

I met Him I met my Destiny: A Tribute to my Teacher Professor R.Vaidyanadhan

K.N.Prudhvi Raju[†]

Abstract

Professor Rajagopala Vaidyanadhan had been a teacher like no other teacher. This tribute presents a panorama of his early and higher education, professional life and academic achievements. The sentiments expressed in this tribute are not feelings of just this author alone but are feelings of almost all his students. He joined the teaching profession not by chance but by choice. He did a commendable job as a teacher. He updated himself with the latest in the field and imparted his knowledge to all his students. As a researcher, he did a good number of seminal works. He kept himself active in his post-retirement time and served the earth science community through his invaluable contributions. At 94 years of age, he is healthy and hale because of his daily disciplined routines.

Keywords: My Destiny; R. Vaidyanadhan; Andhra University; Geology and Geography; Geological Society

[†] Professor (Retired), Department of Geography, Institute of Science, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005,
Email id: knpraju1954@gmail.com

Introduction

In Sanskrit, the word 'Guru' means dispeller of darkness. In other words, a teacher is one who fills one's mind with light/knowledge. Shankaracharya says this about teachers/*gurus*:

*Janmaaneka shataih sadadarayuja
bhaktya samaaraadhito*

*Bhaktyairvaidikalakshanena vidhinaa
santushta eesah swayam*

*Saakshaat srigururupametya kripaya
druggocharah san prabhuh*

*Tatvam sadhu vibhodhya taarayati taan
samsaaradhuhkhaarnavaat*

The sum and substance of this quartet is this— Pleased by the Virtue accrued by doing pious and righteous deeds through countless (former) births following scriptural prescriptions God himself comes down as a 'Guru' to impart the person knowledge about ultimate reality knowing which one can with ease sail through the difficult ocean of life. There were many teachers in my life, but one is special and the only one of his kind I met.

I met my Guru Professor Rajagopala Vaidyanadhan, through strange coincidences of circumstances which conspired to take me towards him. Here is what happened to lead me towards him. I was in the second year of my undergraduate studies doing courses in Botany, Zoology and Chemistry along with languages (English and Hindi). On one fine day, one of my classmates said that "a teacher from Andhra University has come and that he will address students of our college the next day" in the College Auditorium. I heard it very casually and said, "I am not interested." In a commanding tone my friend said, we will go together. The next day dawned, and my classmate insisted and literally pulled me into the auditorium. The auditorium was fully packed with students and teachers. After the initial formalities of introducing the speaker, the teacher from Andhra University rose up to speak. I could notice a certain aura in his face. Right from his first word to the last, a fluent speech in perfect

flowery English with good sequence and coherence in sweet musical mellifluous tone, I heard him as if I was under a spell. After he just finished, I got up from my seat and looking towards my classmate and pointing my left hand towards the teacher, I blurted out in a moderately loud tone, "I want to be his student". My friend exclaimed "how can you be his student, you are a biology student interested to do post-graduation in the subject of zoology and that teacher is from geology, so you can't in your dream too think of becoming his student! I repeated, I don't know, but I want to be his student. There was despair and dejection in my mind, and for the first time momentarily I regretted of entering into biology stream. With memories of the day going into the back of my mind, I got into the thick and thin of studies and passed my graduation in first division. Though I got less marks in zoology than in the other subjects, I applied for admission into Andhra University into post graduate course of zoology, my favorite subject, but I failed to get an admission. I got admission into a zoology course in Shantiniketan but with no vegetarian food and plain curd available in the hostels, I was forced to leave it. I came back home quite dejected.

With no prospects of admission into zoology next year, I decided to do post-graduation in English literature and was passing time reading English classics and poems. One day, I was loitering shyly in front of a portion of our house where a geography lecturer of our college was living as one of the tenants. I was expecting him to call me in and he did call me in. I went in and took the seat offered and after about a few seconds of silence, he enquired about how I was spending my time and about my day-to-day routine. Before I could gather my wits to answer his questions, I got up, and took a step towards his open bookshelf, picked up a thick book of hardcover and settled back in my place. It is a book on Geomorphology by A. K. Lobeck. I turned a few pages of the book, got attracted towards the beautiful scenic plates and block diagrams of landforms and landscapes and asked him whether the subject 'geomorphology' is

