

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR B. K. ANAND



The fraternity of physiologists and pharmacologists in India are grieved at the passing away of Professor B. K. Anand on April 2, 2007.

Hailing from a very humble beginning, he achieved significant glory in Scientific Research with the discovery of the 'Feeding Centre' in the hypothalamus in 1951.

Professor Bal Krishan Anand was born on September 18, 1917 in Lahore. After distinguishing himself as an excellent student by winning scholarship, medals and prizes, Professor Anand earned his medical degree from King Edward Medical College, Lahore in 1940. He then joined the Medical Service in 1942 and earned the M.D. degree in 1948 in three subjects: Medicine, Pathology and Physiology. Professor Anand then joined the Lady Hardinge Medical College as a Professor of Physiology at a very young age of 32 in 1949. Professor Anand went to Yale University in 1950 as the first Rockefeller Foundation Fellow and there while working with Professor John Brobeck, he discovered the existence of a neural substrate which is responsible for regulating food intake, that is now known as the Feeding Centre. Professor Anand then returned to India in 1952 along with several essential equipments granted to him by the Rockefeller Foundation so that he could continue with his line of research in India. After a six months stint in Amritsar, Professor Anand joined the Lady Hardinge Medical College as Professor and Head, Department of Physiology. Professor Anand took up this challenging job and under his leadership, it became the first Medical College in the country to introduce human and mammalian experiments in Physiology in 1953 and by 1955, Lady Hardinge Medical College became recognized for starting a M.D. course in Basic Medical Science. In 1955, the Neurophysiology Research Unit was established in Lady Hardinge Medical College in the same year.

Soon after independence, the Health Minister at that time, Late Smt. Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur was involved in creating a Medical College and Hospital of excellence and had requested Professor Anand to join the Team of Experts involved in the planning of this centre. When the center came into existence, it was named as All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Professor Anand joined the Institute as its first professor in the Department of Physiology. He demonstrated his dynamic leadership by helping to structure the M.B.B.S. course to three phases of three semesters, each followed by a year of internship that included three months of rural posting. This pattern was quickly followed by the rest of the country. The integrated course on Neurobiology designed by Professor Anand, and held in collaboration with Professor Keswani of the Department of Anatomy was successful and highly appreciated as a first of its kind in the country. Professor Anand was a member of the team which laid down the policies and curriculum for postgraduate training in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, that was soon accepted by the Medical Council of India for all Medical Colleges in India. In 1969 Professor Anand became the Dean of All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Professor Anand's tryst with science continued till the end of his long and distinguished scientific career by raising further questions related to the Neurobiology of feeding and

satiety. The Neurophysiology Research Unit had moved with him to All India Institute of Medical Sciences and continues to flourish even today based on the foundations created by Professor B. K. Anand. The research studies flourished with the large team of brilliant researchers such as Professor G. S. Chhina, Professor Sheel Dua Sharma, Professor K. N. Sharma, late Professor S.K. Manchanda, Professor Usha Nayar, late Professor T. Desiraju. Professor Anand was truly blessed by having with him in his research team the father of Indian Neurology and teacher *par excellence*, Late Professor Baldev Singh. Besides understanding the neural basis of feeding and satiety, Professor Anand and his team undertook studies to understand the role of the limbic system in emotional and aggressive behaviour, the role of hypothalamus in reproduction, as well as in cardiovascular, respiratory and gastrointestinal activities. The pioneering studies of Professor Anand, Professor Chhina and Professor Baldev Singh in Yoga and in high altitude research are well known.

In 1955, Professor B. K. Anand was instrumental in establishing the Association of Physiologist and Pharmacologists of India affiliated to the International Union of Physiological Sciences. In 1957 he also started the publication of Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology that is now one of the best medical journals published in India.

In 1974, Professor Anand took voluntary retirement to take a World Health Organization assignment in New Delhi to look after the Health Manpower Development Division in South East Asia. This involved rendering advice for policy matters relating to education, nursing and paramedical manpower in countries extending from Mongolia in the north to Maldives in the south, India in the west and Indonesia in the east. In 1977 after retiring from the WHO, he joined the Family Planning Foundation as its Biomedical Director and he held this position till his retirement in 1982 after successfully steering research in India in Biomedical Sciences especially in the development of contraceptives.

Since 1977, Professor Anand had been attached to the Department of Physiology as an Emeritus Professor and he continued to guide, steer and advise students, researchers and faculty in striving for excellence in teaching and research at the post graduate level. In 1982 after retiring from the Family Planning Foundation, he took up yet another challenge of establishing a Postgraduate Medical Institute in Srinagar at the behest of the late Shri Sheikh Abdullah. On December 5, 1982, the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Science was formally inaugurated with an Outpatient Department and a 150 bed in-patient service. This Institute soon started to flourish and the first batch of postgraduate students was enrolled in 1984 due to the hard work, grit and determination of its Director, Professor Anand. He continued with this assignment till ill-health made him to retire in December, 1985.

Professor Anand had been the winner of numerous national and international awards, accolades, and prizes, and had authored numerous research publications. He will be remembered by all of us as a warm individual and as a teacher-scientist who had taught us to reach for the stars.

With the demise of Professor B. K. Anand, India has lost one of her outstanding scientists and an educationist *par excellence*.

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