

Prof. Avtar Singh Atwal

Former Professor and Head
Department of Zoology-Entomology
Dean, College of Agriculture and
Dean, Post Graduate Studies
Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, India



Prof. Avtar Singh Atwal was born on June 25, 1927 at village Khanewal, District Multan, now in Pakistan. He did his B.Sc. (Agriculture) from Punjab Agricultural College and Research Institute, Lyallpur (Pakistan) in 1947, where he obtained first position in the University and was awarded the Gold Medal. He completed his Ph.D. from the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, University of Adelaide, South Australia in 1954 under the Colombo Plan. He remained Post Doctorate Research Fellow of the National Research Council of Canada during 1955-57. It was during his doctoral research when he came into contact with eminent ecologists and thus, he imbibed the spirit of ecological principles and practices which he later introduced in the academics of the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.

Prof. Atwal started his professional career as Lecturer in Entomology in 1947 and worked as Assistant Professor/Associate Professor till 1960. He was Entomologist to the Government of Punjab and State Locust Control Officer (1961-63), when he introduced successfully the aerial spraying for locust control. He was the first Professor and Head, Department of Zoology-Entomology of the newly formed Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana (1963-66). He worked as Dean, College of Agriculture (1966-73 and 1975-79) and Dean, Post Graduate Studies (1979-85), PAU, Ludhiana. In between, he was Advisor to Jammu & Kashmir Government and Vice-Chancellor (Designate), J & K Agricultural University (1973-75) and prepared the project for establishing the University. He worked as full time Member, Punjab State Planning Board (1986-89). Even when he worked on other positions, he maintained his interest in ecological approach to pest control and agricultural development for the first 20 years, and in the role of honey bees and other insects for pollination of crops for the next 20 years. He has published 15 books, 250 research and strategy papers on agricultural education, research and development.

Prof. Atwal has made outstanding contributions in the fields of agricultural research, education and development. He was the first scientist in India to successfully introduce the Italian honey bee, *Apis mellifera* Linnaeus in early sixties through a unique experiment, using the technique of interspecific queen introduction. *A. mellifera* colonies were raised by introducing the fertilized queens among the workers of *Apis cerana* Fabricius. Persistent efforts spread over a decade led to the successful establishment of *A. mellifera* in Punjab and the entire Indo-Gangetic plains where Honey Revolution has followed the Green Revolution. Prof. Atwal will be remembered as the Father of Modern Beekeeping in India as he opened new vistas of commercial beekeeping in the country. As one of the founder Deans of Punjab Agricultural University, Prof. Atwal played a pivotal role in introducing many innovative programmes and developing several new Departments. He was instrumental in revising and restructuring the PAU course curricula keeping in view the changing educational needs. For making education wholesome many new disciplines were started and trained faculty was recruited by making personal contacts from throughout India and even foreign countries. Some of the new disciples of Ecology, Forestry, Agrometeorology, Food Science and Technology, and Floriculture and Landscaping at PAU are the outcome of his visionary approach in planning. The College of Agriculture being the premier institute of PAU, played the most significant role in ushering Green Revolution in the state. It was during his tenure as Dean, when this college had won the Institution Award of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce

and Industry in 1977.

Prof. Atwal established the Indian Ecological Society in 1974 and was its founder President. The Indian Ecological Society is one of the oldest in this field and has been responsible for bringing the ecological perspective in the academic and applied spheres of life in India. He nurtured this society with complete devotion and organized several symposia and conferences.

The books written by Prof. Atwal would continue to shape up the destiny of students and teachers in many Asian countries. His monumental book “Agricultural Pests of South Asia and Their Management” is one of the most popular text books ever written on this subject; since its first publication in 1976, the book has been reprinted many times with eight revisions. Even after his retirement, he continued to publish for the benefit of students and farmers; his recent book “*Mellifera* Beekeeping and Pollination” has been acclaimed as a master piece giving details of behaviour of four species of honey bees and their role in crop pollination.

Prof. Atwal was a widely travelled person, visiting more than 35 countries in almost all the continents of the world. He has been a member of several national and international bodies associated with agricultural research and development. He has attended 20 World Congresses and 25 International Conferences related to various aspects of agriculture, ecology and environment.

Prof. Atwal expired on September 26, 2014 after a brief illness. The Society of Biopesticide Science India deeply mourns his sad demise and prays for peace to the departed soul.

G.S. DHALIWAL

President

Society of Biopesticide Science India

Insect Biopesticide Research Centre

Jalandhar-144 003, India

Dr. S. P. Singh

Ex. Director

Project Directorate of Biological Control

Bangaluru, India



Dr. S. P. Singh was born at Faridkot in Punjab, on 11th August, 1941. He had his earlier education at his native place, from where he passed his matriculation examination and got B.Sc. degree. He obtained his M.Sc. degree from the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, in 1963 and Ph.D. from the Kuban Agricultural Institute, Krasnodar, Russia, in 1973.

Dr Singh held several important positions. He was Head, Central Horticultural Experiment Station (IIHR-ICAR), Chethalli (1980–1983); Project Coordinator, ICAR-AICRP on Biological Control (1984–2002); Head, Biological Control Centre (NCIPM-ICAR) (1988-93); Project Director, Project Directorate of Biological Control (ICAR), Bangalore (1993–2002) and Project Coordinator-IPM, Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, Jakarta (Indonesia) (2004–2007). His focus of research remained on Biological Control and Pest Management throughout his career, which enabled him to obtain various awards like Hexamar Agricultural Research and Development Foundation Award (1994–1995) for outstanding contribution in the field of biological control of horticultural crop pests. He conceived and established the first ever Project Directorate of Biological Control in India in 1993 and it was under his leadership that PDBC won the ICAR Best Institution Award in 1998.

Dr. S. P. Singh was recognized as Fellow, Member, Member Secretary and Chairman of several national/international scientific committees. Some important recognitions include Fellow, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, India; Plant Protection Association of India; Indian Society for the Advancement of Insect Science; and Horticultural Society of India. He became NATP Team Leader of the first “Team of Excellence for Human Resource Development in Biological Control” project at PDBC, Bangalore.

As Project Director, PDBC, Dr. Singh guided biological control research on tropical, subtropical and temperate crop pests. He developed and transferred technologies for management of mealy bugs, scale insects, psyllids, lepidopterans and tissue borers. As a Project Coordinator-IPM, Asian and Pacific Coconut Community at Indonesia, he guided the coconut IPM research, development and Transfer of Technology through Farmer Field School approach in nine countries of Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

Dr. Singh has been a leading figure in prestigious scientific societies, and served as President of the Society for Biocontrol Advancement and Editor of the Biocontrol Newsletter. He served as member of the editorial boards of a number of national and international scientific journals, including, prestigious *Biocontrol News and Information* (London). He has more than 400 publications to his credit.

Dr. Singh passed away on 1st December, 2014 after a brief illness. The Society of Biopesticide Sciences India deeply mourns his sad demise and expresses sympathies to the bereaved family. May his soul rest in peace.

G. S. DHALIWAL

President

OPENDER KOUL

General Secretary

Society of Biopesticide Sciences India

Insect Biopesticide Research Centre

Jalandhar-144003, India