taught in geography? The geography teacher immediately said, Yes, geomorphology is taught in geography and also prompted, “if you wish, you can study geography, as admission into geography is open to all graduates of science”. Holding the same book in my hands, I asked for permission to carry it home for a couple of days. With a nod given, I took the book home, looked into its content, was so impressed, I placed an order through postal V After about 5-6 days, a postman stood at our door to deliver the book. He asked for a payment of INR 150 for the book. With a palpitating heart, I approached my mother for money. My mother was shell-shocked at the cost of the book. During my graduate studies, I purchased many books, but the costliest book I purchased was only INR 25/- . At that time my father’s salary was only INR 300 a month. My mother refused to give me INR 150 to pay for the book as that would upset the monthly family budget. For a few minutes, I was in a quandary what to do?! With folded hands, I pleaded with my mother that I would be put to shame before the postman, my mother relented and, with a strict warning gave me the cost of the book. I felt relieved, spent long hours with the book turning and returning its pages. I loved the subject of geomorphology and decided to apply for a geography degree. Eagerly waited for the admission notice to appear, and I applied for M.Sc. in geography only. I was called to appear at 8.00 a.m. at Andhra University in Visakhapatnam to complete the admission formalities. It is about 8 hours of journey then from my native place to Visakhapatnam. Fortunately, I was there at 8.00 a.m. and exactly on the dot my name was called out on loudspeaker. I wondered at the timing, and I thought, had I been even a minute late, I would have missed it. I went in and my paper was pushed to a person for signature. I looked at him and he is Dr.R.Vaidyanadhan! I could guess he is the Head of the Department. My joy knew no bounds. I controlled myself lest I danced there in ecstasy. I came out with my heart thumping in an ecstatic mood, paid the admission fees, and my joy knew no bounds. It is nothing but a conspiracy of circumstances that fulfilled my desire. A geology teacher coming to geography

is a masterful conspiracy to be my teacher whom I loved at the very first sight and word. Paulo Coelho’s *The Alchemist* vindicated. Yes, Paulo Coelho’s ‘conspiracy of circumstances’ to fulfil an intense desire and dream stood vindicated!!! That was how I met him, and I met my destiny.

My search for Him was slow but steady

The path was beset with barriers many

Yet I met Him, and I met my destiny

What I am today bears testimony

Small and simple, in erudition a marvel

A man and a teacher with qualities ideal

Always on dot in time with the routine regimental

In speech eloquent and in speed mercurial

Taught me about Terra, its rocks and rivers

A fascinating field of landforms

As a Sage gave me great thoughts

They are my guiding stars

I called Him Master and Master shall I call Him

For I am a student and servant to Him

Owe my life and letters to Him

Will continue to draw sustenance from Him

I keep Him high above Gods

Met Him against many odds

It is the loneliest of my desires

Satiated my soul shall cease its cycles

Professor R.Vaidyanadhan: His Parents, Early and Higher Education

Professor Rajagopala Vaidyanadhan (Figure 1), reverentially called **Master** by his students, was born on 21st September 1931, as the third of eight children to simple and pious Brahmin parents, Shri Rajagopala Iyer and Smt.Avayambal in the Kallakkurichi village of the South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu. He received his early education (1939-41) in his village primary school at Kottalambakkam. By his father’s job in Railways, the family moved to Guntakal (1941-43) in Andhra Pradesh, where he

passed his sixth and seventh classes from the Railway Secondary School.

