

## R. P. S. Ahlawat (1945–2009)

In the passing away of R. P. S. Ahlawat, Navsari Agricultural University, Gujarat lost a leading scientist and agronomist of national repute. Ahlawat had made Gujarat his home for nearly four decades and through hard work and progressive attitude, made major contributions to the growth of the agricultural scenario in Gujarat and the Gujarat Agricultural University (GAU). As the Director (Research) and my younger colleague when I took over as the Vice-Chancellor of GAU, I was amazed to see his capacity for hard work, dedication and happy outlook. He gave leadership to many new developments of seeds, horticulture, water management, agronomy practices, coastal development project and eco-friendly agriculture. He made his mark at the national level as President of the Indian Agronomy Society and in the last few years helped establish the newly formed Navsari Agricultural University as its first Vice-Chancellor with extraordinary care.

Ahlawat did B Sc/M Sc/Ph D (agronomy) from G.B. Pant University of Agriculture with top honors and joined the same university's Tarai Development Project for seed production. Subsequently, he came to Gujarat and joined as an Associate Director of Research at the GAU, Junagadh Campus in 1977. After nearly a decade, he joined the Navsari

Campus, here he made major contributions in the areas of water management, planning of several new research programmes and guiding several M Sc and Ph D students. In 1997, he was promoted and appointed as the Director of Research and Dean to PG studies, and was stationed at the Ahmedabad office to coordinate research activities at all the four campuses of the GAU. His ability to network and plan various research projects was excellent. Several new varieties of seeds were developed by GAU scientists under his leadership.



Soon after the construction of the Ukai Dam in South Gujarat, the increased water availability actually created havoc with the productivity of sugarcane and rice due to waterlogging. Ahlawat and his team put up a proposal for sub-surface drainage system for removal of excess water. This proposal was approved under the Indo-Dutch programme and a demonstration was organized near Surat

in south Gujarat. Sugarcane productivity, which had reduced because of waterlogging by nearly half, could be revived and brought back nearly to its original full capacity of 80 t/ha. It was based on this experience that at GAU, we decided to educate farmers of all the districts in Gujarat about a well-planned scientific water-management system, especially after the Narmada canal water was made available.

When GAU was divided into four separate universities, Ahlawat became the Vice-Chancellor of Navsari Agricultural University. He worked with visionary zeal and introduced several new projects on *Bt* cotton, coastal aqua agro system, organic farming for horticultural crops, etc. Also a full-fledged food processing unit was established through his efforts. Ahlawat was elected as the President of Indian Agronomy Society and the last conference at Navsari under his presidency was a resounding success.

Ahlawat leaves behind his wife and two sons. His friendship, scientific outlook and dedication will be missed. Gujarat in particular, will greatly miss his services for the agricultural development.

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## Prem Kumar Khare (1946–2009)

Born on 1 June 1946 at Varanasi, Khare, after completing his Master Degree from Gorakhpur University, started his research career from Allahabad University, under the guidance of Divya Darshan Pant, the then Head of Botany Department, on various morphological and paleobotanical aspects of pteridophytes. During his research career, Khare discovered *Damudopteris polymorpha* species from the Raniganj hills. At the same time he also discovered stomatal ontogeny of *Psilotum*, *Tmesopteris* species, *Dipteris (wallichii)*, a rare fern. Simultaneously, he started his professional career as Lecturer in the same department in February 1974 and continued as Reader and Professor of Botany. During

2007–08 he was the Head of the Botany Department of Allahabad University.



Khare carried out comprehensive studies on petiolar structure, phytochemical studies of economically and taxonomi-

cally important ferns as well as ecology of Pteridophytes of Western Himalaya and Central India. While studying petiolar structure he developed petiolar characters as a good tool for taxonomic identity of ferns particularly, *Adiantum*, *Asplenium*, *Ophioglossum* and *Pteris* species besides other fern species. He passed away on 3 May 2009.

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