DR M.C. NANDEESHA: THE MAN WHO BROUGHT GENDER AWARENESS TO THE ASIAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

Meryl J Williams\*

\*17 Agnew Street, Aspley, Queensland, Australia 4034.

MerylJWilliams@gmail.com (corresponding author)

In December 2012, the world lost Dr Mudnakudu C Nandeesha, the man who put women and gender equality issues on the agenda of the Asian Fisheries Society. In 1990, Dr Nandeesha organized the Women in Fisheries in India workshop for the Asian Fisheries Society Indian Branch. In subsequent field work in Cambodia and Bangladesh, Dr Nandeesha became even more convinced that women’s equality was a major factor in the successful development of aquaculture and fisheries. He organized first a national (Cambodia, 1994) and then a regional (Indo-China countries, 1996) workshop on women in fisheries. At the same time, the Cambodian non-government organization, PADEK, which he worked for, sponsored the first women in fisheries photographic completion at the 1995 5th Asian Fisheries Forum (AFF) in Beijing. These competitions were also held in 1998 and 2001 at the Asian Fisheries Fora. However, the photograph competition was the soft way into the AFS processes. Dr Nandeesha approached WorldFish Center to help sponsor, with AFS and others, the first Global Symposium on Asian Women in Fisheries in 1998 at the 6th AFF. This set the pattern to having a women, later gender, symposium at each Asian Fisheries and Aquaculture Forum. This presentation traces explores in depth some of Dr Nandeesha’s key ideas on eradicating gender inequality in fisheries and aquaculture, through analyzing some of his key publications and from my first hand experience of how he influenced people and organizations. It concludes that Dr Nandeesha was a visionary with an intuitive understanding of how to motivate others to act and bring about institutional change.