

Interview with Dr. Kavyashree Srinivasa

Intervju z dr. Kavyashree Srinivasa

Katarina Čufar

Dr. Kavyashree Srinivasa* has worked at our Department of Wood Science and Technology (DWST), Biotechnical Faculty (BF), University of Ljubljana (UL) since February 2020. In September 2018 she applied for a Marie Skłodowska Curie (MSCA) individual fellowship from the European Commission. The proposal “Enhancement of UV stability of thermally modified wood through envelope impregnation with nano-based stabilisers” (NewSiest 867451) was awarded with a Seal of Excellence and funding was approved under the Widening fellowship scheme, and Kavyashree Srinivasa became a postdoctoral researcher at BF UL for the period from February 2020 to 2022. We interviewed her in November 2021.

1. Can you briefly present yourself and your professional development?

I am Kavyashree Srinivasa, born in India, a multicultural and diverse country, and the largest democracy in the world. I received my master’s degree in chemistry (analytical chemistry) from the University of Mysore. Then I joined the Institute of Wood Science & Technology, Bengaluru as a junior research fellow under a project, and then enrolled myself for a doctoral degree in Forestry (Wood Science & Technology) at the Forest Research Institute Deemed University, Dehradun. This four years of work experience at the research institute was life-changing, and transformed my views on the importance of sustainability, preservation and durability of wood and its products.

2. What stimulated your co-operation with Prof. Dr. Marko Petrič and the University of Ljubljana.



Figure 1. Dr. Kavyashree Srinivasa during her stay in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Slika 1. Dr. Kavyashree Srinivasa med svojim bivanjem v Ljubljani.

Initially I met Prof. Dr. Marko Petrič in person during IRG-WP (IRG44), Stockholm, Sweden, and I had been following his work during my doctoral studies. After completing my doctoral degree, I approached Prof. Petrič with regard to hosting a nationally funded overseas post-doctoral fellowship (DST-OPDF). The application time frame was not suitable, so he suggested that I apply for a Marie Skłodowska Curie fellowship, and I succeeded in obtaining an MSCA Widening fellowship from the European Commission.

3. Which program supported your stay in Ljubljana in the recent period.

I am currently working as part of an EU funded project titled “Enhancement of UV stability of thermally modified wood through envelope impregnation with nano-based stabilisers”

* Kavyashree Srinivasa, Department of Wood Science and Technology, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Jamnikarjeva 101, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
e-mail: Kavyashree.Srinivasa@bf.uni-lj.si,
kavyashree15@gmail.com

(NewSiest 867451) as a postdoctoral researcher from Feb 2020-2022.

4. What are the main challenges and achievements of your stay?

There were a few challenges initially when I started my work here, since this was my first stay outside my country and, like everyone, I had to get accustomed to new climatic conditions, work culture, language, food, and social life, and then the COVID-19 outbreak started and forced us to a new way of life. The support from my team members and family gave me courage to overcome all such challenges. Due to the pandemic, attending conferences and networking could not happen as planned, but being a part of the project team has given me a great opportunity to develop interpersonal and professional skills.

5. What are the main professional challenges of your home university, country and in global sense.

India being a tropical country with a population of around 1.4 billion is among the largest importers as well as producers of wood

and wood-based products. It has committed to creating a carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion MT of CO₂ by 2030 through additional tree and forest cover (UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, 2015). However, in the past few decades the majority of India's forest cover has been degraded by the construction of dams and highways, along with mining and industrial work, or inhabited to accommodate increasing population or displaced into sanctuaries and national parks to improve tourism. The sustainable management of forest resources is still rare, and the related policies and accomplishments are in a contradictory stage. There is a huge gap between the policymakers and professionals working on the ground in fields related to R&D, industry and the involvement of general public. Scientists working in the wood sector have few international collaborations and little experience working abroad, as there is less support from national funding. In this regard, I would like to share my experiences, educate and encourage people around me to pursue higher education in forestry and utilize the available resources to develop and gain expertise, leading to the development of skills.

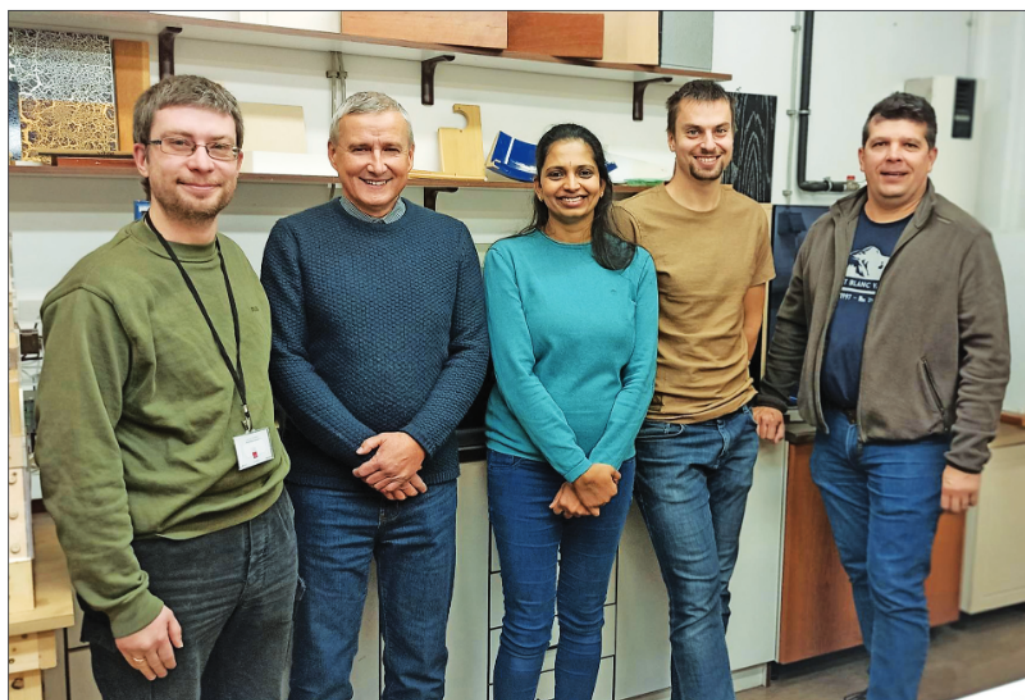


Figure 2. In the laboratory with her supervisor and colleagues.
Slika 2. V laboratoriju z mentorjem in kolegi

