

Volume 02 Issue 01  
(July 2025)

# Pusa Krishiksha

A Magazine of the Graduate School for Parents, Wards and Academia

## In this Issue...

- 2 Editorial
- 4 Convocation
- 9 Hooker Award
- 10 Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Lecture
- 11 Dr. B P Pal Memorial Lecture
- 13 Placement Cell
- 15 Dual Degree Program
- 18 Foundation Day
- 19 National Science Day
- 20 Center Page
- 24 Clubscape
- 28 Culturescape
- 30 PGSSU
- 32 Cultural Fests
- 33 Sports
- 34 National Service Scheme
- 36 IARI Jharkhand
- 38 Indulgence
- 39 Academic Partners



ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi

**Perspectives of Eminence**

**IARI  
Must  
Lead  
Innovations**

**Prof. Raj S. Paroda**



**In an exclusive interview with Ms. Nimmala Sreevalli, Literary Secretary of the Pusa Graduate School Student Union (PGSSU), Prof. R. S. Paroda, former Director General of ICAR and former Chairman of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), FAO, reminisced about his days in active service and emphasized why should IARI be recognized as one of the world's leading agricultural institutions.**

**How did the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP), which you spearheaded, modernize agricultural education and research? What specific changes did you implement to align agricultural curricula with the needs of a rapidly changing world?**

When I think of the future of Indian agricultural education, I strongly believe we must modernize our approach. My vision, shaped significantly through the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP), is that our institutions can no longer remain confined to crop sciences alone. If we want to be globally competitive, our universities need to broaden their faculties and curricula to meet the complex, interdisciplinary demands of the modern world.

For me, the model of U.S. Land-Grant Universities has always been a guiding example. They evolved beyond agriculture to include faculties of Medicine, Liberal Arts, and Veterinary Science, which gave them the interdisciplinary flexibility needed to solve contemporary challenges. Why shouldn't we do the same? Take something as simple as evaluating the nutritional quality of a forage crop—you cannot rely only on a chemistry lab. You need to collaborate with animal nutritionists, use *in-vitro* analysis, and bring in expertise across disciplines. That is the level of integration we must aspire to.

At the same time, I must stress the importance of Basic Sciences—Botany, Physics, and Chemistry. These are the foundations of everything we do. Yes, we have strong departments like Soil Science at IARI, but we cannot allow basic sciences to fade into the background. It worries me that bright students are increasingly avoiding these fields. Without strong basic sciences, how can we ever hope to lead in emerging areas like Environmental Science?

Ultimately, if we want our universities to remain relevant, attract and retain young talent in an increasingly urbanized society, and aim for the top global position, we must embrace this holistic, interdisciplinary model of education. Only then will Indian agricultural education achieve the stature it deserves.

**“Ultimately, if we want our universities to remain relevant, attract and retain young talent in an increasingly urbanized society, and aim for the top global position, we must embrace this holistic, interdisciplinary model of education. Only then will Indian agricultural education achieve the stature it deserves.”**

**Given your international experience with organizations like the FAO and GFAR, how do you think Indian agricultural education compares to global standards, and where do we need to improve?**

From my international experience with organizations like the FAO and GFAR, I have come to realize that while Indian agricultural education has a strong foundation, it is critically vulnerable to complacency. Too often, I hear the sentiment that “we are the best.” In my view, this attitude is dangerous—it discourages us from striving toward true global excellence. If we seriously wish to see our institutions ranked among the top 100 globally, alongside places like Harvard and Oxford, we must rethink how we engage internationally. It cannot just be about numbers; it has to be about the quality of academic exchange and genuine openness at the institutional level.

To move in this direction, several things must improve. First, we need to substantially increase the number of active Letters of Agreement with leading international institutions. Second, sandwich programs should not be optional—they must be mandated. Such programs, where education, training, and research are structured both in India and abroad, provide our students with invaluable exposure and perspective.

