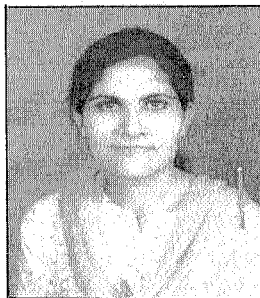


OBITUARY




DR. AZRA QURAIISHI
(1945-2002)

Dr. Azra Quraishi an eminent tissue culturist, Chief Scientific Officer and Deputy Director General, Agriculture Biotechnology Institute, NARC/PARC, Islamabad died on 22nd November 2002 (16 Ramadan 1423) after a brief illness. She was buried in Rawalpindi by the side of her mother Salma Begum. May God Almighty shower His choicest blessings upon the departed soul and may her soul rest in eternal peace in heaven (Ameen).

Dr. Azra Quraishi daughter of Dr. Abdul Sattar Quraishi, a civil surgeon, was born on 22nd September 1945 in Tonk State, Rajasthan, India. In 1951 she with her parents migrated to Rawalpindi, Pakistan. She had her early education at the Presentation & Convent School, Rawalpindi. She obtained her B.Sc. degree (1964) from the Gordon College, Rawalpindi and her M.Sc. degree (1966) from the Botany Department, University of the Punjab, Lahore. She started her career as a lecturer in Viqar-un-Nisa Girls College, Rawalpindi (1967-72). She obtained overseas Scholarship of Government of Pakistan and was awarded the degree of M.Phil. (1973) for her work on "Studies on some aspects of vegetative multiplication in *Solanum tuberosum* var., BF-15 by tissue culture technique" and Ph.D. (1976) for her work on "Study of callogenesis and organogenesis from explant of *in vitro* shoots in *Solanum tuberosum* var., BF-15" from the University de Paris, Orsay, France. She rejoined Viqar-un-Nisa Girls College, Rawalpindi (1977-1978). She went to Canada as a Canadian Immigrant and joined the group of Dr. Hiruki, Professor of Plant Virology at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. She worked on protoplast culture as a post doctorate fellow (1978-1979). She returned to Pakistan and joined the Nuclear Institute for Agriculture & Biology (NIAB), Faisalabad. She worked as Senior Scientific Officer (1979-1980) and developed a group for work on plant tissue culture. For a brief period she also taught at the Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. Dr. Amir Mohammad the then Chairman of the PARC who recognized her talent gave her the responsibility to establish national tissue culture programmes.

Dr. Azra Quraishi will always be remembered by her pioneering work to establish virus free potato seed production technology in Pakistan which increased its production @ 5% annual growth level but also resulted in less import of seed from Holland. She also successfully launched projects of micropropagation of banana, date palm, *Vinca major*, *Citrus reticulata* and screening salt tolerance through tissue culture in local wheat and rice cultivars. In recognition of her significant contributions to scientific research, Dr.



Azra Quraishi was awarded Hamdard Award (1992), Norman Borlaug Award (1997), PARC/PARSA Millenium Award for Best Scientist (2001), PALMES Academique Award from French Government (2002). In a Memorial reference on 26 November 2002, Dr. Badruddin Soomro, Chairman PARC, Islamabad announced that the Institute of Agriculture Biotechnology and Genetics Research (IABGR) NARC/PARC, Islamabad has been renamed after Dr. Azra Quraishi.

Dr. Azra Quraishi was a prolific writer. She has published < 140 scientific research papers in journals of international repute of home and abroad besides 85 scientific popular articles in national newspapers. Dr. Azra Quraishi participated in < 70 national and international conferences, seminars, workshop in Canada, China, Egypt, Philippine, USA, UK, India, Jordan, Bangladesh etc. She has also organized several national and international symposia/workshop on plant tissue culture in Pakistan. She was a life member of the Pakistan Botanical Society besides member of a number of other national and international societies.

Dr. Azra Quraishi always nurtured her associates with affection and encouraged them to make contributions in the subject of plant biotechnology. A person with kind heart, she was bearing the cost of education of nearly 3 dozen children.

The loss of her mother and younger brother during the last 3 years was a great shock to her. A lone soul however, never complained. Apart from members of the family (2 brothers and 1 sister), Dr. Azra Quraishi has left behind a large number of students and colleagues, who are now holding responsible positions in teaching and research institutions at home and abroad to mourn the loss.

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