

# OBITUARY

Prof. Divya Darshan Pant  
(18-10-1919-09-07-2001)



Professor Divya Darshan Pant, recipient of International Gold Medal of Palaeobotanical Society, Fellow of Palaeobotanical Society and great well-wisher of Society passed away on 9th May 2001 at Allahabad.

Professor Pant was born on October 18, 1919 in the town of Ranikhet, Almora District, Uttaranchal. He carried out his early education at Ranikhet and Nainital and moved to Lucknow for higher studies and obtained distinctions at Master's Degree in Botany at the University of Lucknow by securing a first class with first rank in 1941. He started his research career under the guidance of Prof. Birbal Sahni. Later he moved to Allahabad and joined the Botany Department, University of Allahabad as Lecturer in the year 1945 and obtained his D. Phil Degree in 1950. He became Reader in 1964, attained the position of Head of the Department and Professor of Botany in the year 1966. In 1981, he retired from active service but continued to pursue his academic activities at Botany Department, University of Allahabad till his last days.

During his academic career Prof. Pant built a strong school of palaeobotany at Allahabad and made significant contributions in the morphology, taxonomy and reconstruction of Gondwana plant fossils. The classification proposed for spores-pollen and cuticles are significant to correlate the character affiliation of extinct and extant plant. In fact, Prof. Pant's school carried out in depth studies in plant anatomy, different aspects of gymnosperms, plant morphology in general and palaeobotany in particular.

Prof. Pant worked with many eminent scientists of England and Europe, e.g. Prof. T.M. Harris, Reading University; Prof. J. Walton, University of Glasgow; W.N. Edwards, British Museum and Prof. R. Krausel, Frankfurt.

Numerous awards and distinctions were bestowed on Prof. Pant which is difficult to list at one place. He was fellow of all the three academies of India, Indian National Science Academy, National Academy of Sciences, India, Indian Academy of Science and was also the Fellow of Indian Botanical Society, Palaeobotanical Society, Linnean Society (London). He was awarded the Birbal Sahni Gold Medal for 1976 at the Indian Science Congress and elected as the President of Botany Section in the 65th Indian Science Congress, 1978. Prof. Pant attended many national and international conferences and presided over number of scientific sessions in India and abroad.

Prof. Pant was an able administrator and during his period Botany Department, University of Allahabad acquired number of academic distinction at national and international levels. He successfully organized All India Seminar on Recent Trends in the study of Plant Structure from 15 to 19 December 1979, at Botany Department, University of Allahabad and formed a Society of Plant Taxonomists in 1973 and launched an official journal of the Society called PHYTA. Twenty-two students obtained their doctorate degree under his supervision and his students are holding important positions while carrying out significant contributions in different disciplines of plant science.

Prof. Pant was a pleasant companion and he travelled in humility with the rich and powerful, with men of genius, with scholars and teachers and with the commoners as well. He was always ready to give wise

and thoughtful counsel to students and associates who came to him for advise and help. He had a keen sense of humour and frequently laughed himself. He was always cheerful and enjoyed the society of others.

Such a noble and illustrious personality has left us forever to mourn him. His place perhaps would never be filled up in the domain of fundamental aspects of

Botany and his absence would long be felt amongst the leading men of science in India.

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