Faculty development is just as important. Under NATP, we started a program to invite some of the best professors from abroad on sabbatical, so they could teach here and fill critical knowledge gaps. Unfortunately, the

***We cannot rest on past achievements. If we are to achieve global parity, our institutions must embrace a forward-looking culture, driven by openness, collaboration, and the will to be world-class.***

impact was limited. Many institutions were reluctant to acknowledge their deficiencies, and visiting experts often felt their expertise was underutilized. This, I believe, reflects a cultural issue. Unless our institutions clearly express both the desire and the need for global expertise, these opportunities will be wasted.

For me, the message is clear: we cannot rest on past achievements. If we are to achieve global parity, our institutions must embrace a forward-looking culture, driven by openness, collaboration, and the will to be world-class.



**IARI has been attracting foreign students for a long time, but the numbers used to be limited due to Government regulations. Post NEP 2020, how do you feel IARI should project itself as an international higher education institution and attract global talents?**

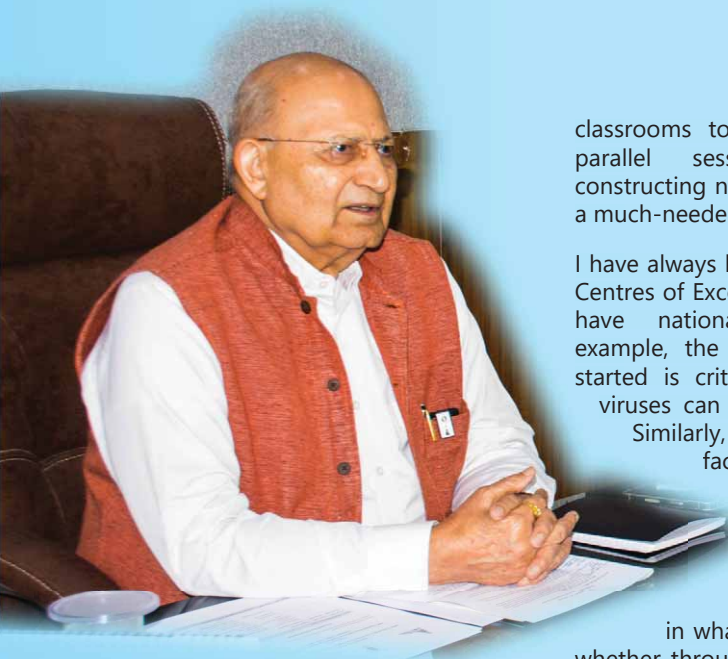
When I think about IARI’s evolution into a truly global institution, I am convinced that the first obstacle we must overcome is complacency. Too often, there’s a sense of “we are the best,” but if we are serious about being world-class, that attitude is our greatest barrier. My personal goal for IARI has always been ambitious: if we cannot become number one globally, then we must at least be firmly within the first 100, alongside universities like Harvard, Stanford, and Oxford.

To reach this, I believe we must attract the best global talent through structured, meaningful academic exchange. I remember how U.S. universities partnered with Indian

agricultural universities in the past, creating models of collaboration that brought real value. Building on this, I see three key areas of focus for the future. First, IARI must proactively establish strong MOUs and Letters of Agreement with leading international institutions. Second, we need to introduce sandwich programs that allow students to combine training, education, and research both here and abroad, blending the strengths of both systems. Third, we must actively invite top foreign professors on sabbatical. I initiated such a program under NATP, providing facilities and support, but it faltered because domestic institutions

were reluctant to admit gaps, and visiting faculty often felt their expertise was underutilized. Reviving this initiative requires a clear institutional openness and a genuine desire for growth.

The key is transparency. Institutions must openly express their need to improve, rather than seeing collaboration as a weakness. In the past, my efforts were limited by institutional pride and personal reluctance—foreign experts felt “not needed,” and domestic institutions did not acknowledge gaps. Post-NEP 2020, this culture must change. Collaboration should be seen as a measure of strength. I also strongly support programs like the International Agriculture Course, which I requested after returning from Tashkent. Using the expertise of global IARI alumni, such as Dr. Tamboli in Washington, we can combine international exposure with the deep network and roots of IARI, giving students a truly global perspective while remaining grounded in our home institution.



