

**Prof. Ashok Kumar Sarial, Vice-Chancellor,
Sri Sai University, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh**

Prof. Ashok Kumar Sarial, an accomplished scientist, teacher and administrator, earlier served as regular Vice-Chancellor of CSK HPradesh Krishi Vishvavidyalaya (CSK HPKV) for 4 years. Presently Prof. Sarial is Vice Chancellor of Sri Sai University, Palampur.

He is having more than three decades of rich and varied experience in teaching and research. Prof. Sarial worked as Professor of Genetics and Plant Breeding in CCS Haryana Agricultural University (HAU), Hisar.

He obtained his Ph.D. degree in Genetics from premier Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi in 1995. Prof. Sarial had been a meritorious student and being the topper of the institute, he was awarded IARI Gold Medal for his excellent academic performance and ICAR Jawahar Lal Nehru Best thesis award for outstanding post-graduate research.

Prof. Sarial worked as Rockefeller Foundation Fellow under International Program of rice biotechnology at Texas Tech. University, Lubbock, USA (1997-99); and as an Expatriate Expert in Biometrics & Biotechnology at Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa under World Bank/ UNDP sponsored programme 'Promotion of Higher Education' of the Ministry of Education, FDR, Ethiopia from 2004-06.

Prof. Ashok Kumar Sarial is known for his teaching excellence and research innovations. He has seven first time research innovations/findings to his credit including development of world's the longest grain Basmati variety Pusa 1121 released for cultivation in 2003 and world's first Basmati rice hybrid Pusa RH 10 parental lines. Variety Pusa Basmati 1121 has revolutionized Basmati cultivation in the country as it occupies more than 70 per cent area of total Basmati acreage. It has emerged as a major export variety contributing annually around 70 per cent of total Basmati export worth more than Rs. 19000 crore foreign exchange and his this contribution has enabled India to attain number one position in the world in case of Basmati export since 2011 leaving behind USA, Vietnam, Thailand and Pakistan. His contribution has brought livelihood security and prosperity to millions of farmers in Basmati growing regions of the country according to Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

As Vice-Chancellor, HPKV, Palampur Prof. Sarial brought qualitative changes in teaching and research thereby improved University ranking from 23rd to 11th position amongst the 74 agricultural universities of the country.

He established an Advanced Natural Farming and Protected Agriculture Centre, first of its kind in the country. He facilitated the opening of Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Right Authority (PPVFRA) Branch office in the University for North-Western Himalayan region of the country

Prof. Sarial registered three landraces of maize of rural communities under PPVFRA thus protecting the farmers rights for which the Central Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare, GoI awarded Plant Genome Saviour Community Award, 2019.

During COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Prof. Sarial received appreciation letter from His Excellency Hon'ble Governor HP for handling the university academic and other activities

Prof. Sarial is a decorated scientist at national and international level. He is credited with over 90 publications and guided more than a dozen PG and Ph. D students. Four of them working in reputed universities in Canada, UK, Nepal and Australia. He is recipient of 28 awards, honours, recognitions and fellowships, etc such as ICAR Jawahar Lal Nehru Award, (1997) and ICAR Recognition Award (2009), ICAR sponsored Best Teacher Award (2008) etc., 9 Gold medals and fellowships etc.

Prof. Sarial has been a member of several professional societies/academic bodies viz. International Advisory Board, Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), Bangkok; Member expert nominated by APARRI, Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA); member, ICAR Governing Body; Fellow of Indian Society of Genetics and Plant Breeding; Chairman, Board of Management, CSKHPKV, Palampur; Member, Governing Body, ICAR, New Delhi; Board of Management, Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan; Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agriculture and Technology, Jammu (J&K) and H.P. Technical University, Hamirpur; Chairman, Inspection Committee of Department of Higher Education, Govt. of H.P. for inspection of Private Universities of Himachal Pradesh for starting B.Sc. Hons. (Agri.) degree programme(s); Member, Steering Committee of H.P. Public Service Commission; State Innovation Council of Govt. of Himachal Pradesh; State Bio-diversity Board of Govt. of Himachal Pradesh; Board of Directors of H.P. Board of School Education and Planning Board of Govt. of Himachal Pradesh etc.

Prof. Sarial has visited foreign countries like USA, Africa, Thailand and Taiwan in professional concern spread over four years.