

OBITUARY

Dr. Khushnood Ahmed Siddiqui
(8th June 1937-18th March 2009)

Dr. Khushnood Ahmed Siddiqui, a world renowned geneticist/agriculture scientist of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) died on 18th March 2009 at Tando Jam due to heart failure. May Almighty Allah shower His countless blessings upon the departed soul and may his soul rest in peace in heaven. Aameen.

Dr. Khushnood Ahmed was born on 15th June 1937 in Indore, India. After partition, he migrated to Pakistan and settled in Sukkur, Sindh. His childhood grew up with the auspicious guidance of world famous scholar Allama Umar bin Muhammad Daupoto. He received his primary education from Sukkur and graduated from Sindh Agriculture College, Sakrand, affiliated with University of Sindh. After graduation in 1956, he was appointed as lecturer in Botany at Sindh Agriculture College, Tando Jam. On the competitive base he was awarded Commonwealth Scholarship to pursue higher studies abroad and earned Ph.D. in Cytogenetics from Reading University, UK in 1964. He did his post-doctorate from Canada and joined Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission at Nuclear Institute of Agriculture (formerly Atomic Energy Agricultural Research Centre) Tando Jam as Senior Scientific Officer on 8th June 1967. Later on, he assumed the charge of Head, Plant Genetics Division. During his tenure he received 3 promotions as Principal Scientific Officer, Chief Scientific Officer and Chief Scientist. He also served as the Director from 1992-1997. After retirement he was engaged with Higher Education Commission at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

Dr. Siddiqui has made a significant contribution in the field of plant breeding and genetics particularly in the evolution of wheat, rice, sugarcane, pulses and the oil seed crop varieties through the use of conventional (hybridization) and mutation breeding techniques. Under his dynamic guidance and supervision, his team was able to release first mutant wheat variety Jauhar-78 in 1979. Other wheat varieties released by his team were Sindh-81, Sarsabz, Soghat-90 and Kiran-95. Among these varieties Sarsabz has brought green revolution in Sindh province. It was released in 1986 and is being cultivated successfully over large scale in Sindh for the last 23 years. Another high yielding wheat variety Kiran-95 has also been grown over a considerable area in Sindh for the last 13 years. It has the potential of producing higher yield in fertile soils and can sustain very well in saline soils. Dr Siddiqui has maintained a large collection of wheat germplasm with diversified genetic background. He was popular among the scientific

community and the growers of the country. He introduced 'Farmers Day' event every year at NIA Tando Jam to narrowing the gap between scientific and farming communities and to share the modern technologies with growers.

Dr. Siddiqui was the author of more than 200 national and international publications including scientific research papers, proceedings and scientific books. His scientific research work has been published in reputed national and international Journals such as Caryologia, Euphytica, Experientia, Hereditas, Naturwissenschaften, Z. Pflanzenzuchtung, Pakistan Journal of Botany, The Nucleus, Proceedings of Pakistan Academy of Sciences journal, Wheat Information Service, Cereal Research Communication and in many international proceedings. Besides he has contributed chapters in many books. Dr. Khushnood Siddiqui as a PAEC scientist represented Pakistan at many national and international scientific forums like China, Denmark, Brazil, UK, Holland, Sweden, Scotland, USA, Japan, Canada, Germany, France, Austria, Australia, Iran, India and Thailand. He organized three International Symposia on "New Genetical Approaches to Crop Improvement" in 1982, 1992 and 1997. Dr. Siddiqui was very active member of scientific societies of Pakistan such as Pakistan Botanical Society, Pakistan Academy of Sciences etc., and outside Pakistan. He served as a member of Syndicate, Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam. Three scholars obtained their Ph.D. degrees under his guidance.

In recognition of his scientific endeavours, Dr. Siddiqui was decorated with several national and international awards, including Dr. Borlaug Gold Medal (1986), Open Gold Medal, Pakistan Academy of Sciences Award (1988), Commonwealth Science Council Award (1993), Lateef Gold Medal for Eminence in Science and Technology (1994), Al-Khwarzmi International Award (1995) and Bhittai Academy Award (1995). Dr. Siddiqui was elected as Fellow Pakistan Academy of Sciences and TWAS (2006).

Dr. Siddiqui was very fond of literature and poetry and always considered him as a student of science. He was very much impressed by the poetry of Allam Muhammad Iqbal (RA), Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (RA), Baba Bulle Shah (RA), Faiz Ahmed Faiz (RA), and Imam Din (RA). Besides scientist, he himself was a poet and used to convey his message through it. Dr. Siddiqui will be long remembered for his services in the field of Agricultural Research and Service to the farmers. Dr. Siddiqui has left behind four sons, two daughters, several grand children and a host of his admirers to mourn the loss. May Almighty Allah rest his soul in eternal peace heaven. Aamin.

(Muhammad Afzal Arain)

Director

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