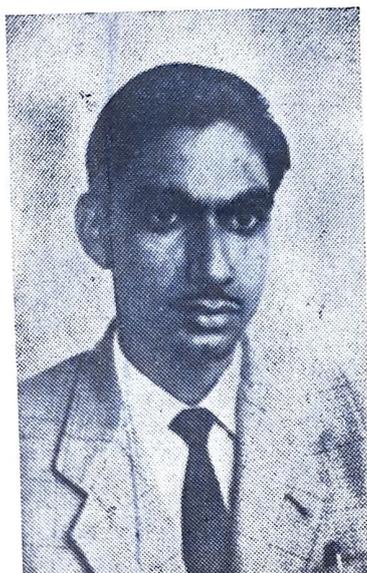


## OBITUARY



KESHAV MUKUND LELE  
(1931—81)

On 9th January, 1981 around midnight, death came quietly to Dr. Keshav Mukund Lele. With his passing away, not only the world has lost an internationally recognised eminent palaeobotanist, but also a noblest of soul and philanthropist.

Born in 1931, on 26th March at Varanasi, Keshav was the youngest son of a devoted, religious and cultured Brahmin parents. After school education, he joined Banaras Hindu University which led him to obtain M.Sc. degree in Geology in 1951. The same year he entered the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany at Lucknow as a Research Scholar and worked for his Ph.D. under the guidance of Prof. Rajnath of B.H.U. At the suggestion of Prof. K. R. Surange he devoted himself to palaeobotanical problems of South Rewa Gondwana Basin, especially the Parsora and Tiki flora. His methodical work established a floral phase for the Middle Gondwana and thus Lele received his doctorate degree in 1957. In 1954, he took up an assignment in a C.S.I.R. sponsored scheme "Palaeobotanical Investigations of Indian Coals" at the Sahni Institute. Dr. Lele had his early training in palynology from Prof. R. Potonié, which remained his

chief interest for the next twenty-five years. In 1961 Dr. Lele published first systematic palynological description of the Lower Gondwana miospores.

In 1960-61, Dr. Lele went to Glasgow to work on the Devonian and Carboniferous flora of Europe with Prof. John Walton. In the year 1967 again, he went to Belgium to work on Devonian plants with Prof. Suzanne Leclercq. In 1975 he was selected as Assistant Director to work as Head of the Palaeozoic Palaeobotany Department, at the Institute, a position which he occupied till his last. Dr. Lele was not a prolific writer but he contributed about 55 palaeobotanical papers which were published in different reputed journals. His papers are characterized by an admirable style—factual, lucid and concise—the outcome of painstaking care and originality of approach. His outstanding palaeobotanical contributions are on the Middle Gondwana flora, and Palynology of the Talchir and the Karharbari Formations of the Lr. Gondwana of India.

Dr. Lele was associated with many national and international organisations, such as 22nd International Geological Congress, Working Group on Devonian Laevigate spores; International Commission of Palaeozoic Microflora, 1967; Palaeobotanical Society, Lucknow; IV International Palynological Conference; Editorial Board, Geophytology; Silver Jubilee Palaeobotanical Conference, Lucknow. In the year 1980 he was elected as Councillor for International Commission of Palynology.

Dr. Lele was a sharp observer with an unbound curiosity. He was respected and admired by his colleagues and friends. His religious bent, perfect courtesy, generosity and good temper were natural to him. Dr. Lele was also fond of classical music, painting, sculpturing, and also tried his hand in literary skill. Everything was at its best in his serene home atmosphere with a loving wife and three sons when in November, 1980, Dr. Lele suddenly became very ill from the dreadful disease—lung cancer. His tragic death at an early age is indeed a grievous blow not only to his family alone but also to many friends and colleagues all over the world.

SHAILA CHANDRA

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