

Homage to Dr. Pushpa M. Bhargava

A renowned Scientist and Democrat

Dr. Pushpa Mitra Bhargava, 89 years, has departed on August 1, 2017. He breathed his last while restlessly striving to take the fruits of his work in the field of science and technology, particularly in Biotechnology, to the common people.

He took birth in Ajmir of Rajasthan. He was educated in UP. He stayed in several foreign countries engaged in research work. From 1950-53 he conducted his research in IICT, Hyderabad (then Central Laboratory under CSIR). He turned to Biological sciences for his research. He was the founder director of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad till his retirement.

He welcomed the revolutionary experiments in biotechnology. He wished that these must bring good results in peoples lives. He opposed the allowing of genetically modified crops in agriculture without comprehensive studies. Accordingly he seriously opposed the governments Bill to set up biotechnology authority. He joined and stood in the forefront of the protest organised by the activists of peoples movement against bringing genetically modified brinjal seeds in to India. He opposed the moves by the government to introduce GM mustard in to the country and resigned in protest from his membership of Genetic Engineering Approval Committee.

He denounced US war against Iraq as he felt the war unleashed by the imperialists go against the very existence of humanity. He worked as the Convenor of Anti-war Forum that came up in Hyderabad. He stood firm by the victims of Union Carbide Company's gas leak at Bhopal.

We quote here from "Statement on Scientific Temper" made by Dr. Bhargava along with Dr. Raja Ramanna and P.N.Haksar in 1981:

".... We are witnessing a phenomenal growth of super-stitious beliefs and obscurantist practices. The influences of variety of godmen and miracle makers is increasing alarmingly. The modern tool of propaganda and communication are being used to give an impression that instant and magical solutions can be found for the problems that confront our people....The ancient period of our history is interpreted to inculcate chauvinism which is false pride; the medieval period is misinterpreted in a way that would fan communalism".

He was of the clear view that Science and technology must help to improve the lives of our people and the efforts must be made to use science and the knowledge of science with a rationalist orientation. He openly stood against propagation of pseudo science ideas carried on through the science Congress organised by the government.

We pay our homage to Dr.Pushpa M.Bhargava, a democrat and a renowned scientist who opposed obscura-ntist ideas, deceptive policies, yearned for cultivation of scientific temper and pro-people science, worked for the same to the best of his ability, clashed with authoritarian forces and whole heartedly stood on the side of people.

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**Editor,
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