

Udipi Ramachandra Rao



Udipi Ramachandra Rao, a renowned space Scientist, was born on 10th March, 1932 at Admar in Karnataka. He did his B. Sc. from the Govt. Arts and Science College, Anantapur and M. Sc. from Banaras Hindu University. He obtained Ph. D. from PRL Ahmedabad (Gujrath University) in 1960. After obtaining his Ph. D., he went to M. I. T. (US) as postdoctoral fellow. He was also Associate Professor in Texus University during 1963-66. He joined Physical Research Laboratory Ahmedabad in 1966 and become a Professor in 1970. He became Director ISRO, Satellite Centre, Bangalore in 1972 and was there till 1984.

Professor Rao started his career in Cosmic Ray research under Dr. Vikram Sarabhai. Professor Rao was the first to establish the continuous nature of Solar wind and his experiments on pioneer and explorer spacecrafts led to a deep understanding of the polar Cosmic Ray Phenomena. Professor Rao introduce satellite technology in India in 1972 and under his guidance the first Indian satellite 'Arya Bhatta' was launched in 1975. He was Chairman of Space-commission and Secretary, Department of space in 1984 and over 15 Satellites including 'Bhaskar', 'Rohini', 'INSAT-1 and INSAT-2' were launched under his leadership.

He took steps to develop rocket technology and his efforts culminated in the successful launch of ASLV rocket in 1991. He was also to be credited with the development of second generator remote sensing satellite IRS-IC and ID.

Professor Rao has published over 300 scientific papers in National and International journals covering topics on Cosmic Rays, Interplanetary Physics, High Energy Astronomy, Space applications and Rocket Technology.

Professor Rao received numerous prestigious awards and honours. He has been elected fellow of many academic bodies such as Indian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Electronics and Telecommunications Engineers, Third World Academy of Sciences among others. He is the Chairman of the Committee for Liaison with Developing Countries (CLIODN) since 1986.

Professor Rao received Santi Swarup Bhatnagar Memorial award, Vikram Sarabhai Research award, Meghnad Saha Gold Medal, P. C. Mahalanobis Medal and many other prestigious awards. More recently he received the coveted 'Theodore Von Karman' award by the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), Paris, for the year 2005. Professor Rao was awarded 'Padma Bhusan' by the Government of India in 1976. He gave the 29th Convocation address in Indian Statistical Institute on 1995. The title of his talk was 'Statistical Dynamics of Sustainable Development'.

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