



AgEcon SEARCH

RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

No endorsement of AgEcon Search or its fundraising activities by the author(s) of the following work or their employer(s) is intended or implied.

Obituary

Dr. Pandurang Vasudev Sukhatme (1911-1997)

The Indian Society of Agricultural Economics deeply mourns the sad and sudden demise of Dr. P.V. Sukhatme on January 28, 1997. Dr. Sukhatme was a renowned statistician and nutritional expert and made notable contributions to the advancement of the study of statistics, biometry and under-nutrition among the population.

Born on July 27, 1911 in Budhgaon village of Satara district in Maharashtra and after passing matriculation examination in 1928, Dr. Sukhatme graduated in Mathematics in 1932 from Fergusson College, Poona. He studied at and obtained the Ph.D. degree in 1936 from University College, London and D.Sc. in Statistics in 1939 for his work on bipartitional functions. During his academic career he held several distinguished positions both in national and international organisations. At the time of his death, he was the Adjunct Professor of School of Health Sciences at University of Poona.

He was Statistical Advisor at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research from 1940 to 1950. During his long tenure with ICAR, he was responsible for giving the statistical branch a full fledged status as an Institute exclusively devoted to research in Agricultural Statistics. Later he joined the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations in 1951 as the Director of the Statistics Division. During 1970-71, he worked as Regents Professor at the University of California at Berkeley, U.S.A. Subsequently, Dr. Sukhatme founded the Department of Biometry and Nutrition at Maharashtra Association for the Cultivation of Science in Pune and carried out research on nutrition and allied topics.

In the early sixties, he formulated a method of assessing the incidence of undernutrition and malnutrition in the population and used it to assess in broad numerical terms the extent and magnitude of hunger in the country. He further made an attempt to estimate the amount of food supplies needed to ensure adequate nutrition for India's growing millions and examined the prospects and possibilities for raising the needed food within a foreseeable future. He also examined the scope, limitations and sources of errors in the available data on food consumption and requirements. He demonstrated the contribution which statistical method can make to improving the understanding of one of India's major problems, namely, the food and protein problem. In collaboration with Professor Sheldon Margen, Dr. Sukhatme raised the issue whether over a moderate range of calorie intake changes, basal metabolic rates adjusted enough to avoid having to change activity levels in order to re-equilibrate energy intake with energy expenditure. The hypothesis suggested a threshold of rather low intake above which it has no effect on productivity.

Dr. Sukhatme was President of the Biometric Society of India, Indian Society of Medical Statistics and Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics. He was also a member of the Poverty Group, Planning Commission, Government of India. He was also nominated as Honorary Member of National Statistical Societies of Japan, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), U.S.A., U.K. and several other countries.

He was a humane person and showed much concern for the poor and down-trodden. During the three successive droughts in Maharashtra between 1972 and 1974, Dr. Sukhatme arranged to provide a cheap and nutritional meal, 'Sukhdi' through community kitchens by the State Government.

Dr. Sukhatme was a life member of the Society. He was elected President of the 31st Annual Conference of the Society held in Varanasi and presided over the Conference in 1972. The theme of his Presidential Address was "Protein Strategy and Agricultural Development" which highlighted the extent of incidence of protein deficiency in India and suggested various possibilities to combat the problem.

Several prestigious awards were conferred upon him including the Guy Medal of the Royal Statistical Society, London, Hari Om Trust Award of the University Grants Commission, Dr. P.C. Mahalanobis Centenary Celebrations Award at the Indian Science Congress, Jaipur (1994), Indian National Science Academy Award and the Padma Bhushan.

He wrote a number of books and published over 150 research papers in academic journals. Some of his important publications included "Impact of P.V. Sukhatme on Agricultural Statistics and Nutrition", "Glimpses of India's Statistical Heritage", "Sampling Theory of Surveys", "Statistical Method for Agricultural Research Workers", "Third World Food Survey", "Six Millions to Feed", and "Diet, Disease and Development". In his death the country has lost an eminent statistician and the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics a distinguished member.