

## OBITUARY



**K.P.S. Chandel**  
(1937-2000)

A devoted plant explorer, distinguished scientist, a Fellow and founder member of the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources (ISPGR), Dr. K. P. S. Chandel passed away prematurely on December 13, 2000, while he was on an exploration tour to north-west Himalayas.

Dr. Krishna Pal Singh Chandel was born in a Rajput family in village Ghatampur in the district of Kanpur on 14th April, 1937. He obtained his early education in the village. Due to his keen interest in agriculture, he joined Government Agriculture College, Kanpur (affiliated to Agra University, Agra) and passed his BSc (Ag) and MSc (Ag) degrees from there. He received his PhD in Genetics from PG School, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi in 1975. He also obtained a post graduate degree in Plant Conservation and Utilization from University of Birmingham (UK) in 1980.

He started his career as Botanical Assistant in 1964 in UP Sugarcane Research Institute. In pursuit of a professional research career, he joined the erstwhile Plant Introduction Division of IARI (now NBPGR) in 1965 and was posted to work at its regional station at Shimla in the field of plant genetic resources. Later, at the NBPGR Headquarters, from 1976-97, he held various positions such as Assistant Botanist, Senior Scientist, Principal Scientist, Head of Plant Exploration and Collection Division, Joint Director and Director (1995-1997) and thus associated with total gamut of plant genetic resources activities.

The innate desire to give a meaningful direction to the genetic resources conservation of "problem crops", he led the ICAR-DBT funded project 'National Facility for Plant Tissue Culture Repository' as Joint Director, which is now recognized as one of the best in the world. Dr. Chandel contributed a great deal in almost all aspects related to plant genetic

resources, particularly in the field of germplasm exploration and *in-vitro* conservation and cryo-preservation. His contributions include collection and build up of large number of germplasm from difficult areas, such as Lahaul Spiti and from north-west Himalayas. Dr. Chandel authored over 200 scientific publications which include research papers in national and international journals, books and monographs. Dr. Chandel travelled far and wide in countries like Europe, UK and USA in connection with PGR related activities. As an excellent scientist, he inspired his colleagues a great deal.

Dr. Chandel was committed to the cause of the ISPGR and contributed significantly. He held the position of General Secretary of the Society for two terms.

He was recipient of several awards. He was Fellow of National Academy of Sciences, India (NASc) and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) and Indian Society of Genetics and Plant Breeding in India. Dr. K.P.S. Chandel, combined a brilliant mind with a sensitive heart, will continue to be remembered by PGR community and scores of his friends and colleagues in future.

Recognizing his passion for plant genetic resources, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India awarded him prestigious Dr. B. P. Pal National Environment Fellowship, a rare distinction for a scientist in agriculture sector. This was a great affirmation for someone, who dedicated his career to collecting and conserving plant genetic resources for today and tomorrow. He was at the job when cruel destiny snatched him at the premature age of 63 years.

Survived by his wife, a son and a daughter, Dr. Chandel's demise is very deeply mourned and condolled by the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources with a pray to the Almighty that his departed soul may rest in peace. We convey our sympathies to the bereaved family.

**Umesh Srivastava, Ruchira Pandey and  
Neelam Sharma**