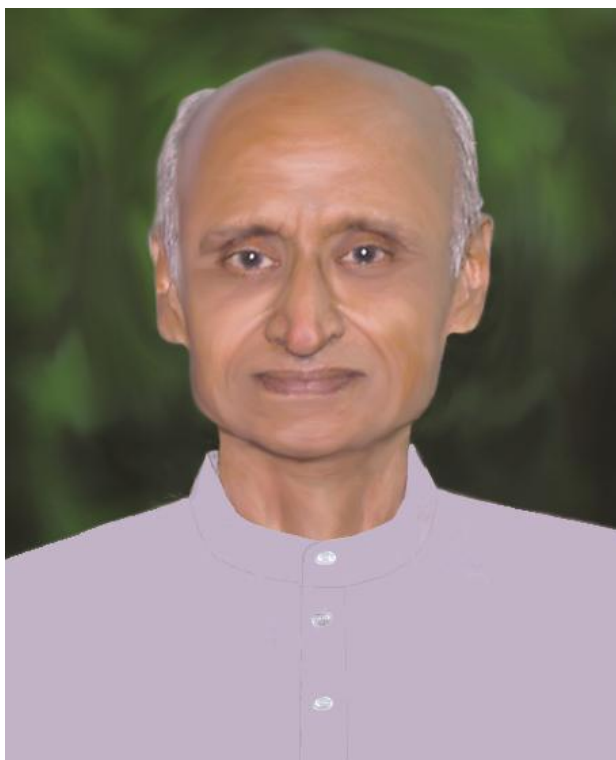


Figure 1: Professor R. Vaidyanadhan

Source: Author

Master studied his eighth standard in Singaram Pillai Secondary School (1943-44) in Villivakkam, Madras (now Chennai). After his eighth standard studies, the whole family shifted to Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, where he passed his ninth and SSLC (Secondary School Leaving Certificate course) from Gandhi Municipal School (GMS), Vijayawada (1944-47), Andhra Pradesh. He passed his Intermediate (1947-49) from SRR & CVR (Sri Rajah Rangayya and Chunduri Venkata Reddy) College at Vijayawada and thereafter joined Geology Department of Andhra University at Waltair (Visakhapatnam), Andhra Pradesh, to pursue his B.Sc. (Hons.) (1949-52). He continued in the same department and did his M.Sc. in Geology by Research (1952-53). He was no ordinary student and passed all his examinations and courses in flying colours. Thinking that if nothing came his way to earn for a living, he would 'type' his way into life, he learned typing, which stood him in good stead throughout his academic/professional career. He is one of the fastest typists at Andhra University, and he never depended on anybody to type his letters and papers. Thank goodness,

his brilliance attracted his Guru Professor C. Mahadevan, and he was taken in as a Demonstrator (1953) in the Geology Department of Andhra University. As he had been so brilliant in studies, he was advised by his Guru to go for the Civil Services Examination, which he did not heed, as Master very much wanted to be a teacher; he became one, to the great benefit of many of his future students. So, it was rather by choice, not by chance, that he became a teacher.

Professor R.Vaidyanadhan: Professional Life

Being extraordinary in every aspect of his duties as a demonstrator, it took no time for him to get elevated as a Lecturer in Geology (1954) in the same department. In 1959, he received Smith Mundt/Fulbright Fellowship to pursue training in Geomorphology at the Geology department and air-photo interpretation, cartography and photogrammetry at the Centre for Geodesy at Columbus Ohio State University, Ohio, USA. He also underwent training in Photo-geology at USGS in Washington, D.C. during his stay in the USA. The legendary Donald R.Leuder, who authored the legendary textbook on Aerial Photographic Interpretation, had been his teacher/trainer while at Ohio State University. In the middle of 1960, Vaidyanadhan returned to Andhra University. The research he had been doing on "Geomorphology of a part of Cuddapah Basin" for his Ph.D. degree ever since he became Lecturer was submitted for his doctoral degree to Andhra University in 1960. With the award of Ph.D. degree in 1963, Mr.Vaidyanadhan turned Dr.Vaidyanadhan. In 1966, Dr.R.Vaidyanadhan climbed a step further in his professional career by getting the post of Reader in Geology. As a faculty in the Geology Department, Master earned great reputation and respect as a good teacher and researcher. When the Department of Geography was started in the year 1972 in Andhra University, Professor R.Vaidyanadhan was the pick of the then university administration, to run and develop the department. He applied afresh for a post of Reader in Geography and was appointed as Reader in Geography in 1974. In 1976, he was formally appointed as Professor in Geography.

He served the Department as Head of the Department for eight long years (1974-81), and finally he retired from the service of Andhra University in 1991.

Prof.R.Vaidyanadhan has had a brilliant academic career right from school to the university. He stood first in the B.Sc. (Hons.) and M.Sc. (Geology) in Andhra University, Visakhapatnam. His research work on "Geomorphology of a part of Cuddapah Basin" was a first of its kind from the Department of Geology in Andhra University by a geologist. Usually, geologists do not indulge seriously in matters of physical geology (geomorphology). So, it was a rare interest that took seed in the mind of Professor R.Vaidyanadhan and grew into a large tree of knowledge under the shadow of which he nurtured and nourished many of his students in the subject of geomorphology especially after he came to the Geography Department in Andhra University.

