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Policy Landscape For

CROP CARE

A REFORMIST AND INSTITUTION BUILDER PAR EXCELLENCE

A visionary leader, agricultural scientist, architect of modern ICAR, policy advisor, educator, and excellent networker are some of the many epithets that truly describe Dr RS Paroda. A true son of India and an excellent human being to the core, he has made extra-ordinary contributions to strengthen and modernise the National Agricultural Research System (NARS), recognised today globally for its outstanding performance for rapid growth of Indian agriculture. His contributions in the field of genetic resource management at the national, regional and global level are so well recognised that fondly he is called 'Gene Guru'.

Early Years

Dr Paroda was born on August 28, 1942 at Ajmer, Rajasthan, to late Shri Ram Karan Singh and late Smt Indira Devi, and was the eldest of five siblings. Rajendra Singh Paroda obtained his early school education in village Saradhna and then in Government High School, Ajmer. Belonging to an agricultural family, and being only son, Rajendra Singh's thoughts and interest steered him towards agriculture. Having graduated from Dayanand College, Ajmer, in agriculture, he moved to Udaipur to pursue post graduation from Rajasthan College of Agriculture in Plant Breeding and Genetics.

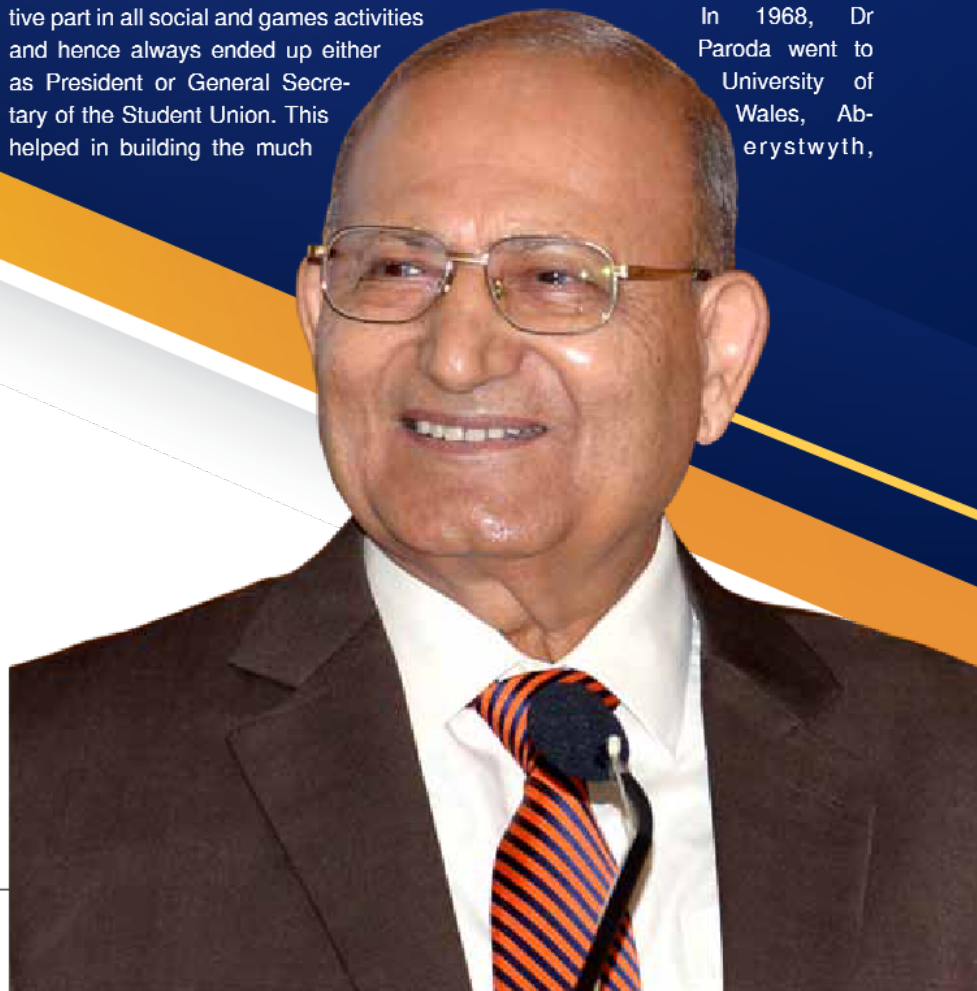
"My college life was most rewarding. Despite being good at studies, I took active part in all social and games activities and hence always ended up either as President or General Secretary of the Student Union. This helped in building the much

needed confidence to perform better and excel," he says.

