

## **Dr. Syed Zahoor Qasim**

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**Dr. Syed Zahoor Qasim** (31 December 1926 – 20 October 2015) was an Indian marine biologist. He helped lead India's exploration to Antarctica and guided the other seven expeditions from 1981 to 1988. He was a Member of the Planning Commission of India from 1991 to 1996. He was the Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia from 1989 to 1991 and an Honorary Professor of universities including Aligarh Muslim University, Madurai Kamaraj University, Anna Malai University, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, and Jamia Millia Islamia.

Dr Syed Zahoor Qasim was born on 27th December 1926 at Allahabad. He began his schooling from Majidiya Islamiya Intermediate College Allahabad. He took his B.Sc. in 1949 and M.Sc. degree in Zoology in 1951. He stood first in the order of Merit for which he was awarded University Gold Medal. For a few years, he was a lecturer in the Department of Zoology at Aligarh before proceeding to the United Kingdom for higher studies in 1953. He returned to India in December of 1956 and joined the Department of Zoology of AMU as a Lecturer. He became Reader in 1957 and started a new laboratory of Fish and Fisheries in the Department.

In 1962, he joined the Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Bombay (Mumbai) as a Professor of Fisheries Biology and in 1964, moved to Cochin as Assistant Director in the Directorate of International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE) under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Here he extensively worked on biological oceanography especially on the primary productivity of Kerala Backwaters and on the atolls of Lakshadweep. From 1970 to 1973, Dr. Qasim was the Director of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute at Cochin. He also held the additional charge of the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Cochin for about one year. Here he promoted new lines of work in Fisheries Biology and initiated the development of mussel culture and pearl culture techniques for the first time in India. This work earned him the prestigious award of "Padma Shri.". In January 1974, he took over as the Director of the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa. In February 1976 he was responsible for the commissioning of the first Oceanographic Research Vessel Ganeshani for NIO. He initiated many new programs on the productivity of the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

In May 1981, Dr. Qasim was appointed Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Environment (DOE) and within a year (April 1982) he took over as Secretary of the newly established Department of Ocean Development. He has been responsible for the acquisition of a second Oceanographic Research Vessel "Sagar Sampada" for the Indian Oceanographic research. Dr. Qasim led India's First Expedition to the Antarctica and successfully organized and guided the other seven expeditions to the frozen continent from 1981 to 1988. His work on Fisheries Biology, primary productivity, mari-culture particularly mussel and pearl culture, estuarine ecology, environmental pollution and Antarctic research will always be quoted profusely. He has published more than 200 original research papers in national and international journals. For his original work and distinguished services, he won many honors and awards. He led many delegations of India in several international conferences and meetings.

Dr. Qasim is a Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, Indian academy of Sciences, Bangalore, National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad, among many others. Under his guidance nearly 40 students obtained their Ph.D. degrees from various universities in India. He is Editor for several journals and member of the Editorial Boards of many national and international scientific journals. he is an Honorary Professor of several Universities including Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai in Tamil Nadu, Annamalai University, Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (Chennai) in Tamil Nadu, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and the Jamia Millia Islamia(University) in Delhi.

Dr. Qasim played a key role to establish Dr. D. Swaminadhan Research Foundation (DSRF) with the help of his colleagues Prof. Dr. D. Swaminadhan and Dr. Jayant Patil. Dr. D. Swaminadhan Research Foundation (DSRF) is a non-profit and non-governmental forum established in 1995 with the laudable objective of contributing towards development based on eco-friendly, pro-poor and gender equity parameters. It is registered as a Society and as a Trust under Indian Societies and Trusts acts. Social Action, sustainable development, social empowerment, application of advancements in science & technology for rural development and promotion of human values are the focus. The Foundation has been recognized by the Department of Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt. of India as a Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (SIRO) and by the Ministry of Finance for the purpose of Income Tax Exemption. DSRF is also registered with Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India under the Foreign Contributions (Regulations) Act of 1976.

#### **Awards and Honors:**

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- Padma Shri (1974)
- Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Award (1978)
- Lal Bahadur Shastri Award (1988)
- Padma Bhushan (1982)
- Oceanology International Lifetime Achievement Award, UK (1999)
- First National Ocean Science and Technology Award by Government of India (2003–04)
- Asian Society Gold Medal (2005)
- SOFTI Biennial Award (2007)
- Lifetime Achievement Award, Indian Science Congress (2008)

#### **Books Authored**

The Indian Ocean: Images and Realities

Indian Estuaries

Biodiversity of Mangrove Ecosystems

Living Resources of India's Exclusive Economic Zone

Indian Ocean in the 21st Century: Linkages and Networking Proceedings of an International Seminar Held in New Delhi on 9 and 10 February 1998

Science and Quality of Life

Glimpses of the Indian Ocean

India's Exclusive Economic Zone: Resources, Exploitation, Management

Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures, 1989, Ocean - The Future Hope of Mankind