Professor R.Vaidyanadhan: His stint and stay in the Geography Department

From 1974 onwards as Reader and Head of the Department of Geography and later as Professor (1976 onwards) Master built up the Department to grow into one of the best departments of Geography in our country in terms of laboratories, equipment, facilities, course content, etc. During his times, there used to be a stream of teachers, research students and district officials coming to the geography department seeking some help, or the other and Master magnanimously used to help everyone either directly himself or through his colleagues and research students. Though administration was not his forte, he ran the department efficiently and smoothly as a Head. Master was always available to the students and faculty even on holidays. It was never a ten-to-five job for him. He used to walk up to the department around 7.30 a.m. and used to be available till 6.00 m. and quite often, he used to come back to the department by around 7.00 m. to complete any backlog work of the day—no procrastination and no postponing is his philosophy. He was a workaholic; work is worship to him. Of course,

he never blew his trumpet on any count, and he avoided public glare and self-promotion.

Here are a few snippets to portray his personality. Such is his punctuality, our (1974-76 batch) first ever weekly field trip in the very first week in the very first semester of our post-graduation, most of us assembled at the department at 7.30 a.m. the scheduled time. He was not there, but to our surprise we saw Him walking up to us at 7.28 a.m. and he joined us exactly at 7.30 a.m. He asked us 'come along' to get into the van and when one of our classmates timidly mentioned about a classmate expected to arrive in a couple of minutes, he said, "no waiting for late comers". As students that was our first encounter with him and his punctuality. Later, in the subsequent semesters we witnessed his legendary punctuality. In the field, he always used to walk ahead of us at such a pace we could not catch up with him and used to follow minute to minute timelines and schedules everywhere with military precision and things used to fall in place as if time is in his hands. Geography being essentially a field science like his own mother subject geology, with great foresight he scheduled our timetable in such way, assigning one entire day (every Friday, the last working day of a five-day week) for field work/trip, a logical step with geography/geomorphology being field subjects. That's a unique opportunity for many of his students to get acquainted with the field and field work. On the very first field workday/class he taught and demonstrated us how to locate oneself in the topomap by taking bearings with Clinometer and Brunton compasses of visible peaks/features/landmarks and drawing resection lines (from the same peaks/features/landmarks) intersecting at the place in the map where we stood in the field. On another occasion, he put us on 'practice the paces'--walking 25 metres in normal steps a number of times to get the average number of steps--to measure approximate distances in the field. The next field work class/day with Master was a great experience of learning to draw form lines of features with low relief (less than the map contour interval) with simply ranging rod and eye-level measurements and pacing. This

field work experience and touch with the field stood us in good stead in the later years when we joined research. There are many examples of his excellent methods of teaching. Alas, it is unfortunate that no other geography department in India cared to assign field work (one entire day) as one of the regular classes, a great deficiency with geography education at higher levels in India.

If many of the students of geography produced by Andhra University are occupying/occupied high positions and are doing/did well in their professional life, it was solely because of the courses Master introduced and taught—Aerial Photo Interpretation, Cartography and Geomorphology as a specialisation—in geography course. We had both theory and practical papers in these subjects—a fetching point for most of his students; a look into the list of his research students reveals the advantage his students had because of these courses. If Dr.Y.V.N.Krishna Murthy, M.Sc., Ph.D., a student of Geography Department could serve as Director, Regional Remote Sensing Service Centre (RRSC), Nagpur; Director of IIRS (ISRO), Dehra Dun, and who ultimately retired as Director, NRSC of ISRO, Hyderabad, it was because of these courses he studied in his post-graduation. The author of this tribute could join as Lecturer in Remote Sensing (Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi) and Reader in Remote Sensing (Banaras Hindu University), it was solely due to formal training in aerial photo interpretation (in post-graduation) and experience with remote sensing during research. A couple of his geography students entered Geo-Engineering and Geology departments in Universities and retired as Professors and Heads of the respective departments (see the list below).

Geography being a comprehensive and inclusive subject, he realized its potential and made sincere and painstaking efforts to make it into a professional course and to turn out his students into professional and 'practicing geographers' like doctors and engineers. He is a strong votary for making geography into a professional subject. If the geography fraternity in our

country had picked up the threads from him, it would have really turned into a professional subject by now. He put his students on sediment analysis, soil analysis and geophysical survey methods especially electrical resistivity surveys. He created laboratories and facilities and used to say to his students that at least one good piece of work using each facility and instrument would justify the purchase of any equipment. When the author of this profile could not get hostel accommodation in the research scholars' hostel, Professor R.Vaidyanadhan, simply permitted him to stay in the department and the author lived in the department, in research scholars' hall for three and half years. Such was his nature of extending help to his students; when the author of this profile was about to go to field, he asked him "how much money are you carrying and pulled out two hundred rupees and pushing into his hands said, "you might need it in the field; carrying a couple of hundreds more is necessary". He used to sense one's needs and used to extend help. A true and great 'Guru' always contemplating and working for the welfare of his students.