His academic merits secured him his doctoral degree from the prestigious Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi. Dr Paroda worked under the able guidance of late Dr AB Joshi on genetic architecture of wheat. He was also fortunate to have received patronage of Dr MS Swaminathan.

Reminisces Dr MS Swaminathan, "I had the privilege of knowing Raj Paroda from his student days at IARI. Even at that time, it was clear that Raj was a scholar of unusual ability, creativity and great promise. His Ph.D. thesis in the broad area of plant breeding and genetics was one of the best submitted to IARI P G School."

In 1968, Dr Paroda went to University of Wales, Aberystwyth,



Dr RS Paroda, Founder Chairman, TAAS and Former Secretary, DARE & DG, ICAR

UK, on a Commonwealth Post-doctoral Fellowship. One day, while working in the glass house, a gardener commented, "Raj, if persons of your calibre will move out of India, how will your country make progress in agriculture?" This made Dr Paroda pledge to himself that he would return home despite tempting job offers abroad.

Stellar Career

Dr Paroda started his service career as Forage Breeder at Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar, now named after Chaudhary Charan Singh. Dr Paroda worked at Hisar as Professor and Head, Department of Plant Breeding and later as Additional Director of Research. Then he joined ICAR first as Director, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NB-PGR), New Delhi, and then Deputy Director General (Crop Science).

Dr Paroda later spearheaded the NARs in the country as Director General, ICAR and Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) for seven years (1994-2001). During his leadership of ICAR, more than 30 new institutions, beside four Bureaux on Genetic Resources of Animals, Fish, Micro-organisms and Insects were created.

For the modernisation of the entire research system, including state agricultural universities, he conceived and negotiated the prestigious National Agriculture Technology Project (NATP) from World Bank for US S 240 million in 1998. This helped in reorienting agricultural research, education and extension system to meet new challenges.

Dr Paroda is well known for initiating and strengthening many visionary programs. He has the unique distinction of being the main architect of one of the world's largest and most modern National Gene Bank, second in the world today, in terms of germplasm, which houses invaluable germplasm of different crop plants numbering more than 420,000 accessions. The most impressive state-of-the-art National Agricultural Science Centre (NASC) Complex, located at Pusa Campus, was also built due to his

tête-à-tête with Anjana



Recognitions

- PADMA BHUSHAN in 1998
- Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Memorial Prize (1982-83)
- ICAR Team Research Award (1983-84)
- FICCI Award (1988)
- Om Prakash Bhasin Award (1992)
- Asia-Pacific Seed Association Special Award (1995)
- CGIAR Award for Outstanding Partnership (2000)
- Life Time Award by Association of Agricultural Scientists in America (2001)
- Dr Harbhajan Singh Memorial Award (2001)
- Dr BP Pal Memorial Award (2003)
- Borlaug Award (2006)
- ISCA Gold Medal for Excellence in Science (2006)
- Gold Medals from Ministry of Agriculture of Armenia (2006) and Vietnam (2012), Life Time Achievement Award of 'Agriculture Today' (2008)
- Dr A.B. Joshi Memorial Award (2012)
- Prof. Kanniyam Memorial Award (2012)
- Krishi Shiromani Samman by Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd. (2013)
- US Awasthi-IFFCO Award (2017)
- MS Swaminathan Award (2020)



vision, initiative and dedication.

He has made significant research contributions in the field of plant breeding and genetic resource management. He was also able to get gene banks established in all eight countries in Central Asia and Caucuses (CAC) during 2001-2007. International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad and an Agriculture Research Institute of Kazakhstan have named their Gene Bank after Dr Paroda in recognition of his notable contributions.

