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## Remembering Prof. M.S. Swaminathan: A Mentor and Pioneer in Environmental Journalism



For a decade in the 1990s, I met Prof. M.S. Swaminathan regularly at the MSSRF while covering the environment and development conferences organised at the Foundation. As a journalist reporting for a daily newspaper - The Hindu Business Line - I was expected to cover the inaugural and valedictory function of these meetings. However, as a young

journalist wanting to strengthen my understanding about the environment, I stayed on through most of the meetings. Sitting as a wallflower in the octagonal auditorium, I soaked in all that was said and enjoyed meeting the international experts who passed through Chennai only because of Prof. Swaminathan and the Foundation. I remember Prof. Swaminathan was encouraging me at a time when environment journalism did not have the glamour that it has today.

I continued to meet Prof. Swaminathan even in the later years, for meetings at the Foundation. Howsoever busy he was, he always had the time to speak with the visiting journalists, and especially those like me who had a special interest in the environment. Whenever I sent him a link or a clipping of a piece that I had written, I would get a response without fail within a couple of years.

In the early months of the COVID pandemic, he co-authored this piece for Mongabay India

- <https://india.mongabay.com/2020/04/commentary-covid-19-and-food-security-lessons-for-indian-agriculture/>

When I heard about his death in 2023, I wrote this obituary for Mongabay India

- <https://india.mongabay.com/2023/10/obituary-remembering-m-s-swaminathan/>

The photo is from a media workshop we had organised on behalf of Panos South Asia and MSSRF in 2014.