**As a student at IARI, and inspired by the institutional legacy of innovation, could you share a core memory or a specific incident from your life or your time at IARI that truly ignited the spirit of innovation in you, particularly regarding agricultural advancement in India? What was that pivotal moment that shaped your drive for change?**

My personal journey with IARI has shaped everything I am today. Had I not come here, I might have only known Rajasthan, my home state, and never truly understood India. IARI gave me a Commonwealth Fellowship to go abroad, where I realized where we stand in global agriculture. It also gave me the chance to witness the Green Revolution firsthand and see how farmers truly benefited. I remember sowing those small packets of seeds that came all the way from Mexico—I enjoyed every moment, dibbling them in the fields myself. Dr. Swaminathan and Dr. Borlaug would visit, and we students actively participated in the fieldwork. Being part of that, I saw how this institution was making remarkable strides, and as a student, I always wanted to give back in whatever way I could.

Later, when I became President of the Indian Science Congress, I insisted that the Congress be held at IARI. Until then, despite Dr. Swaminathan having been President, it had never been organized here—perhaps the facilities weren't adequate at the time. When it was finally held, I worked on modernizing

classrooms to accommodate multiple parallel sessions, paving roads, constructing new gates, and giving IARI a much-needed facelift.

I have always believed IARI should have Centres of Excellence in areas where we have national-level expertise. For example, the Centre for Virology we started is critical because seed-borne viruses can create serious problems.

Similarly, the protected cultivation facility, which I had inaugurated by the President of Israel, is another milestone. I have tried to give back to IARI in whatever small ways I could, whether through these initiatives or by taking charge of the IARI Alumni Association—not for the position, but to contribute meaningfully before the end of my life.

Opportunities abound for IARI to lead in areas like post-harvest technology, regenerative agriculture, micro-irrigation, and conservation agriculture under the Rice-Wheat Consortium System. I have always encouraged proactive innovation—anything we

**“Whatever I am today is because of IARI. If I had not come here, I would not have known India, but may only Rajasthan, where I am coming from.”**

develop here, like rhizobial cultures in microbiology, should be scaled and applied. We must also continue our legacy in areas like rose breeding, started by Dr. B.P. Pal, while creating new Centres of Excellence for training in protected cultivation. IARI has the expertise, the history, and the potential to lead—and I have always tried to support it in realizing that vision.

**As a visionary in global agriculture what would be your concrete**

**message to IARI to take future challenges in agriculture?**

When I think about IARI's role in innovation, I see it as moving beyond the Green Revolution. We must lead a Second-Generation Revolution, focused on sustainability and resource efficiency. Personally, I committed myself to pushing IARI to lead initiatives like the Rice-Wheat Consortium System and to expand the Zero-Till Program. We have become a leader in the country, but can not stay there if we do nothing.

To support newer shift, I felt it was essential to establish a new Centre of Excellence for Conservation Agriculture. The goal was to rigorously up-scale and out-scale these practices, creating new “green areas” and achieving sustainable intensification. This requires a scientific commitment that goes far beyond what we have accomplished in the past.

One area where innovation is urgently needed is Protected Cultivation. I believed IARI should establish a top-tier Centre of Excellence for Training in this field. Otherwise, we risked falling behind other centers, like those in Haryana, which, with external support, were already offering superior practical training in high-value horticulture. At the same time, I emphasized the importance of reinvigorating IARI's core research reputation, especially in fields like Microbiology and culture collection.

Ultimately, my vision for IARI has always been about vigilance—constantly assessing national needs, developing cutting-edge innovations, and ensuring that these innovations are both technologically refined through up-scaling and broadly adopted by farmers through out-scaling. That is how an institution stays relevant and truly leads the way.