Dr Paroda has been conferred Fellowship of several National Science Academies like, Indian National Science Academy (INSA), National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI) and

tête-à-tête with Anjana



Young and dashing with dream in his eyes



was elected as General President of the prestigious Indian Science Congress Association in 2000-2001.

Among international recognitions, he was elected as Fellow of Agricultural Academies of Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Tajikistan and the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). He had also been the President of more than a dozen Agricultural Scientific Societies in India. Both American Society of Agronomy and the Crop Science Society of America had conferred their prestigious 'Honorary Membership' on Dr Paroda in 2001. Honorary D.Sc. presented to him by 19 academic institutions, including Ohio State University, Columbus describes volumes about his outstanding achievements.

A Global Leader

An internationally acknowledged agricultural scientist, Dr Paroda has donned several important positions abroad. He had served as founder President of Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), FAO, Rome from 1988-2001. He also served for more than two decades as Executive Secretary of Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), FAO, Bang-

“My motto in life has been to serve the society with a human face and create required infrastructure for colleagues to perform to their best ability.”

kok - a vibrant regional forum, fostered by him from the beginning to strengthen regional agricultural research collaboration among NARS of more than 20 countries.

He was the only Indian to have

served as the Chairman as well as Vice-Chairman of ICRISAT Governing Board. He was the member of Board of Trustees of IRRI, member of WMO High Level Task Force on Climate Services, member of Advisory Council of Australian Center for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), member of Finance Committee of CGIAR, member of the Governing Board of the Commonwealth Agriculture Bureau International (CABI) and the member of Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC), an Apex body of CGIAR System Council.

Till recently, Dr Paroda worked for an overall benefit of farmers as Chairman, Farmers Commission of Haryana,

Happy Birthday Sir!

On his 80th birthday, we at **Agriculture Today** wish him the very best and thank him profusely for his enormous contributions to Indian and global agriculture.

Happy Birthday Sir! Keep going great!





Chairman of Working Group on Agriculture and Member of Rajasthan Planning Board. He ensured drafting and release of State Agriculture Policies both for Haryana and Rajasthan.

Efficient Organiser

Dr Paroda's foresight in bringing together diverse range of leaders, thinkers and scientists to promote dialogue and strengthen partnership amongst stakeholders in agricultural research is phenomenal. He has organized in the capacity of either Chairman of Organizing Committee or Organizing Secretary of a number of national, regional and international symposia, conferences and seminars, to promote the cause of agricultural science.

Dr Paroda successfully organized the 2nd International Crop Science Congress in New Delhi in November, 1996. He presided the 88th Session of the Indian Science Congress (2001) as its President, wherein the then Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, released a Vision Statement on Food, Nutrition and Environmental Security.

This resulted in the establishment of Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Science (TAAS), of which Dr Paroda is the Founder Chairman for last more than two decades. He has been championing the cause of women in agriculture, as evident from the First Global Conference on Women in Agriculture (GCWA), organized by him in 2012 in New Delhi. GCWA was graced by then Hon'ble President of India Mrs Pratibha Patil.

In November 2016, Dr Paroda had organised very successfully the '1st International Agrobiodiversity Congress' (IAC 2016) in New Delhi, which was inaugurated by PM Shri Narendra Modi.



“My message to the youth is to embrace agriculture as their profession to serve the society and also empower farmers for better livelihood”

The 'Delhi Declaration on Agrobiodiversity Management', an outcome of IAC 2016, is being used for defining a roadmap for future management of agrobiodiversity globally. At global level, under his chairmanship of the Program Organizing Committee, the two Global Conferences on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) were held in Montpellier, France in 2010 and at Punta del Este in Uruguay in 2012 leading to the endorsement of popular 'GCARD Road Map'.

Never allowing setbacks to interfere,

Dr Raj Paroda has endlessly and fearlessly cruised ahead fulfilling his objectives with a singular focus on development of agriculture. Indian agriculture is fortunate to have a visionary in him to lead the sector. He headed a committee constituted by the Principal Scientific Advisor, GoI and submitted its report in 2018 on 'Secure and Sustainable Agriculture', suggesting several policy reforms in agriculture sector for both faster growth and the welfare of Indian farmers.