

*Obituary***PROF. DR. M.I. D. CHUGHTAI  
(1919-2006)**

The stature of a person can be assessed best if the contributions made by him are judged in the context of the period and the circumstances under which they are made. Muhammad Izazud Din Chughtai, one of the most prominent scientists of the country, passed away on December 16, 2006, having made a glorious contribution in the field of science, during a period when higher education and scientific research were not on high priority of the policy makers. He was a nephew of Abdur Rahman Chughtai, who made a name for himself in painting the illustrated *Diwan-i-Ghalib*, published as “*Muraqqa-i-Chughtai*.”

Prof. M.I.D.Chughtai cherished scientific research and worked for the promotion of science and technology in the country throughout his life. Apart from guiding the research of hundreds of M.Sc. Students, 22 researchers obtained their Ph.D. degree under his supervision. He published over 150 papers in scientific journals. Hardly any other university professor in Pakistan had published as much or produced that many Ph.Ds. as Dr. Chughtai during that period. On the basis of research contributions in biochemical sciences, he was awarded D.Sc. degree by the University of Manchester in 1974.

Dr. Chughtai was a gentle human being and a person with progressive mind and action, a trait not commonly available in our institutions of higher learning during his active professional career. The life at the university campuses was highly polarized during the seventies and Punjab University typified this scenario. Having a senior academic like Prof. M.I.D. Chughtai, who would not be dragged into any politics and who would continue with his academic and scientific pursuits

unhindered, was not only exemplary but also an asset.

He was Founder President of the Pakistan Society of Biochemists (now Pakistan Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), which is one of the oldest scientific bodies of the country. He remained Secretary General and then President of the Pakistan Association for the Advancement of Science, the only vibrant forum for the promotion of science in the country during the sixties and seventies. He was one of the earliest elected members of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, the most prestigious scientific body of the country.



Prof. Chughtai represented Pakistan regularly at the international scientific conferences, which made him travel all over the world, projecting the image of Pakistan, often using his personal resources. This international exposure made him conscious of the inevitable fast growth of biochemical sciences and its applications for human welfare, which made him work tirelessly for its strengthening in Pakistan. Although higher education and science in the country were not the priority areas for the policy makers, his efforts had laid the foundation on the basis of which his successor managed successfully the establishment of the Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology at the University in 1996.

He was born on January 4, 1919, in Lahore, where he received all his education, obtaining M.Sc. in Chemical Technology from the University of the Punjab in 1940. He proceeded to Britain in 1945 for further studies

at Manchester University, and after obtaining Ph.D. he returned to the newly created state of Pakistan in 1948. After a brief stint in the Economic Affairs Division, Government of Pakistan, Karachi, he joined the University of the Punjab in December, 1949, as a Senior Lecturer in Biochemistry and Fermentation in the Institute of Chemistry, thus creating the Section of Biochemistry, the first institution in this field in the country. He became Professor of Biochemistry in 1963, Director of the Institute of Chemistry in 1970 and Dean, Faculty of Sciences, before retiring on January 4, 1979. In recognition of his contributions, the University made him Professor Emeritus. He served as Vice-President of the Pakistan Association for History and Philosophy of

Science and then its President until his death in 2006, during which period his support was invaluable, especially for the Pak Journal of History & Philosophy of Science. He remained active professionally as long as allowed by his health, which deteriorated fast with the death of his younger son in December, 2002.

He is survived by his wife and a son.

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