

Professor Sohail Ahmad Award
-for basic research
-Recipient (2014): Prof. D.N. Rao



Professor Sohail Ahmad

(January 3, 1932 – March 2, 2008)



EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Professor Sohail Ahmad was born in Budaun, UP, India, on January 3, 1932. He studied at S.T. High School, Aligarh, and then went on to acquire higher degrees, viz.: (i) a Bachelor of Science degree in 1952; (ii) a Master of Science degree in Zoology (Parasitology) from Aligarh Muslim University in 1955; (iii) a Master of Science degree in Bacteriology from the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University), Pittsburgh, USA, in 1964; and (iv) a PhD degree in Microbiology in 1976.

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CAREER

Professor Ahmad started his academic career with a teaching position at Delhi College (now Zakir Husain Delhi College) –in 1958, before winning a graduate scholarship in 1962 for pursuing his second masters in bacteriology at the Carnegie Institute of Technology.

During his graduate studies at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (1962-1964), Professor Ahmad worked with Professor Neils K. Jerne, who was a pioneer in the development of immune network theory, and who won a Nobel Prize for this work in 1984. Professor Ahmad's experience in working with Professor Jerne helped him to gain vital insights into antigens, antibodies and the immune system.

In 1968, he joined the Department of Microbiology, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College (JNMC), AMU, as a Lecturer, and was appointed Professor in 1983. He also served as Chairman of the Department.

During his 26-year career at AMU, Professor Ahmad brought laurels to the University through his achievements in academics, and through his pioneering research on antigen-antibody interactions. Of particular note was his research on the diagnosis and prevention of parasitic diseases, whereby he and his team made a significant contribution to the body of work geared towards the development of vaccines for malaria (*P. falciparum*) and amoebiasis.

Professor Ahmad's early research won him a WHO travel Fellowship to UK, USA, and Canada in the mid 1970s. This enabled him to receive cutting-edge training at the London School of Tropical Medicine, Wellcome Research Laboratories (Beckenham, Kent), National Institutes of Health (NIH, Bethesda, Maryland), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta, Georgia), and the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at McGill University (Montreal, Quebec).

On his return to AMU, Professor Ahmad dedicated himself to teaching and research, and single-handedly established state-of-the-art parasitology and malaria laboratories, within the Department of Microbiology.

In addition to being an outstanding teacher, loved and respected by his students and colleagues, Professor Ahmad was known internationally for his important contributions to research in parasitology and microbiology. He and his research scholars published over 200 articles in national and international journals of repute. He was invited to present his seminal research at numerous national and international conferences, workshops, and seminars. He successfully supervised around 50 PhD, MPhil, and MD students.

RECOGNITION AND RETIREMENT

In 1987, Professor Ahmad received the prestigious Watumull Foundation Award (USA) and a gold medal for “research in the development of a vaccine for the immunologic control of Amoebiasis.” Until his retirement from AMU in 1994, he remained actively involved in both teaching and research. Today, his students hold prestigious positions – ranging from research scientists and professors to clinicians and surgeons – in India and abroad.

PASSING AWAY

Professor Ahmad passed away peacefully in his sleep at his home in Aligarh on March 2, 2008.

– By Dr. Saif Ahmad (Son)

Dr. D.N. Rao, born in the year 1951, obtained his M.Sc. in 1972 and Ph.D. in 1978. After his doctoral degree, he joined as a Research Officer at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and subsequently became a Lecturer and is presently working as Professor & Head, Department of Biochemistry, AIIMS, New Delhi. He has worked as General Secretary & Treasurer of Indian Immunology Society and Vice President of FIMSA and has recently been elected President of Indian Immunology Society.



Prof. D.N. Rao

- ❖ He has been the Editor in Chief of “Indian Journal of Clinical Biochemistry” (IJCB) for about five years and has received a large number of Awards/orations for his contributions in Biochemistry and Immunology. He is the recipient of Prof. B.K. Aikat Oration Award of ICMR; Prof. V.M. Thakor Award by Institute of Medical Technology, Udhna (Surat); Dr. K.C. Kandhari memorial Oration by AIIMS; Seth GS Medical College & KEM Hospital Oration by ACBI; Chaturvedin Ghanshyam Das Jaigopal Award for Immunology by ICMR; Hari Om Ashram Alembic Research Award by MCI; Professor C.R. Krishna Murthi Lecture Award by SBC; Dr. & Mrs. G.P. Talwar Oration Award by ACBI; ICMR award for contribution in Biomedical Research; Dr. Pran Nath Chhuttani Oration award by National Academy of Medical Sciences; He has been the 1st recipient of AIIMS Excellence award (awarded by Dr. Robert Huber, Noble Laureat).
- ❖ He has organized many national and international scientific meets including the 9th APCCB in 2002, the 33rd Indian Immunology Society Conference in 2007 and the SFRR Satellite Meeting in 2008 and the 5th FIMSA conference in 2012.
- ❖ Dr. D.N. Rao’s research interest includes Biochemistry and Immunology of infectious diseases. He has been involved in developing peptide based immunogens for vaccine design and immuno-diagnostics for diseases like Malaria, HIV and Plague. He has guided a large number of students for Ph.D., M.D. and M.Sc. degrees. He has generated extramural research grants from DST, DBT, ICMR, DAE, DRDO, CSIR and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. He has published more than 130 research articles in International and National Journals.

