

**Opening Address by Dr. G. Várallyay:**

Distinguished Delegates, Respected Participants of the Hungaro—Indian Seminar on Salt Affected Soils, dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Research Institute for Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, I wish to welcome:

- the official delegation of specialists on salt affected soils from India:
- Prof. DR. J. S. P. YADAV
- Prof. DR. N. T. SINGH
- Prof. DR. K. BALAKRISHNA RAO
- DR. D. N. SHARMA;
- our guest-scientists from India, working in our Institute:
- DR. I. K. GIRDHAR
- DR. A. K. BHATTACHARYYA;
- the Hungarian delegates of the Seminar;
- the officials of the Ministry of Culture and Education, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Ministry of Agriculture and Food;
- all guests, colleagues.

It is a great honour for our Institute that we may be the host of this Seminar.

I do not wish to emphasize the significance of the Seminar, because it was mentioned by the previous speakers, but I would like to stress some points at the beginning of the meeting:

- A characteristic fact of our time is that in spite of the “expanding world” theory in philosophy, the distances between countries and nations decrease;
- In India and Hungary the more efficient utilization of natural resources and ecological potential (solar energy, water-, soil- and biological resources) is a key problem.

I feel that the following statements are valid for both countries:

— The final aim of agriculture and forestry is the production of good quality and maximum quantity yields to satisfy the demand of the growing population, without any harmful side-effect of the production, e. g. without any unfavourable, human-induced change (which — if they occur — are almost irreversible in many cases, and even if their rectification is possible, its cost may be prohibitive) in the well balanced equilibrium state of the biosphere. Important aspects within this broad spectrum are the amelioration and agricultural utilization of salt affected soils and the prevention of further salinization and alkalization processes.

— In spite of the differences between the two countries in climate, geological structure and evolution, hydrographical and hydrological conditions, vege-

tation and land use, there are many similarities between Indian and Hungarian salt affected soils, in their formation, properties and consequently in problems of their agricultural management, irrigation and amelioration. There is a strong interrelation in both countries between salinization and alkalization on the one hand, and hydrogeological, hydrological conditions on the other hand, and due to the extension of irrigation, the hazard of further secondary salinization and alkalization is likely to increase.

In both countries, just as in other huge areas of the world, one of the key issues of agricultural development ensuring increased food production is increased water use efficiency: the best possible utilization of rain water and the extension of irrigation with more moderate water requirements.

Our joint effort in attacking common problems transformed the contacts of colleagues into those of friends. In the meantime, our official contacts, too, developed, and became more comprehensive. Young Indian specialists came to our Institute for longer periods and for obtaining a scientific degree. In 1973, the first international Post-Graduate Course was organized in our country on the management and utilization of salt affected soils with four participants from India. Five of the Institute's staff members participated in the Indo-Hungarian Seminar on "Management of Salt Affected Soils" held in February 1977 at the Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal. A four-member-delegation participated in the Symposium on Salt Affected Soils held in Karnal in 1980. Mutual study trips became regular. The present Seminar is a mile-stone on this way.

On behalf of the host Institute, I wish all the participants successful work, high-level scientific discussions and a thorough exchange of experiences furthering the well-organized coordination of future researches on salt affected soils, the better, more economic amelioration and agricultural utilization of salt affected lands, as well as the prevention of harmful soil processes due to secondary salinization and alkalization. I sincerely hope that these will be the main scientific results of the Seminar.

I hope that our Indian guests will get an impression of the activities of Hungarian soil scientists, agricultural chemists and soil microbiologists, and will see how the scientific results are utilized in agricultural practice. I also hope that you will feel at home and get a glimpse of Hungary, of the life of Hungarians in the cities and in the villages as well. May your stay here be as useful and pleasant as ours was in your beautiful country.

Thank you.