

A Textbook of Marine Ecology: by N. Balakrishnan Nair and D. M. Thampy, *The Macmillan Company of India Ltd.*, 1980, Rs. 41.50, 352 pp.

Students in marine biology and ecology at the selected Indian Universities, where these subjects are taught, had to scan through a sea of literature to find out their subjects of interest. Often many informations are either not accessible to students or too specialised to be appreciated by young students. The subject of marine ecology has been dealt in several textbooks published. These books are prohibitively expensive for our students and contain informations which have very little application to the conditions prevailing in the seas around India.

Professor Nair and Dr. Thampy have, thus, filled up a very vital gap in the study of marine biology in Indian Universities. The book contains three parts, each part having several chapters dealing with relevant aspects of the theme covered under the part. The informations under each chapter are very well arranged and contain details about the fundamentals needed to form an understanding of the basic facets of marine ecology. These will, definitely, help the young students to form an idea of what should be involved in a study of marine ecology. Such a book is, therefore, of vital importance for both the teachers and students. The authors are both teachers of long standing and they have tried to collect and collate the informations which they themselves found essential for successful learning of the subject.

But such a useful book is not without its blemishes, as is usual with many similar publications. The authors have cited the old Knudsen's relation for conversion of chlorinity to salinity. This relation has been modified as nowadays salinity is mostly calculated from conductivity ratios and not by argentometric titrations as used to be done earlier. Informations from the Indian seas are scattered all through the book and many of them are old and have since been modified. Scanning through the list of references, one finds that the authors have gone through works done mostly prior to 1970. A considerable amount of work on the ecology of the Indian seas have been done since. It is hoped that the authors will update the information in future editions. A comprehensive chapter on the ecology of the Indian seas would be a very useful addition.

The chapter on pollution of the marine environment appears to be out of context to the general theme of the book. Words like 'eutrophication,' 'half-life' seem to be unknown to the authors. Wrong information on annual addition of oil to the sea (50 to 25,000 tonnes instead of 6.113 million tonnes) is also there. No mention about the effect of pollution on marine life in Indian coastal waters has been made. The authors should expand the chapter to make it more relevant or omit it altogether in the next edition of the book.

The chapter on instruments for ecological study should have been more comprehensive. Details about gears like Niskin PVC water samplers, samplers for sterile sampling, Neuston net for surface tow, electronically operated direct reading current meters, expendable bathythermograph, etc., will be valuable addition to this chapter.

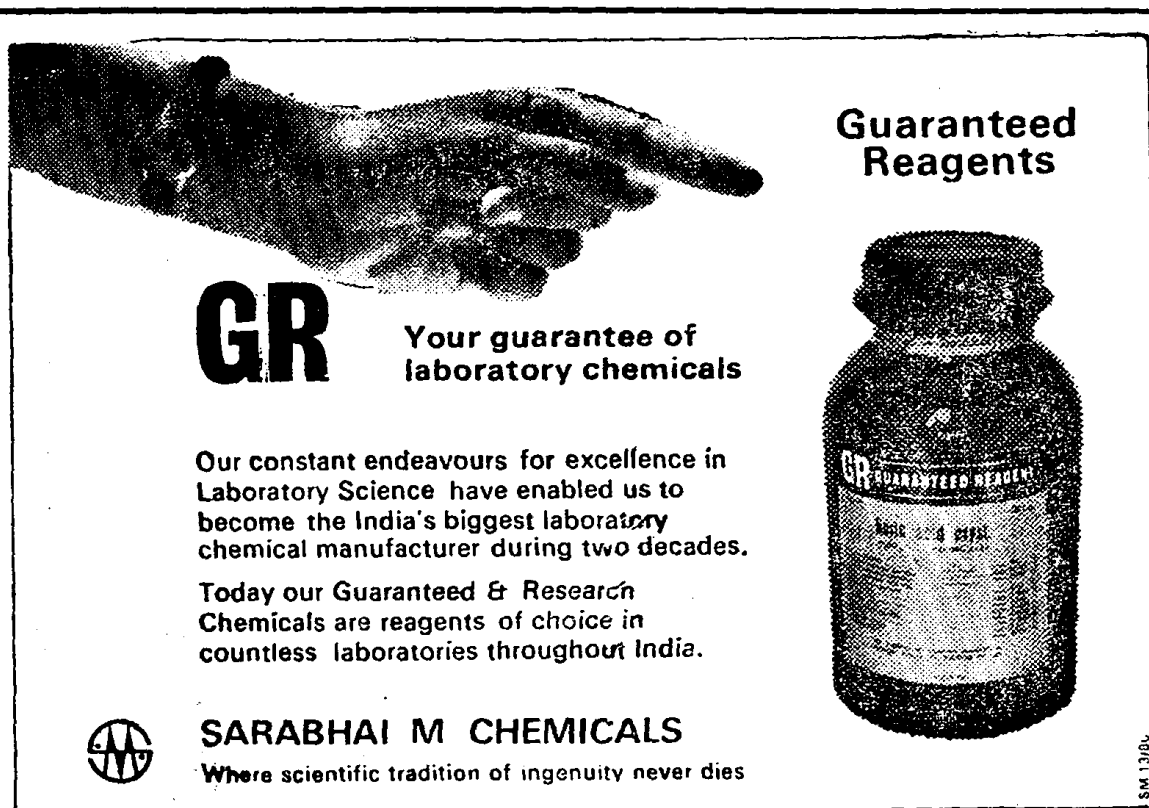
There are several 'printer's devil' at many places which indicate a not-too-careful proof reading.

Thinking about our students, the book has been very economically priced, although the quality of papers has to be sacrificed. But this is just natural.

All in all, it is a very useful book fulfilling a longstanding need. I whole heartedly recommend it to all the students of marine sciences and to all the libraries.

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—R. SEN GUPTA



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