Dr. Kavyashree Srinivasa je od februarja 2020 zaposlena na Oddelku za lesarstvo (OL) Biotehniške fakultete (BF) Univerze v Ljubljani (UL). Septembra 2018 se je prijavila na razpis za individualno študentsko Marie Skłodowska Curie (MSCA) Evropske komisije. Predlog projekta "Enhancement of UV stability of thermally modified wood through envelope impregnation with nanobased stabilisers" (NewSiest 867451) je bil nagrajen s Pečatom odličnosti, sredstva so bila odobrena v okviru programa »Widening fellowship scheme« in Kavyashree Srinivasa je postala podoktorska raziskovalka na BF UL za obdobje februar 2020-2022. Razgovor z njo smo opravili novembra 2021.

1. Ali lahko na kratko predstavite sebe in svojo poklicno pot?

Sem Kavyashree Srinivasa, rojena v Indiji, večkulturni, raznoliki in največji demokratični državi. Magistrirala sem iz kemije (analizna kemija) na Univerzi Mysore. Nato sem se kot mlajša raziskovalka v okviru projekta pridružila Inštitutu za znanost in tehnologijo lesa v Bengaluruju, nato pa sem se vpisala na doktorski študij gozdarstva (znanost in tehnologija lesa) na Forest Research Institute Deemed University v Dehradunu. Te štiriletnje delovne izkušnje na raziskovalnem inštitutu so mi spremenile življenje in pogled na pomen trajnosti, ohranjanja in trajnosti lesa ter izdelkov iz lesa.

2. Kaj (in kdaj) je spodbudilo vaše sodelovanje s prof. dr. Markom Petričem in Univerzo v Ljubljani?

Prof. dr. Marka Petriča sem spoznala na konferenci IRG-WP (IRG44) v Stockholmu na Švedskem. Njegovo delo sem spremljala že med doktorskim študijem. Po končanem doktoratu sem se obrnila na profesorja Petriča s predlogom za gostovanje v okviru podoktorske štipendije v tujini, financirane iz nacionalnih sredstev (DST-OPDF). Časovni okvir prijave se ni ujemal, zato mi je predlagal, naj se prijavim za štipendijo Marie Skłodowska Curie, in uspela sem pridobiti razširitevno štipendijo MSCA Evropske komisije.

Od februarja 2020 do predvidoma 2022 delujem kot podoktorska raziskovalka pri projektu, ki ga financira EU, z naslovom "Enhancement

of UV stability of thermally modified wood through envelope impregnation with nanobased stabilisers" (NewSiest 867451).

4. Kateri so glavni izzivi in dosežki vašega bivanja v Sloveniji?

Na začetku, ko sem začela delati v Sloveniji, je bilo nekaj izzivov, saj je bilo to moje prvo bivanje zunaj moje države. Tako sem se morala kot vsi navaditi na nove podnebne razmere, delovno kulturo, jezik, hrano, družabno življenje. Izbruh Covid 19 mi je tako kot vsem dodatno zapletel življenje. Podpora članov ekipe in družine mi je dajala pogum, da sem premagala vse težave. Zaradi pandemije udeležba na konferencah in mreženje žal ne moreta normalno potekati. Biti del projektne skupine mi je hkrati dalo odlično priložnost za razvoj medosebnih in strokovnih veščin.

5. Kateri so vaši glavni poklicni izzivi?

Indija kot tropska država s približno 1,4 milijarde prebivalcev je med največjimi uvozniki in tudi proizvajalci lesa in lesnih izdelkov. Zavezala se je, da bo do leta 2030 izboljšala pokritost države z drevesi in gozdovi ter tako omogočila ponor ogljika v višini 2,5-3 milijard MT CO₂ (UNFCCC, Pariški sporazum, 2015). Žal je bila v zadnjih nekaj desetletjih večina indijskih gozdnih površin degradirana zaradi gradnje jezov, avtocest, rudarjenja, industrijskih del ali poselitve zaradi prilagajanja naraščajočemu številu prebivalstva ali spremenjena v rezervate in nacionalne parke zaradi izboljšanja turizma. Trajnostno gospodarjenje z gozdnimi viri je še vedno redko. Politike in dosežki so si nasprotujoči. Obstaja velik razkorak med oblikovalci politik in strokovnjaki, ki delujejo na terenu na področjih, povezanih z raziskavami in razvojem, industrijo in vključevanjem splošne javnosti. Znanstveniki, ki delajo v lesnem sektorju, imajo manj mednarodnih sodelovanj in izkušenj z delom v tujini, saj je podpora z nacionalnimi viri manjša. V zvezi s tem bi si želela deliti svoje izkušnje, izobraževati in spodbujati ljudi okoli sebe, da nadaljujejo visokošolsko izobraževanje na področju gozdarstva in lesarstva, da bi bolje izkoristili razpoložljive vire za razvoj in pridobivanje strokovnega znanja, ki vodi k splošnem razvoju. ●