

## RECOLLECTIONS

Late K. Chidambaram was one of the last stalwarts who started making a mark in fisheries development in India during pre-independence years. An erudite scholar, researcher, and administrator, he played an important role in fisheries development in the country. He was well known for his managerial and organizational capacities which were exemplified in his work in the erstwhile Madras Presidency, the State of Gujarat, in the Fisheries Division of Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India and as Founder Director of the Marine Products Export Development Authority under the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India. His contributions through calm, cool and mature reflections contributing to positive actions at national and international meetings and conferences are well known.

I had known K Chidambaram from the mid-fifties, perusing through many of his research and development publications in the Bulletin of Madras Fisheries Department and other journals. His mentors and contemporaries in the State Fisheries Department included some illustrious personalities, like Sunder Raj, Devanesan, Devidas Menon, T.J. Job, G.K. Kurian and A.H. Alikunhi, to mention a few, all upholding the traditions and standards set by Frederick Nicholson and James Hornell.

Chidambaram always had a wry smile, so characteristic of him, which made his personality enigmatic and inscrutable, nor have I ever seen him lose his cool – a great asset to a good manager and administrator. He could enthuse confidence and liaise with ease, whether it be with fishermen, industrialist, financier, banker, bureaucrat or politician. This was well exemplified in his outstanding work as Director of Fisheries of Gujarat and as Director, MPEDA. His efforts in these are milestones in the development of fisheries in India.

He did not mix his personal life with official work. He had an immense capacity to manage matters. As a researcher and research manager, I had numerous occasions to meet Chidambaram and also share common forums. His pleasant disposition and receptive mind have left lasting impressions. He was one of the pioneers in fisheries consultancy. He could relax in the company of equals. Many of his colleagues may remember the jokes *par excellence* of late G.K. Kurian on “consultants” etc., which would not perturb him.

Chidambaram belonged to an era of technocrats who are on the verge of extinction. I feel sad that he has left us forever in January 2003. May his soul rest in peace

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