

Dr. S. Kedharnath Memorial Lecture (KML-2013)

Dr. S. Kedharnath was an eminent Forest Geneticist, who served as the Head of Forest Genetics Section and Director, Biological Research, in the erstwhile Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. He pioneered tree improvement research in the country and is known as the “Father of Forest Genetics in India”.

Dr. S. Kedharnath was associated with the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), since its inception in 1988 and served as the member of Research Advisory Group (RAG) of the institute for many years. To commemorate the outstanding contributions made by him in the field of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, IFGTB organized “Dr. S. Kedharnath Memorial Lecture” (KML-2013)” on 4th April 2013.

The programme of the first Dr. S. Kedharnath Memorial Lecture was started with an invocation, by Dr. Kannan C. S. Warriar, Scientist of IFGTB. Dr. C. Kunhiknan, Scientist of IFGTB welcomed the gathering. Dr. N. Krishnakumar, Director, IFGTB, during his introductory remarks mentioned that, IFGTB was established at Coimbatore, in April 1988, by amalgamating the erstwhile Forest Research Centre and other Plan Schemes functioned under the then Forest Research Institute and Colleges, Dehradun. He added that, 2013 is the Silver Jubilee Year of ICFRE / IFGTB and the institute has done commendable service to State Forest Departments, farming community, wood based industries and other stake-holders in the past 25 years of its existence. He stated that, Dr. S. Kedharnath contributed immensely to the field of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding and the Memorial Lecture initiated in his honour will surely inspire the young Scientists to take up new challenges. He stated that, Dr. Kedharnath Memorial Lecture initiated now, in the Silver Jubilee Year of the institute will continue every year. Dr. K. R. Sasidharan, Scientist of IFGTB, narrated the achievements made by Dr. S. Kedharnath in the field of tree improvement and the unstinted support extended by him to the research activities of the institute. Dr. B. Nagarajan, Scientist of IFGTB and Organizing Secretary of Dr. S. Kedharnath Memorial Lecture highlighted Dr. S. Kedharnath’s qualities as a good human being and a guide as well as the role played by him in molding the Scientists of IFGTB. Prof. S. Kondas, IFS (Retd) and former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Tamil Nadu Forest Department,

remembered Dr. S. Kedharnath as a friend and a great Scientist in the field of Forestry.

Dr. S. Nagarajan, ICFRE Chair of Excellence in Forest Genetic Resources delivered the first Dr. S. Kedharnath Memorial Lecture on the topic, **Forging Alliance between Biodiversity, Genetic Resources, Tree Improvement and Forest Management**. He mentioned that, forest ecosystem is a subsystem under biodiversity and is a treasure house of tree genetic resources. He pointed out that, climate change and human activity restrict availability of tree genetic resources and necessitates their collection, documentation and conservation for present usage and posterity. He highlighted the complex genetic variations existing in tree stands and opined that, it could be due to environmental influence, adaptation, epigenetic reasons or due to stable inherited traits. He observed that, at present there is no national level Germplasm Bureau for forest trees and the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) of ICAR is catering in part to this requirement of forestry. He opined that, since the trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses, particularly the medicinal plants in the forest ecosystem are unique and different from that of agriculture, there is need for establishing a National Forest Genetic Resources Bureau (NFGRB) to cater to the specific needs of Forestry. He explained the mandate, organizational structure and duties of the proposed NFGRB, during his talk.

About 150 participants, from organizations like Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology & Natural History (SACON), Coimbatore, Vanavarayar Institute of Technology, Pollachi as well as family members of Dr. S. Kedharnath, agriculturists/ tree growers and Officers, Scientists, Staffs and Research Scholars of IFGTB attended the lecture. Some of the dignitaries present during the lecture include Dr. N. Vijayan Nair, Director, Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Dr. G.V.S. Murthy, Head of Office, Botanical Survey of India, Dr. Manoj Kumar Sarcar, CCF (Working Plan), Coimbatore and Prof. P. Durairasu, Dean, Forest College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Mettupalayam

A portrait of Dr. S. Kedharnath was unveiled by Prof. S. Kondas IFS (Retd), former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Tamil Nadu Forest Department and a Bibliographical Memoir of Dr. S. Kedharnath was released by Dr. S. Nagarajan, ICFRE Chair of Excellence in Forest Genetic Resources, during the occasion. The copy of the Bibliographical Memoir was received by Shri K. Rajnath, S/o of Dr. S. Kedharnath.

Shri T.P. Raghunath, IFS, Group Co-ordinator (Research), proposed the vote of thanks.

Dr. N.Krishnakumar
Director