After his return (in 1960) from the USA, with a foresight, Professor Vaidyanadhan introduced photo-geology (theory and practical) to the department of geology at Andhra University during early '60s. He was one of the very few early photo-geologists available in the country. The result we see across the country—most of his students are leaders in their own fields of specialisations such as Remote Sensing, Geomorphology, and allied fields. Being a native of a second-world country and having had an experience (1959-60) of a first-world country (USA), he wanted to have a personal touch and experience with a third-world country and travelled to Tanzania in Africa and served there as a Professor of Geology (1981-83) at the University of Dar-es-Salam. He went to Tanzania only to facilitate his colleague to become head of the department and when the university administration was totally disinclined to accept his magnanimous offer to step down from headship of the department to facilitate his colleague to take over as Head of the Department. Such was his altruistic nature.

From the year he joined the Geography Department, he invited very eminent people from different organisations and universities and arranged lectures and interactions. On one such occasion, in 1978-79 the then Director General of Geological Survey of India visited the geography department and after looking into displays we put up of our research works he remarked--“Professor Vaidyanadhan, now I realise, geography is a complete and comprehensive earth science unlike geology and geophysics”. The author of this write-up felt proud on listening to this comment and realised the uniqueness of the geography subject. This way, the students would get to know many eminent people. Such acquaintances with eminent persons helped his students in various ways. Here is an example of it, sometime in 1980, Professor Moonis Raza visited the geography department and interacted with the research scholars (when the author of this profile was a research scholar) and Professor Moonis Raza carried some memories of it and the author of this profile could join as a Lecturer in Remote sensing in the Department of Geography of Jamia Millia Islamia through the blessings of Professor Moonis Raza; of course, it was Prof.R.Vaidyanadhan who arranged it all.

Professor R.Vaidyanadhan: A Sage of Andhra University

Professor R.Vaidyanadhan is a perfect human besides being a perfect Guru—possessing knowledge and devotion to seek knowledge. What is unique with him is that —he is sinless, devoted and selfless in service. He has purity of heart and soul through which came the value of his words. And sans selfishness and sans expectations in return, he used to transfer his knowledge to his students completely. As a teacher, he did not have a stereo-type method but used to come down to the level of the student to teach. Not only this, but he also used to encourage his students to teach themselves. He always maintained personal contact with his students to give them a feeling of ‘gurukul’ environment. Quite rightly, he was awarded the Andhra Pradesh State “Best Teacher Award” from among all the Professors of all the

universities in the State, in 1983. At the time of the Award Ceremony, Professor R.Vaidyanadhan was busy working with his students in a remote part of Andhra Pradesh! He had been a UGC National Lecturer during the 1980s.

As a teacher, he was thorough with his subject knowledge and gave perfect answers to all his students’ questions, and he used to care for the welfare of his students—qualities expected in teachers. If he could mesmerise his students and audience through his lectures, it is entirely due to his thoroughness in both theoretical and field aspects of the courses he taught, crystal clear expression, fluency and finally his beautiful tone and handwriting; even after 60 years this has not changed!! Each sentence he spoke used to be complete with perfect sequence of points taught. All his students used to enjoy his lectures. His immediate students, colleagues, and the entire Andhra University fraternity used to respect him. He commanded respect but never demanded it. Professor R.Vaidyanadhan has all qualities fit to be qualified and called as a ‘Sage of Andhra University’.

His long and rich experience of research and field travels covering the length and breadth of our country (from Pahalgam to Kanyakumari and from Bhuj to Tezpur) made him a walking encyclopaedia and stood him in good stead while teaching and talking to his students and audience. Master is a leading light and a life-long companion to all his students. Fifteen students were awarded Ph.D. degrees under his direct guidance and several dozens are his “indirect” students.

Besides being an avid reader, Professor Vaidyanadhan is a prolific writer and published over 75 research papers in national and international journals. Whenever his research scholars prepare a research paper, he placed his students’ names first and his name next—a magnanimity rarely found among teachers of his time and even now.

