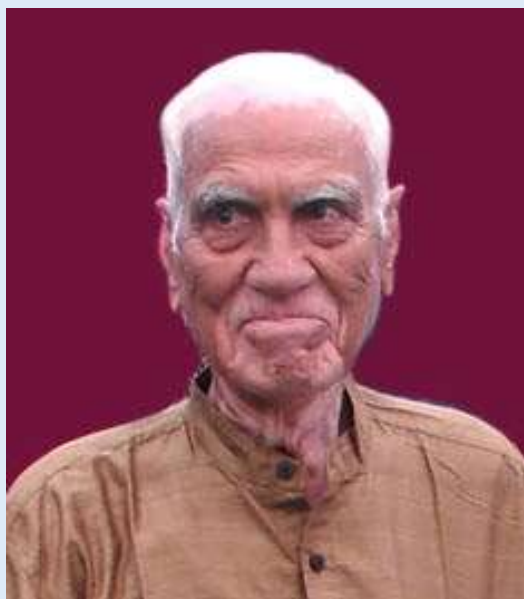


Air Vice Marshall Surendra Sahni



December 10, 1926 – May 20, 2018

Air Vice Marshall Surendra Sahni, an epitome of perseverance and wisdom, has been an inspiration to all of us at the Development Alternatives Group and to a multitude of those who came in contact with him on a professional and personal basis. He was the founder of the Bundelkhand Programme of the Development Alternatives Group. He worked extensively on rejuvenation of degraded lands, and pioneered one of the first integrated watershed management initiatives of India, in the semi-arid and poverty stricken Central Indian Region. It was his immense passion, perseverance and knowledge that saw the degraded land come back to life and lives of thousands of farmers improve.

Born on 10th December 1926, at Jhansi, AVM. S. Sahni did his graduation from Banaras Hindu University in 1947, and joined the Flying Branch of the Indian Air Force the same year. After a distinguished flying service with the Indian Air Force, he was deputed as the Director of Agriculture Aviation to the Ministry of Agriculture from June 1975 to June 1980. Having served there for five years, he took premature retirement in December 1981 to devote himself wholeheartedly to rural development. He joined Development Alternatives in January 1986 and established the Bundelkhand Centre at Jhansi. The first project he undertook was in 1987 to green two denuded hillocks measuring approx. 238 acres on either side of Datia town, which he developed into good pasture lands. The second project undertaken was involved in greening the Semai and Sindhvani villages of Datia. Some other predominant works undertaken by him involved soil and moisture conservation, enrichment of soils by tropical legumes, propagating neem cultivation and fodder for livestock support. He was instrumental in the construction of over 100 small and medium check dams on the *nalas* & streams, bringing water to the parched villages of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. He is fondly remembered as *Chacha Sahni* by his Air Force and DA colleagues.