British Journal of Nutrition

cambridge.org/bjn

Obituary

Cite this article: Levy L, Prentice A, and Macdonald I (2026). Remembering Sheela Reddy. *British Journal of Nutrition*, page 1 of 2. doi: 10.1017/S0007114526108800

Received: 23 September 2026 UTC
Revised: 23 September 2026 UTC
Accepted: 23 September 2026 UTC

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Remembering Sheela Reddy

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Sheela Reddy, an expert in nutrition policy and effective promoter of nutrition science in the UK, died on 1 August 2026 after a period of ill health.

Sheela graduated in 1973 from the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, Hyderabad, and was awarded Master's degrees from Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University (1975) and Queen Elizabeth College, University of London (1985), followed by a PhD from King's College London (1991). Following post-doctoral research and teaching at King's College, University of London, Sheela became the Principal Nutritionist at Leatherhead Food Research Association in 1994. Sheela will be remembered as the lead within the Department of Health (DH) for Nutrition from 1998 to 2012 but contributed more widely to national and international policy through work with a range of organisations including the WHO, CODEX, EU bodies and professional groups across the UK. In this role, Sheela was a strong advocate for evidence-based advice on nutrition to ministers, central and local government and those with a nutrition-related professional role, as well as the general public.

Sheela will be well known to all in the Nutrition Society of Great Britain and Ireland (NS) who were members in the years before her retirement. She was a regular attendee at Society meetings and symposia and served as an observer at the NS Council. Sheela provided advice and guidance to the NS Council, including on the Society's efforts at that time to formalise the profession of nutrition in the UK. Through her many contacts elsewhere, she supported high-level consensus meetings between NS and other national bodies with an interest in nutrition research and practice. These meetings ultimately led to the evolution of the Society's UK Voluntary Register of Nutrition and the foundation of the Association for Nutrition as we know them today. Sheela was appointed an Honorary Founding Fellow of the Association for Nutrition and served as an Association for Nutrition Council member and Trustee from 2009 to 2012.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114526108800 Published online by Cambridge University Press

All Society members will have benefited from the legacy that Sheela leaves behind from her roles within DH to promote evidence-based nutrition. Sheela led the secretariat for the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy and the establishment of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition, which took over from Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy in 2001. She also led the secretariat for Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition until her retirement, contributing to the full range of Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition reports and position statements, including but not least those on maternal and child nutrition, which was her passion.

In addition, Sheela was a long-standing member of the project board that steered the UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey and related surveys, such as those of infants and young children and of people in low-income households. Sheela also represented DH among the funders of UK nutrition research, attending prioritisation workshops and strategy reviews. Many NS members and readers of its journals will have used National Diet and Nutrition Survey data in their research and received project funding in key areas of nutrition that Sheela will have championed.

Following her retirement, Sheela continued her active involvement in Nutrition Policy, contributing to teaching at King's College, University of London, while advising internationally, including in India, where she demonstrated a fierce commitment to her friends and family.

Sheela will be fondly remembered by her colleagues and friends in the NS as well as those within the government nutrition teams across the UK, members of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition and Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition and the Association for Nutrition.

Sheela is survived by her beloved son, Vasisht Pingle, and her mother, Vedavati Devi.

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