

Obituary



Dr Krishan Lal Chadha

(15.11.1936 to 23.03.2025)

Dr Krishan Lal Chadha, the Former Deputy Director General (Horticulture) and President of the Indian Academy of Horticultural Sciences, breathed his last on the 23rd March, 2025 at the age of 88. With his demise, it ended an era of Horticultural research, development, policy, and management that was enriched with his sound scientific knowledge, constant focus on creating horticulture research infrastructure and a vision for sound technology-led development for food and nutritional security in India.

Dr Chadha born at Bhopalwala, Sialkot (now in Pakistan) on 15 November, 1936. He had his early education from Government High School, Phillour (1947-51), obtained B.Sc. (Agri.) in 1955 and M.Sc. (Hort.) in 1960, Punjab University, Chandigarh. He completed his Ph.D. (1965) degree from Post Graduate School, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi. His illustrious career span to six decades, where he has built the foundation for horticulture R&D, which is now being witnessed in the form of revolution contributing substantially to the agricultural GDP.

Dr Chadha started his career as Fruit Research Assistant at the Horticultural Research Station, Mashobra, Shimla in 1955-56. While, continuing his Ph.D. degree at IARI, he was selected as Assistant Horticulturist, Citrus Dieback Scheme, IARI, New Delhi (1963-64), later he joined Fruit Specialist at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana (1964-69). and held several prestigious positions, e.g. Senior Horticulturist, Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bengaluru (1969-72), Project Co-ordinator (Fruits), IIHR (1972-80) and Head, Central Mango Research Station, Lucknow (now ICAR-CISH, Lucknow) (1972-80); Director, IIHR, Bengaluru (1980-85). He became first Horticulture Commissioner, Govt. of India; First Executive Director, National Horticulture Board (1986-87) and Deputy Director General (Hort.), ICAR at New Delhi (1987-96). He was also the first National Professor (ICAR) at IARI, New Delhi during 1997-2001. In the private sector, he served as Chairman, Indian Society of Agri-business Professional (ISAP) and Indian Agribusiness Systems Pvt. Ltd. (Agriwatch), New Delhi (2007-08), and Chief Agriculture Advisor, FICCI. He was the founding Chairman of the Institute of Horticulture Technology, established under the aegis of an NGO at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh since its inception in 2008.

His research contribution included release of the high-yielding regular-bearing Clone No. 51 of Dashehari mango, establishment of National Germplasm Repository of 760 mango genotypes, management of physiological disorders like fruit-drop, malformation and black tip in mango, citrus decline; identification of mango dwarfing rootstocks; high-density planting in pineapple, and development of sampling techniques and nutrient guides for many fruit crops; Field gene, pollen and cryo-banks in Horticultural crops, promotion of oil palm etc.

Dr K.L. Chadha was a highly respected and distinguished horticulturist who has mentored all round development in Horticulture of India during the last six decades. He is accredited with laying foundation of a technology-led horticulture R&D in the country as Secretary/ Chairman, Working Groups on Horticulture during three Five Year Plans, namely VIII, X & XI resulting in huge funding support by the Govt. of India, which helped in creation of a sound R&D infrastructure and launching of several Flagship programmes. As DDG (Hort.), ICAR he was instrumental in set up 9 National Research Centres and 4 National Institutes in 9 states of the country.

Dr Chadha was a prolific writer having compiled and edited 40 books/ bulletins in Horticulture including monumental compilation *Advances in Horticulture* in 13 volumes (9,410 pages) released during 1993-97 and *Agriculture and Environment* released by Dr Manmohan Singh, the then Prime Minister of India during 2006. He was also responsible for planning, co-ordinating and editing of the very popular ICAR publication '*Handbook of Horticulture*' published in 2000 and revised it in 2018.

He has nurtured 15 professional agri-horti societies as President or Vice President including National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi (Editor, 1999-2000; Vice President, 2000-02); Indian Society of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi (President, 1994-96), Indian Society of Vegetable Sciences, Varanasi (Vice President, 1986-2005), Association for the Improvement in Production and Utilization of Banana, Trichi, Tamil Nadu (President, 1996-02), Mushroom Society of India, Solan, Himachal Pradesh (President, 1991-98), Orchid Society of India, Chandigarh (President, 1990-96), Bougainvillea Society of India, New Delhi (President, 1993-96), Rose Society of India, New Delhi (Vice-President, 1989-96), All India Kitchen Garden Association (Chief Patron, 1990-2025), Delhi Agri-Horticultural Society, New Delhi (Vice-President, 1987-96), Delhi Dahlia Society, New Delhi (Vice-President, 1993-96) and IARI Alumni Association, President (1993-94). Dr Chadha has the rare distinction of being associated with the Indian Academy of Horticultural Sciences (Formerly the Horticultural Society of India) in various capacities during the last six decades. He was first inducted into the society in the year 1965 as Member, Editorial Board, became Editor in 1969, as Secretary in 1981 and President in 1990 till his last breath in 2025.

He has also held important positions in the International Agriculture bodies such as Vice-Chairman, Board of Trustee, International Potato Centre, Lima, Peru and Member, Editorial Board, Commonwealth Agriculture Bureau. He was a consultant to FAO, USAID, World Bank, IPGRI in 9 countries on development of horticulture and plant genetic resources. He has represented India on International Society of Horticulture Sciences, Netherlands for 20 years (1982-2002). Dr Chadha won several awards and recognitions from the International and National Academies, Agricultural Universities, societies, industry and farmer organizations. These include 4 Fellowships including those from International Society of Horticulture Sciences, the Netherlands; National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), New Delhi and 3 D.Sc. (Agri) *Honoris Causa* degrees by State Agricultural Universities, at Kanpur, U.P., Pusa, Bihar and Bhubaneswar, Odisha respectively. Important awards received by him include Padma Shri (2012), US Awasthi IFFCO Award (2021), Krishi Shiromani Samman (Mahindra & Mahindra Pvt. Ltd., 2014); Dr B.P. Pal Memorial Award (NAAS, 2005); Om Prakash Bhasin Award (1992) and Borlaug Award (1984). He is the only Indian horticultural scientist recognized as first Fellow by the International Society of Horticulture Sciences. He was also conferred HSI-Shivshakthi Life-Time Achievement Award-2007 and National Agriculture Leadership Award for Life Time Achievement-2008. He was also recognized as Adjunct Professor, IARI (2011-2018).

His initiatives and dedication have brought a paradigm shift in horticulture R&D in India, catalysing fast growth and bringing the sector to the national focus in achieving food and nutritional security, employment generation, besides improving incomes of small and marginal farmers. He is fondly referred as '**Father of Golden Revolution in Horticulture**' by different organizations and farmers in the country. The void created in Indian Horticulture with the demise of Dr Chadha will never be filled, but by following the path shown by him, we can fulfill some of his dreams to pay a tribute to his great soul. The IAHS family express its gratitude to him for guiding it to the present status. May his soul rest in peace.