



Dr. V Ramanatha Rao

Former Sr Scientist &
Honorary Research Fellow,
Bioversity International, Rome ,
Co-Founder GRSV, Consulting
Service

Ramanatha Rao -Profile

Ramanatha Rao is an undergraduate (1963-'67, SV Agricultural College, Tirupathi) and postgraduate (1967-70, AP Agricultural University, Rajendranagar) in agricultural sciences. After working briefly at the Agricultural Research Station, Rajendranagar (1970 -'71), he obtained his doctorate in Genetics and Plant Breeding from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi in 1975. He worked at the All India Coordinated Rice Improvement Project, Rajendranagar (1975-'76). He joined the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad and worked on the genetic resources of groundnut during 1976-1989. In between, he spent one year (mid-1983 to mid-1984) sabbatical to study and establish *Arachis* genetic resources collection at the Centro Nacional de Pesquisa em Recursos Genéticos - CENARGEN, Brasilia, Brazil, funded by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA). While at ICRISAT, he helped in establishing the groundnut germplasm world collection numbering over 10,000 accessions including several wild relatives. He worked closely with groundnut improvement scientists and participated in studying various desired traits and breeding efforts.

He joined the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (which became the International Institute for Plant Genetic Resources-IPGRI, and then Bioversity International). He worked at its offices in Rome, Italy (1989-'92); Singapore (1992-96') and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1997-2007). He conducted a set of complex activities including the programme management-related activities in a spirit of teamwork within IPGRI, and within IPGRI-APO. His work ranged widely and covered various aspects of plant genetic resources conservation and use – of both crop and forestry species. This work covered many PGR disciplines- genetic diversity studies, utilization of germplasm, *ex situ* and *ins situ* and complementary conservation strategies, policies and programmes, PGR networks and collaboration, science and application, leadership and teamwork, the balance between IPGRI's objectives and partners' needs, and at various levels of the organisation- national, subregional, regional, and global levels. He helped several countries in Asia to establish or develop national plant genetic resources programmes. He participated in organising several international training programmes and conferences, including the first in

various countries. He developed proposals and generated funding from GTZ, Germany; JIACA and JIRCAS, Japan; ADB, FAO, ACAIR and AusAid, Australia; NZAid, New Zealand, APEC; EU; and GEF, UN for supporting various plant genetic resources projects in the Asia and the Pacific region.

A project proposal on ‘the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Cultivated and Wild Tropical Fruit Diversity: Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods, Food Security and Ecosystem Services’ that was submitted at the end of 2006 was approved by UNEP/ GEF at end of 2007. He was offered the position of Honorary Research Fellow with Bioversity International which lasted from 2008 to 2014. During this period, he provided technical backstopping to the regional Project Management Unit. Helped in organizing and monitoring various project meetings such as the technical review and planning and the Regional Project Steering Committee (RPSC) meetings and provided technical support and suggestions on the impact of genetic diversity on proposed methodologies and set of interventions. He participated in the National Project Committee (NPSC) meetings of partner countries (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand) India for technical backstopping on the project and other related projects. During the little over 30 years of involvement in PGR work he has published, over 350 papers/reports/chapters and books (mostly edited).

He joined 3 other friends to establish the Global Research-for-development Support Ventures (GRSV) (see <https://grsvconsulting.com/>). His main work, with help of other co-founders and Chief Editor, was to develop the monthly AgriTech Newsletter.