

OBITUARY



MIAN MUHAMMAD AFZAL
(1902-1991)

Mian Muhammad Afzal died quietly on 16th November 1991 in Karachi. May God Almighty shower His choicest blessings upon the departed soul and may his soul rest in peace in heaven. Ameen.

Mian Muhammad Afzal S/O Haji Mehar Hukum Din was born on February 15, 1902 at Batala in district Gurdaspur, India. He obtained the B.Sc. degree in Agriculture in 1923 from the Punjab Agriculture College, Lyallpur now Faisalabad and was awarded Sir Michael O'dyer Gold Medal for obtaining First class First position and Sir Dane Silver Medal for standing First in the Biological Sciences. Mian Afzal was awarded a post graduate research scholarship by the Indian Central Cotton Committee for research studies at the Agriculture Research Institute, Lyallpur (1923-26), a post graduate research scholarship by the Punjab Government for research studies at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad, Br. West Indies where he worked with Prof. S.C. Harland on cotton breeding and agronomy and in 1928 was awarded AICTA, the Associate membership of the college.

Mian Muhammad Afzal was an eminent agricultural scientist and is well known for his contributions to cotton research and development in Pakistan. He served in the Punjab Agriculture Service as an Assistant Cotton Research Botanist (1928-31), Cotton Research Botanist (1931-49) and has been involved in research work related to breeding and agronomy of cotton crop. Several cotton varieties were developed and agronomic practices of cotton crop helped in improving the quality and increasing cotton production. After the creation of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Afzal was appointed as the first Director of Research of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (1948), Deputy Agriculture Development Commissioner in the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Pakistan (1953), Agriculture Development Commissioner & Chief Agriculture Adviser to the Government of Pakistan (1956). Mian Afzal also served as a member of the Pakistan Land Reforms Commission (1959-60), Pakistan Scientific Commission (1959-60), Pakistan Capital Commission (1959) and has contributed a great deal to the development of Agriculture science especially dealing with cotton crop.

Mian Muhammad Afzal was a recipient of several awards. In 1943 he was awarded Manyard Ganga Ram Prize. In recognition of his meritorious services he was awarded the President's Medal for Pride of Performance (1959), a coveted civil award Sitara-e-Quaid-e-Azam (1959), Gold Medal Award during the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Punjab Agriculture College (1959), de La Oren Merito Agricola by the Government of Spain (1960), Special Award of the Karachi Cotton Association (1977), Honorary Citizenship of the State of Tennessee, USA (1980).

Mian Muhammad Afzal was a widely travelled agricultural scientist. He was held in high esteem at home and abroad and represented Pakistan in several international forums. The Government of Japan, Spain, Syria, Netherlands invited him for advise in their agricultural research and development programmes.

Mian Muhammad Afzal was a founder member of the Pakistan Association for the advancement of Science (1953), Pakistan Academy of Sciences (1954). He was elected Vice President of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (1972-74) and President of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (1974-78). Mian Afzal was author of over 140 research papers published in journals of international repute at home and abroad besides 7 books viz., Cotton production in Pakistan (1949), Cotton Jassid in the Punjab (1953) with Dr. M.A.Ghani as co- author, Cotton plant in Pakistan (1969), Farming in Pakistan (1976), Cotton plant in Pakistan (1983) with Dr. Mahbub Ali as co-author, Narratio Botanica (1986) and Food and farming in the Third World 1983) with Dr. Abdul Hafiz as co-author.

Mian Muhammad Afzal was always found helping his friends and colleagues. He has left behind a son Mian Iftikhar Afzal, 5 daughters, several grand children and a host of his admirers to mourn the loss.

(S.I.ALI AND A. GHAFAR)

(Received for Publication 15 November 1992)