

Professor A.P. Misra Memorial Life Time Achievement Award (2003-2004)

HARI KRISHNA SAKSENA

Dr. Hari Krishna Saksena was born on December 21, 1922 at Sultanpur, U.P. He received his early college and University education at Allahabad and obtained his M.Sc. (Botany) in 1st division from Allahabad University (1944) with specialization in Plant Pathology under the guidance of Professor R.K. Saksena. Thereafter, he joined the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi and worked (1944-46) with the distinguished Mycologist, Dr. B.B. Mundkur for Associateship of IARI, New Delhi.

For about a year, Dr. Saksena worked on gram rust at IARI, with Dr. R. Prasada and for the first time unquestionably demonstrated the status of the weed, *Trigonella polycerata* as its collateral host. After working for a short period as a Lecturer in the Department of Botany, Delhi University, he proceeded to Australia on an UNESCO Research Fellowship for Ph.D. degree. There he worked under Dr. N.T. Flentje at the Waite Agriculture Research Institute, Adelaide, Australia.

After obtaining his Ph.D. degree in 1952, Dr. Saksena moved to Government Agriculture College, Kanpur, U.P. in 1953 as Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology. In 1958, he proceeded to Canada on Post Doctoral Fellowship, to work on the taxonomy and cytology of *Rhizoctonia* causing diseases of forest trees with Dr. O. Vaartaja at Canada Agriculture Research Laboratory, Saskatoon. Dr. Saksena described four new species and one variety of *Rhizoctonia* and emphasized that chlamydospore characters are homo and heterothallic in nature and the perfect state is *Thanatephorus cucumeris*. In 1961, he took over as Professor and Head of the Post Graduate Department of Plant Pathology at the erstwhile Government Agriculture College, Kanpur (now C.S. Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur) and continued till his retirement in December, 1982. Dr. Saksena created a strong school on the *Rhizoctonia* diseases of crop plants at Kanpur. He is an internationally acclaimed scientist.

At national level, Dr. Saksena has been a member of several committees, expert panels concerning project planning, appraisal and evaluation, budget allocation and achievement, audit including (1) Scientific panel for Plant Pathology (1972-78) of ICAR, (2) Interdisciplinary scientific panel of ICAR in respect of National Agriculture Research Project (1977-80). (3) Member of ICAR Quinquennial Review Team for CPRI, Simla; CCRI, Nagpur; CTCRI, Trivandrum; IISR, Lucknow; and ICAR Research Complex for North Eastern Hill Region.



During his 30 years of stay at Kanpur, Dr. Saksena has supervised research work of 20 Ph.D. and 58 M.Sc. (Ag.) students. The important findings have also appeared in many books like *Introductory Mycology* by Alexopoulos (John Wiley and Sons), *Rhizoctonia-biology and parasitism* (University of California Press, 1970), and in Annual Review of Phytopathology.

As a teacher, Dr. Saksena inspired and created awareness and interest for the subject amongst his students and many of them have gained fame in Mycology and Plant Pathology and have provided leadership in Plant Pathology.

After retirement in 1983 Dr. Saksena, served as Emeritus Scientist (ICAR) for two years. He is a charter member of Indian Phytopathological Society and also served the Society as Vice-President (1968), President (1970), Editor-in Chief (1980-83) and Honorary Fellow (1996). The Society of Mycology and Plant Pathology honoured Dr. Saksena as an "Outstanding Teacher of Plant Pathology" on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 1995.

Considering his unparalleled contribution in the field of plant pathology, Prof. H.K. Saksena was honoured with Professor A.P. Misra Memorial Life Time Achievement Award by Indian Phytopathological Society for the year 2003-2004.