



Obituary

The Indian zoo community has suffered a sad loss due to the untimely demise of Sri Pushp Kumar, I.F.S. who passed away suddenly on 2 December 2005. This vacuum may never be filled.

Sri Pushp Kumar joined the Indian Forest Service during the year 1960. He served as Curator of Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad (Hyderabad Zoo) from 1961-1974 and thereafter, as a Director of the same zoo till 1977. It was during this period that Hyderabad Zoo, as we know it today, was designed and developed. He was also entrusted in the task of designing Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Vishakapatnam in 1972 while he was working as Curator of Hyderabad Zoo.

In 1977, Sri Pushp Kumar was elevated to the post of Conservator of Forest (Wildlife). In this capacity, he continued to oversee the development and management of both these zoos. Under his devotion both as Curator and Director and thereafter as Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), the Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam zoos epitomized many features of a modern zoo.

Sri Pushp Kumar was also Director of Crocodile Breeding and Training Centre, Hyderabad, an FAO-UNDP funded Project on Planned Captive Breeding of Crocodile and its Rehabilitation.

After becoming Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Pushp Kumar was involved in designing the Tirupati Zoo which today is one of the finest examples of an open zoo. He retired as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Andhra Pradesh in the year 1990.

In 1992, he was nominated by Government of India as Member of the Central Zoo Authority (CZA). In his capacity as Member of CZA, he continued to be involved in redesigning of old-style cage ridden zoos into open zoos. He continued as Member of the Authority till 1998. As Member of the CZA, he has been associated in drafting of Recognition of Zoo Rules, National Zoo Policy and rules and regulations relating to zoos. He was also associated in drafting guidelines for establishment of Deer Parks and Safaris in the country.

Sri Pushp Kumar can be credited with translating the concept of open zoos all round where wild animals are displayed in naturalistic enclosures for sensitizing for visitors towards the need for conservation of our wildlife heritage. The three zoos, namely Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad; Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam and Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park, Tirupati, which were designed and developed during his tenure in the Andhra Pradesh Forests Department are today considered to be one of the best in the world.

He was also involved with the planning and designing new zoos like the M.C. Zoological Park, Chattbir in Punjab, the Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Chidiyatapu, A & N. Islands and the Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park, Pune in Maharashtra. He was instrumental in the denovo development of the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo in Kerala and Gwalior Zoo in Madhya Pradesh. There may be hardly any zoo in the country which has not been benefited with the expert help of Shri Pushp Kumar. Till his last days, Mr. Pushp Kumar continued his association with the Indian Zoo Community and the Central Zoo Authority.

Today the Indian zoo community is at a great loss due to untimely demise of Mr. Pushp Kumar and it will take years to fill this vacuum. We all pray that his soul may rest in peace.

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