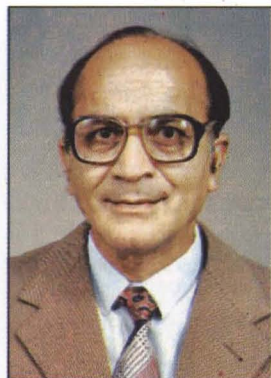


In Memorium – A Tribute to Dr. KL Mehra



Dr. KL Mehra, an eminent scientist and the first Director of the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi passed away on 11 August 2008. After serving on this position from 1976-1983, he joined the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources/

Food and Agriculture Organization (IBPGR/FAO) position in Indonesia, and later also worked in Maldives and Yemen mainly for germplasm collecting.

Before joining NBPGR, Dr. Mehra served in different capacities at the Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute, Jhansi (including its Director for a brief period), Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla and Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi. During his tenure as Director, NBPGR, Dr. Mehra was instrumental in creating a structural set-up for plant genetic resources (PGR) work on germplasm collecting, evaluation, documentation and conservation/use and coordinating PGR activities at the national/international level. Under his leadership, NBPGR organized a series of meetings, working groups and training programmes on various aspects of PGR management for the South and Southeast Asian region which increased visibility of the institute. With his wider interests, he produced a large number of valuable publications in the field of PGR, biosystematics, crop origin and domestication which are immensely valuable to the researchers and students.

Dr. Mehra acquired M.Sc. degree from Botany Department, University of Delhi and Ph.D. degree under Dr. Jack Harlan from Oklahoma State Agriculture

University, USA. His work on biosystematic studies in grasses was very significant and based on taxonomic, cytogenetic and evolutionary studies provided evidence on the domestication of finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*) in Ethiopia and its subsequent spread and cultivation in India which is widely acclaimed and referred. Dr. Mehra also had the privilege of working with renowned American biosystematist, Dr. Edgar Anderson, at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Missouri, USA.

Dr. Mehra remained actively involved with PGR while working with different organizations including the FAO and was closely associated with several emerging international concerns/issues and actively participated in several FAO meetings. He was also closely associated with the Asian Agri-History Foundation, Secunderabad, India and actively involved with the publication activities of the Foundation pursuing his interest in archaeobotany as related to early history of crop plants and their domestication.

In the demise of Dr. Mehra, the PGR scientific community has not only lost a very learned scientist and a visionary in the field of plant genetic resources and evolutionary botany but also a human being par excellence.

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On the demise of Dr. K.L. Mehra, a renowned agricultural scientist of great national and international repute, all the members of the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources pay their homage and pray the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace.

Bhag Mal
President, ISPGR