

# A Tribute to Dr Subbanna Ayyappan (1955–2025)

## A Life of Dedication, Tenacity, and Grace

We are deeply saddened by the untimely demise of Dr Subbanna Ayyappan, a distinguished agricultural scientist, Padma Shri awardee, and former Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi. Tragically, his body was discovered in the River Cauvery at Srirangapatna, Mandya district, on May 10, 2025, following a three-day search after he went missing.

Born on December 10, 1955, in Alakere, Karnataka, Dr Ayyappan's academic journey began at National High School, Bangalore (1967–70), followed by National College, Bangalore (1971), and the College of Fisheries, Mangalore (1971–77), where he earned his BFSc and MFSc degrees. He later obtained his PhD in 1988 from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore. His illustrious career spanned decades, beginning as a scientist at the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore (1978–84), and progressing to roles such as Director of the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar (1996–2000) and the Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai (2000–2002). He served as Deputy Director General (Fisheries) at ICAR (2002–09), Chief Executive of the National Fisheries Development Board (2006–08), and as Secretary, DARE, and Director General of ICAR (2010–16), becoming the first non-crop scientist to lead the council.

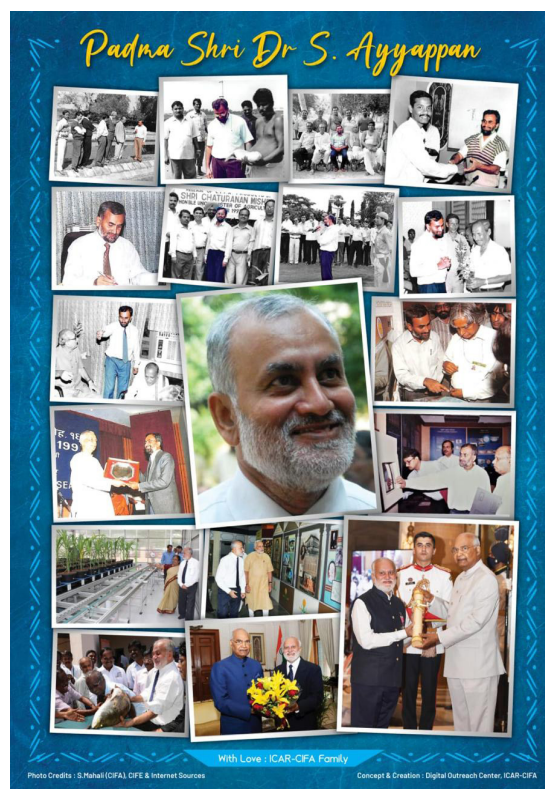


Dr Ayyappan's contributions to India's Blue Revolution were transformative, advancing fisheries and aquaculture development. He held prestigious positions, including Chancellor of the Central Agricultural University, Imphal (2018–23), Chairman of the Karnataka Science and Technology Academy (2020–23), and Chairman of APAARI (2011–12). He also served as Vice-Chairman/Member of governing boards of global institutions like WFC, ICRISAT, CIP, IRRI, and ICARDA. Later, he was NABARD Chair Professor (2016–19) and Adjunct Professor at NIAS, Bengaluru.

His remarkable achievements were recognized with numerous honors, including the Padma Shri (2022), Karnataka Rajyotsava Award (2013), Zahoor Qasim Gold Medal (1996–97), VG Jhingran Gold Medal (2002), and multiple ICAR Awards for Team Research (1997–98). He received 15 honorary DSc degrees and fellowships from esteemed bodies like the National Academy of Sciences, India, and the Zoological Society of India. Dr Ayyappan's leadership, vision, and mentorship left an indelible mark on agricultural science and the global research community.

He is survived by his wife, two daughters, and two sons-in-law. His time at ICAR and as a resident of the National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC) left an indelible mark on the agricultural community. Dr Ayyappan's vision, wisdom, and dedication to scientific excellence inspired many, and his loss is deeply felt by all who knew him.

On behalf of the Executive Council and Members of the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources (ISPGR), I extend heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and the entire ICAR community. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



**Dr Anuradha Agrawal**  
General Secretary, ISPGR, New Delhi