 2022, in Hyderabad, India. Dr. D P Rao led the erstwhile National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) under the Department of Space (now NRSC under ISRO) to an institution of international repute during the 1996-2001-time period.

Dr. Rao, born on 23rd April 1939, was a meritorious student of Government Science College, Jabalpur University, Madhya Pradesh, had obtained his M.Sc. degree in Science, securing first division, in 1960. He was awarded Ph.D. in 1985 by the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad. The professional journey of Dr. Rao began at the Oil and Natural Gas Commission in 1960, where he continued as a field geologist till 1972. Thereafter he joined the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) (formerly, the Indian Photo Interpretation Institute, IPI) Dehradun, for an extensive period of 15 years from 1972 to 1987. He joined as Professor of Geomorphology at IPI in 1972. Soon after Dr. Rao completed an advanced MSc degree course in geomorphology from ITC Netherlands in 1973, he started the PG diploma course in Geomorphology at IPI Dehradun. In 1975, he also visited the USGS EROS data center, Sioux Falls USA on a UN fellowship for training in remote sensing applications using LANDSAT.

Dr. Rao's scientific accomplishments are prodigious. He was an academician, born teacher, and a researcher at par excellence in the field of geological remote sensing. He made significant contributions in the field of active tectonics and applied geomorphology during his association at IPI/IIRS Dehradun. The geological structures of active tectonics identified in the Doon valley on aerial photographs by Dr. Rao have opened a refined understanding of the Quaternary tectonics in the Himalayan terrain. He also did extensive mapping of the Cuddapah basin in Andhra Pradesh, parts of the Vindhyan Mountains, entire Goa, and parts of Saurashtra. His landmark research contribution with Dr. A.M.J. Meijerink and Prof. Rupke from the ITC Netherlands for the geological investigations on stratigraphy and structural developments of the Cuddapah basin was published in 1984 and is considered a major revision in more than 100 years. He has conceptualized and implemented several research projects, guided students, and published several research papers in peer-reviewed national and international journals of repute.

At IIRS Dr. Rao headed the consultancy division during 1982-1986 besides being in charge of the multi-image digital analysis system (MIDAS) laboratory established for training activities. He also has contributed to the establishment of the Coastal and Marine applications division at IIRS. He contributed to the integrated survey of the Karimnagar district, which was later adopted by the Planning Commission for the Integrated Mission for Sustainable Development (IMSD) program of ISRO. Dr. Rao was the first Mission Director of the IMSD project.

Subsequently, Dr. Rao joined the then NRSA, Hyderabad in December 1986 and actively laboured to evolving and executing many national-level application programs including wasteland mapping of the entire country, national drinking water mission, IMSD, etc. He became the Associate Director at NRSA in 1994 and later on assumed the office of Director, NRSA for a period from November 1996 to April 2001. During his tenure as Director NRSA, he strongly promoted the application of RS-GIS through several innovative programmes with practical demonstrations and nationwide projects.

Dr. Rao remained significantly active to the mission of the Indian Society of Remote Sensing, especially for the journal, PHOTONIRVACHAK, during its initial days. He, along with the senior colleagues of IPI/IIRS, sustained and contributed several scientific articles to our journal during these early years. Later on, he was elected as the President of the Indian Society of Remote Sensing for the period from April 1996 to March 1998. During his tenure with ISRS, he also keenly supported the activities of the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS). Dr. Rao's scientific temperament and excellence in scientific research enabled him to reach new heights as a pioneer of national and international repute. He was elected as a fellow of reputed scientific societies of India and abroad such as the National Academy of Sciences, India, Geological Society of India, ISRS, and ITC to name a few. He was conferred with several awards for his outstanding contributions to the field of Remote Sensing and GIS including, the BHASKARA award by ISRS in 2004. In recognition of his distinguished contribution and service, the Government of India has conferred the prestigious Civilian Award of PADMA SHRI for the year 2000 to Dr. Rao.

Dr. Rao will always be remembered for the distinguished services rendered by him and his outstanding contributions to taking remote sensing to the common man's benefit and popularising it in the country. His vast experience, knowledge, and proactive vision have helped to fructify several National Mission Projects of international recognition. The ISRS fraternity profoundly feels and expresses our irreparable loss of a brilliant researcher who has played an exceptional and unique role in the minds of his family, friends, and colleagues.

The Indian Society of Remote Sensing pays its sincere homage to Dr. D.P. Rao and deeply mourns his demise. With a heavy heart, we convey our condolences and bid farewell to the departed noble soul.

The Executive Council of ISRS and ISRS members.