The respect he commanded and admiration he drew from the powers that be of many scientific organisations was such that he was in many instances requested to take up research projects. Except in a couple of cases, he never

applied for projects. He carried out scientific projects along with his research students, which were given by CSIR, UGC, ONGC, DST, ISRO, Ministry of Defense, Planning Commission, etc

List of Professor R.Vaidyanadhan's Ph.D. Students			
Sl. No.	Name	Year of Award	Post/Office held at the time of Retirement
1.	*Y.J.Pardhasaradhi M.Sc., Ph.D., Geology	1970	Retired as Deputy Director General, Geological Survey of India, Kolkata
2.	*K.L.V.Ramana Rao M.Sc., Ph.D., Geology	1973	Retired as Professor & Head, Geology Dept., Andhra University
3	V.L.Babu M.Sc., Ph.D., Geology	1979	Retired as Senior Manager, Oil and Natural Gas Commission, Dehra Dun
4.	M.Sambasiva Rao M.Sc., Ph.D., Geography	1980	Retired as Professor & Head, Geography, Sri Krishna Devaraya University, Anantapur, A.
5.	K.Nageswara Rao M.Sc., Ph.D., Geography	1980	Retired as Professor & Head, Geo-Engineering Department, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
6.	Naresh Bedi M.Sc., Ph.D., Geology	1981	Voluntarily Retired, Geological Survey of India, Kolkata
7.	K.N.Prudhvi Raju M.Sc., Ph.D., Geography	1981	Retired as Professor & Head of the Geography Department at Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh
8.	V.Raghava Swamy M.A., Ph.D., Geography	1981	Retired as Deputy Director, Land Use, National Remote Sensing Centre) of Indian Space Research Organisation), Hyderabad,
9.	Prabhakara Rao M.Sc., Ph.D., Geology	1982	Retired as Deputy Director General, Geological Survey of India, Kolkata
10.	L.S.Suryanarayanan M.Sc., Ph.D., Geology	1983	Retired as Deputy Director General, Geological Survey of India, Kolkata
11.	S.V.B.K.Bhagawan M.A., Ph.D., Geography	1985	Retired as Director, Andhra Pradesh State Remote sensing Applications Centre (APSRAC), Hyderabad
12.	V.S.Prasada Raju M.Sc., Ph.D., Geography	1985	Retired as Scientist-G, Advanced Data Research Institute (ADRIN), Defense Ministry, Hyderabad.
13.	K.B.Mahalaxmi M.Sc., Ph.D., Geography	1987	Retired as Professor & Head, Geology Dept., Nagarjuna University, Guntur, A.
14.	B.D.Emmanuel M.A., Ph.D., Geography	1992	Settled in the USA
15.	Y.Ramesh M.Sc., Ph.D., Geography	1992	Scientist D, Andhra Pradesh State Remote Sensing Applications Centre (APSRAC), Hyderabad
*While in the Geology Department at Andhra University, and the rest while in the Geography Department.			
Source: Compiled by the Author			

Here is a list of research projects carried out by Professor Vaidyanadhan handled during 1962-1989:

- I. Terrain Evaluation Sponsored by Ministry of Defense, New Delhi—1962-1965.
- II. CSIR Project on Toposheets--1964-1967 (Report was published as a

booklet by CSIR--Index to a set of sixty topographic maps illustrating specified physiographic features from India, 1969).

- III. UGC Project on Aerial Photo--1970-1972 (Report was published as a booklet by CSIR--Index to a set of seventy aerial stereo-pairs

- illustrating physiographic features from India, 1973).
- IV. Hill Slope Development, sponsored by the Planning Commission, New Delhi.
 - V. Morphology of Krishna and Godavari deltas--1976-1978 Sponsored by ONGC, Dehra Dun.
 - VI. Coastal Geomorphic Mapping--1989, sponsored by Space Applications Centre, ISRO, Ahmedabad.

