

Client: Jain Irrigation Systems Limited

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TRIBUTE

The big brother of micro irrigation!

DR. BHAVARLAL H JAIN,
FOUNDER OF JAIN GROUP,
PASSED AWAY ON FEBRUARY
25, 2016 IN MUMBAI.
THE ECONOMIC TIMES
POLYMERS MAGAZINE PAYS
A HUMBLE TRIBUTE



When "The Economic Times Polymers" magazine travelled to Jalgaon in January 2016 to visit the Jain Valley campus and interview the MD Anil Jain, we missed an opportunity to interact with Dr. Bhavar-

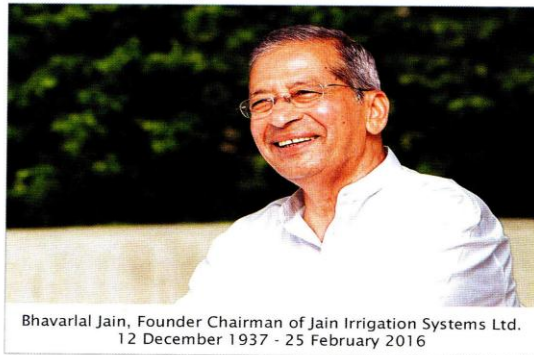
lal H Jain, Founder of Jain Group. Little did we know that we would never get an opportunity to him! Affectionately known as Bhau (meaning elder brother in Marathi), Dr. Bhavarlal H Jain passed away on February 25, 2016 in Mumbai.

While visiting the different farms and facilities at the sprawling 1600 acre Jain campus in Jalgaon, we could truly witness how small ideas – when implanted with determination, hard work and vision, could lead to big revolutions! Everything around had Bhau's distinct signature on it. "He practiced what he preached and he built his entire business on a foundation of inclusiveness and sustainability over the last five decades," said everyone that we met there!

He believed small farmers are entrepreneurs and they must get dignity as well as higher income. It is out of this vision that he created the micro-irrigation revolution that transformed not just farms and landscapes but also the lives of many farmers. Bhau toiled hard to ensure the same to over five million farmers. People called him a visionary and "Karmyogi".

The small town entrepreneur who established a billion dollar, rural, multinational corporation. A spirited champion of the small farmer; whom he saw as nobly toiling in the face of all adversity. A committed environmentalist and compassionate social worker – is no more!

Bhau was a son of the soil, who by sheer dint of hard work, bravely facing penury, rose to head the world's second largest drip irrigation company. His pioneering work in the farming sector is unparalleled by any single individual in this country's history. He brought the latest and most relevant technology to the small and marginal farmers and always ensured that all his business were done ethically and with a conscience. That whatever technology was brought, could be adapted for small farm holdings. Further, he constantly innovated with these technologies to make them



Bhavarlal Jain, Founder Chairman of Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd.
12 December 1937 - 25 February 2016

affordable and within their reach.

A man who never shied away from work, a man who genuinely believed that there was nothing better than to work for a person. Not doing anything was anathema to him. If it was not work in the JISL factory, or the R&D farm, then it was social work. Education was very close to his heart. He believed in nurturing the young with good education and sound values.

The residential school, Anubhuti that he established in Jalgaon, followed modern teaching methods, curriculum and offered an international quality of education, but retained many Indian customs and values seen in the ancient Gurukul system.

He firmly believed that economic conditions should not prevent deserving children from getting a good education. This prompted him to start another school for children whose parents live below the poverty line. Today hundreds of bright youngsters, provided with free education, books, wholesome meals and all other necessities, bear witness to the faith he reposed in them and are blooming in their new environment.

His diminutive stature belied the immense reserves of strength that the man had. Seven heart attacks, two bypass surgeries, an angioplasty and cerebral stroke, did not deter him from working an eight or ten hour day. Be it building and running of the Anubhuti School or the mammoth Gandhi Research Foundation. The latter he set up not just because he personally believed in the Mahatma's teachings but also to ensure that the younger generation never forgets him or the timeless message of his life's work.

A much sought after public speaker, he would hold his audience spellbound with his knowledge and eloquence on various subjects – be they work related, political or social. Without as much as a scrap of paper as an aide memoire, his prodigious



memory could recall data, events or recount anecdotes and stories to enthrall, entertain or captivate his audiences.

Speaking extempore with such erudition and passion on agriculture for nearly an hour at the Harvard Business School during his last visit to the US, prompted Prof. Ray A. Goldberg, (George M. Moffett Professor of agriculture and business, Emeritus) calling him his brother! The professor later visited Jain Irrigation, Jalgaon with a delegation that included other professors and the Dean of Harvard Business School. The HBS today uses Jain as a case study for their graduate program.

There were so many subjects that he was committed to that he has written several books on them. His book on the ills of social structure written 20 years ago, is as relevant today as it was then.

His book on his experiments and learnings with watershed management could well be used as a textbook by students and by the general public as the subject is so pertinent and his observations so simple to understand. His unique style of management, has a thriving sustainable corporation, employing 10,000 associates, seamlessly working across five continents. This is reflected in his books – "An Entrepreneur Deciphered" & "The Enlightened Entrepreneur".

Perhaps the most touching story "Tee ani Mee", written in Marathi, Hindi & English on the relationship with his wife, stops from being just a charming sentimental account of his life with her, because of the underlying message that is woven skillfully into the narrative. A message of direction, a message of hope and encouragement to young couples entering matrimony.

Bhau's unflagging energy has always amazed his younger colleagues and contemporaries. He was ever ready to adopt new technologies and enter new ventures. Particularly ventures that had a social impact and would benefit society. It was his company's avowed policy to never get into any business that preyed upon the weaknesses or addictions of others. No matter how profitable they may be! Thus there was always an effort to do business

that would have a positive impact on society – particularly the weaker sections of society.

His work and concern for the environment had its roots in the tenets of Jainism which teaches one to protect and live in tune with nature. His herculean task of transforming Jain Hills and its environs into a fertile green paradise, included planting millions of trees. Trees that were not just planted and abandoned to fend for themselves, but watered, nurtured and cared for. These efforts converted tracts of barren land into swathes of green and brought hectares of arid fallow land under cultivation.

Bhau's sterling work on rain water harvesting, watershed management and conservation is a landmark in the history of agriculture in this arid region of Khandesh. This and his contribution to agriculture have led universities to bestow four honorary doctorates and have won him numerous national and international awards. The prestigious Crawford Reid Award for promoting proper irrigation techniques, has been given to only two Asians till date. More recently the nation recognized his work and awarded him the Padma Shri in 2008. He set up a huge Agri-Institute at Jain Hills with a faculty of agronomist and doctorates to train farmers from all over India and abroad on the latest farming methods.

He established one of the finest biotech labs, doing research in various fields of agriculture. A few years ago this resulted in one of the most socially impactful ventures-tissue culture banana, strawberry and pomegranate plantlets. Here again farmers from across the country have seen their incomes grow exponentially because of the phenomenal yield from these plants. Such thinking had elevated him to be considered a thought leader internationally.

And till end, Bhau remained a son of soil. The words of his son Anil Jain (and MD of JISL) reflect this very attribute: "My father was always clear right from the beginning. Branch office in New York but headquarters in Jalgaon." RIP Bhau! 🙏