

PERSONAL NEWS

of perfection that satisfied him. LKD also had a tremendous knack of identifying people with talent which helped strengthen NCL's place as a premier laboratory. He would recruit, encourage and create an empowering environment for them to flourish and help them rise to

a level of leadership in the chosen areas of their profession.

His legacy will live on through his varied professional achievements, the institutions he has built, and the many students, colleagues and family members he has mentored. He is survived by

his son, daughter and three grandchildren.

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Radhey Shyam Ambasht (1936–2012)

Radhey Shyam Ambasht was an outstanding botanist and ecologist. He was born on 3 December 1936 at Gyanpur in Uttar Pradesh. He graduated in botany from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Varanasi and later obtained his Ph D under the guidance of R. Misra. His association with BHU as a Professor lasted several years and he served in various academic positions. He headed the Botany Department for two years and was also a Coordinator at the Centre of Advanced Study. After his superannuation, he was CSIR Emeritus Scientist, INSA Senior and Honorary Scientist and Emeritus Professor BHU.

He was an elected fellow of several scientific academies, such as the Indian National Science Academy, National Academy of Sciences and the National Institute of Ecology. He was a prolific teacher and guided 29 research scholars. His career as a researcher and teacher spanned over 41 years.

Some of the subjects which interested Ambasht were the study of plant species, biodiversity, productivity, energetics, nutrient cycling and adaptability in different ecosystems, such as the Eastern Himalaya plantation forests, tropical grasslands of the Vindhya, watersheds and wetland vegetation of several lakes and corridors of the rivers Ganges, Varuna and Rihand.

He developed new experimental methods for quantifying the soil, water and nutrient conservation values based on

simple experiments and formulae. These parameters have been used extensively for quantifying conservation values for the dominant species in the ecosystem and plant communities. He published over 200 papers mostly in international journals which remain extensively cited. In 2000, K. C. Pant (Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission) released *Ambasht's Festschrift Landmarks of Botany in India* at the Forest Research Institute in Dehradun.



Ambasht authored several books. *A Text Book of Plant Ecology* (15 editions) and *Environment & Pollution* (5 editions) dealt with basic concepts in ecology and environment for undergraduate and graduate students. He also edited three books for international publishers, namely

Backhuyes and Kluwer Academic/Plenum (now Springer) of Leiden (the Netherlands) and New York (USA). He was the Guest Editor for a special volume on wetland ecology brought out by the National Academy Sciences, India in 2008.

His contributions were well recognized both nationally and internationally. He chaired sessions at different international conferences and symposia, including the International Ecology Congress, Japan and UK and the International Wetland Congress, Australia. He was bestowed with several awards like the Birbal Sahni Gold Medal by the Indian Botanical Society; Swami Pranawanand Saraswati National Award of UGC for Ecology and Environment, and the Platinum Jubilee Lecture Award of the Indian Science Congress Association.

He delivered his last Presidential address on 15 October 2011 at a national conference in Aligarh. After prolonged illness he passed away on 3 January 2012 at Kanpur. He is survived by two sons and four grandchildren.

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