Aerial Photo and Satellite Imagery interpretation in the laboratory and field work outside were his forte, an excellent combination in an earth scientist. Geological Survey of India sent several batches of officers to train under him in the fields of Geomorphology and Aerial Photo Interpretation. He also taught and trained several batches of post-graduate students from earth sciences in different parts of India. Here is a list of training programmes conducted by Professor Vaidyanadhan:

- I. Geomorphic Mapping and Field Training—1984, sponsored by DST, New Delhi, for 15 students of Earth Sciences selected from all over India at Andhra University.
- II. Geomorphology from Maps and Aerial Photos—1985, sponsored by DST, New Delhi, for 15 participants from Earth Sciences at Nandi Hills (along with Dr.B.Radhakrishna and Dr.K.Ramam).
- III. Geomorphic Mapping—(1987-88), sponsored by the Geological Survey of India for 10 officers of Geological Survey of India at Andhra University.
- IV. Interpretation of Landforms from Maps, Aerial photos and Remote sensing images—2002 at Mahabalewar, 2003 (along with Professor V.S.Kale) at Pune University and 2007-2008 (along with Professor K.V.Subba Rao) at Central University, Hyderabad.

Professor's post retirement period is equally productive. He had been Editor of the Journal of the Geological Society of India (1992-95) and

Vice-President of the Geological Society of India during 1998-2001, 2001-2004, and 2013-2016. Professor completed a stupendous job of bringing out a two-volume book on 'Geology of India', with the joint authorship of Dr. M.Ramakrishnan. The Geological Society of India published this during 2007-2008; the same volumes were revised after being sold out in 2010. These two volumes are a much needed addition to our knowledge on the Geology of India as our classical books by Dr.M.S.Krishnan and Dr.Wadia have turned 60 years old. Further, he and Professor .K.V.Subba Rao completed a large volume on "Identification of Landforms from Topomaps, Aerial Photos and Satellite Imagery" which was published in 2014 by the Geological Society of India. This volume completely replaced the small booklets (see list of publications in the reference list) earlier published by Master during 1968 and 1973.

His students and admirers revere him so much that they pooled a corpus of INR three hundred thousand and instituted a prize in his name to class first student of M.Sc. Geography every year in Andhra University. Also, his students and admirers pooled up another corpus of INR five hundred thousand to Institute an award "Professor R.Vaidyanadhan Endowment Lecture Award in Geological Society of India to be given to eminent geomorphologists of the country every year. After retirement, he was honoured with a 'Lifetime achievement award in Earth Sciences' by NRDC&MSAA, a scientific society from Hyderabad. He was also recipient of the Golden Jubilee Honour of the Geological Society of India, Bengaluru. In his honour, the Geological Society of India has published a Special Section in the December 2024 issue of its Journal.

Conclusion

Even today he commands respect not only from his past students but also from several persons from several institutions in the country. He is an apostle of action and an epitome of knowledge. His promptness in replying to mails received is legendary. In good olden days he used to finish dispatch of replies to all postal mail he used to receive, by the immediate next post. He himself used to walk briskly to the post office to

drop/post all his letters and replies. He has everything to command respect, especially knowledge, in ample measure. We have in our country a great and noble tradition of keeping the 'Guru'/Teacher on the highest pedestal. He is a 'Guru' in the strictest sense of the word and every respect. "Nothing comes closer than a Guru's blessing for a path to betterment." His students remain blessed with his blessings.

Professor is an honest family man; he once confessed, "...if I could do whatever I did in my professional life, it was and is because of the unstinted support and sacrifice of my wife (Late Smt.Laxmi) and sons (Sridhar and Ravi)." It was solely because of their sacrifice, by sparing him enough time to be himself and be with his students to teach, guide and lead them into light, his students blossomed well in their professional lives. Professor Vaidyanadhan did not possess material wealth, but health is his wealth. At present in his 94th summer with his good and caring sons and their families in Mumbai, he is healthy and hale because of his regimental routine of daily life of yoga, going with frugal vegetarian diet and daily prayers.

Professor Vaidyanadhan has the ability and God's grace and always puts in sincere efforts to accomplish whatever he has accomplished so far. He is utterly devoid of "ego". Being a 'Brahman—the knowledgeable' as he is, he did and is doing sat-karma. His motto of life has been "Sarve Janah Sukhinobhavantu" / Let all people be happy; he always cared for and is caring for the welfare of others and considered it as his own welfare. He sincerely engaged himself to enlarge the frontiers of knowledge, freely shared it with his students and whoever asked for it in his entire teaching life. He is not a person to relax. As one can see from the list of his publications, most of his valuable and critical academic accomplishments resulted in his post-retirement life. The earth sciences fraternity, especially his students, pray to the Almighty to grant him a long life and good health.

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