

OBITUARY

Professor Ramamurthy Balasubramaniam

<http://home.iitk.ac.in/~bala/>



Professor Ramamurthy Balasubramaniam (fondly known as ‘Bala’) was born on 15 April 1961 in Salem, TamilNadu. He obtained his Bachelor of Technology (Gold medalist) in Metallurgical Engineering from Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi. For all round performance as an undergraduate student, he was awarded Gandhi Gold medal from Department of Metallurgical Engineering, BHU as well as Vishwa Bharathi Award from the Indian Institute of Metals, both in 1984. He then proceeded to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Troy (RPI), USA and obtained his Doctor of Philosophy in Materials Engineering in 1990. After spending a brief stint as an Adjunct faculty at RPI, he joined the faculty of Materials and Metallurgical Engineering at IIT Kanpur on 2nd April 1990 and became Professor on 13th December 2001.

Professor Balasubramaniam's research interests included Material-Hydrogen Systems, Environmental Degradation of Materials, Structure-Property Correlation in Advanced Materials and Indian Archaeometallurgy. Professor Balasubramaniam was a prolific researcher and has published more than 250 research papers in refereed journals of repute. He has published 10 books. Two of his recent books, which dealt Indian Archaeometallurgy are on “The Saga of Indian Cannons” and “Story of Delhi Iron Pillar”. His research on the corrosion resistance of Delhi’s iron pillar attracted worldwide attention. He also adopted the text book of Materials Science, written by Callister. One of his most recent research project was his work on *Corrosion Prevention of Rails* under the Technology Mission on Railway Safety.

In recognition to his outstanding contribution as an active researcher in the field of Metallurgy, Materials Science and Archeometallurgy, Dr. Balasubramaniam received a number of prestigious awards, including Young scientist award (1993), Indian National Science Academy, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Fellowship (1996), Materials Research Society of India (MRSI) Medal (1999), Metallurgist of the Year award (1999), Ministry of Steels and Mines, Government of India. He was a member of the National Commission for History of Science. He was an editorial member of a number of international journals in the area of corrosion and Archeometallurgy. He was one of the finest teachers and recently received the inaugural Distinguished Educator Award (2009) from Indian Institute of Metals (IIM). Prof. Balasubramaniam was bestowed with B B Lal Chair Professor at IIT Kanpur in September 2009. Dr. Balasubramaniam was a life member of Indian Institute of Metals.

Apart from Academics, Dr. Balasubramaniam was an enthusiastic sportsperson with a passion for cricket. He also had a great passion, both for Indian and Western music, right from his student days in BHU. Professor Balasubramaniam’s illustrious career was cut short by his untimely demise on December 9, 2009 at 2:20 am. He is survived by his wife Dr. Gaitri Saini Balasubramaniam and two daughters, Gowri and Gargi.

The entire metallurgical and materials engineering community of the country, and in particular, the Indian Institute of Metals (IIM) deeply mourns this untimely loss. May his departed soul rest in peace! And may god give strength to the bereaved family to bear the loss.