Obituary

Professor Shridhar C. Gupte

(1933-2015)

Professor Shridhar Chandrashekhar Gupte, the founder life member of the Indian Institute of Geographers (IIG), the President of IIG from 1982 to 1986, the Editor of the Transaction of the IIG from 1986-1989, and the former Vice-Chancellor of University of Pune passed away at the age of 82 on 11 March 2015.

Dr. S. C. Gupte was born in Mumbai on 4th February 1933. In his early childhood he lived at Tilaknagar, a small settlement in Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra. He studied in the local school up to the seventh standard. Later in 1945, when his father joined the Agriculture Department, he completed his high-school education from N.M.V. High-School in Pune. After completing his Intermediate Science from Fergusson College, he joined the Nowrosjee Wadia College for completing his B.Sc. with Mathematics, Physics and Geography. Thereafter, he completed M. Sc. in 1957 from the Department of Geography at the University of Poona (Pune).

Prof. Gupte was a scout from 1945-1950 and Assistant Scout Master from 1950-1954. He also participated in the liberation of Dadra, Nagar-Haweli Enclave from Portuguese rule in August 1954. For this, the ‘Freedom Fighter Samman’ was awarded to him by the Government of India in 2001.

Dr. Gupte joined the Department of Geography, University of Poona (Pune) as Lecturer in 1957. He completed his Ph.D. in 1975 and become Professor in 1979. He was the Head of the Department of Geography from 1984 to 1989.

Prof. Gupte was instrumental in establishing inter-disciplinary culture on the Pune University campus. He actively participated in the preparation and implementation of schemes for multi-disciplinary schools. It was only because of his deep interest in inter-disciplinary studies
that the School of Environmental Science was established on the campus in 1979. He was the Coordinator of the School of Environmental Science for a decade (1979 to 1989). Under his leadership, a number of research projects were completed and a number of international collaboration programs were developed between the University of Pune and universities abroad, such as Bremen (Germany), Pennsylvania State University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University (all from USA) and University of Calgary (Canada). He was a Visiting Professor at the Indian University of Pennsylvania, USA in 1983, 1986 and 1988-89.

Prof. Gupte was the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pune for two consecutive terms, from 1989 to 1995. Before that, apart from being a member of all the major bodies of the university (Board of Studies, Senate, Academic Council, Executive Council, etc.), he was also the Dean of Science Faculty between 1982 and 1985.

He made notable contributions during the tenure of Vice-Chancellorship. He was one of the key members of the committee constituted for redrafting the Maharashtra Universities Act (1994). Under his guidance and leadership, the university made rapid progress, and became financially sound. During his 6-year tenure as VC, Prof. Gupte developed several programs at the university. These include computerization of university administration, total computerization of examination work, campus computer networking, establishment of the International Centre, etc.

After his superannuation, Prof. Gupte was the President of the Deccan College Deemed University (from 1995-2000), the President of the Maharashtra Association of Cultivation of Science (MACS) and the Chairman of Institute Council for Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) from 2000 to 2008. Between 1995 and 1998, Prof. Gupte worked as the member of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). He was the Chairman of the U.G.C. Committee for review of course structure and syllabi for undergraduate and post-graduate level in Geography from 1996 to 1998.

His major subject areas of interest were Economic Geography, Political Geography, Quantitative Geography and Environmental Science. He co-authored two text books on Economic Geography. One of them was the model textbook published by NCERT, New Delhi in 1968.

With an impressive personality, excellent command over three languages (English, Marathi and Sanskrit), sharp memory and deep interest in teaching, Prof. Gupte was a devoted and skillful geography teacher and a great orator. His pedagogic ability as well as deep interest in educational, social and environmental issues are well known to all those who came in contact with him. He was approachable to everyone. Students, teachers and administrative staff from the city and the mofussil colleges freely turned to him for advice on their problems and even grievances. This wonderful teacher, administrator and human being will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by all his students, colleagues and friends for a long time.

Prof. Gupte is survived by his wife, Mrs. Sharayu Gupte and two sons, Anirudha and Nilkanth, who are settled in the USA.

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