
A tribute to Vishnu-Mittre (1924-1991)



VISHNU-MITRE (1924-1991)

VISHNU-MITRE was born on 17th July, 1924 in a village Shorkot, district Jhang, West Punjab (now in Pakistan). His early schooling was completed in Rawalpindi. After taking his B.Sc. degree in 1944 from Gordon College, Rawalpindi, he opted his carrier as a school teacher of biology first in D.A.V. College, Rawalpindi and then in D.C. Jain College, Ferozepur, Ambala. Later, he joined Benaras Hindu University for higher education and obtained M.Sc. degree in Botany in the year 1951.

As a research scholar, he joined Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow in July 1951 and devoted himself to the research in Indian Mesozoic Palaeobotany and also awarded Ph.D. degree by Lucknow University

in 1957. His work on the Jurassic Pteridophytes, Conifers, and Pentoxyleae has stood the test of time.

Deputed by the Institute for higher studies abroad, he joined the Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, U.K. and obtained Ph.D. degree in 1960. While in Cambridge, he specialized in the field of Quaternary palynology and was ably guided by Sir Harry Godwin.

Returning to India in early 1960, he established and organized the Department for Quaternary Palynology at the Institute and coordinated various research programmes in diverse disciplines such as Actinopalynology, Quaternary Biogeography, Climatology, Forestry, Archaeobiology, Aerobiology, etc. He successively held the post of Junior Scientific Officer and Head of the Department (1960-1962), Senior Scientific Officer (1962-1970), Assistant Director (1970-1977), Assistant Director, Special Grade (1977-1983), Deputy Director (1983-1984). After his superannuation on 31st July, 1984, he was appointed Emeritus Scientist at the Institute for a period of two years. After retirement from the Institute, he remained active in the field of research.

Well known for his pioneering work in the field of Mesozoic Palaeobotany and Quaternary Palynology, he published around 140 research papers and two books entitled "Evolution of Life" and "Rocks unfold the past". Eleven scholars obtained doctoral degrees under his guidance. After a brief illness he passed away on November 6, 1991 at Lucknow.

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