



## Professor Ambubhai T. Desai

(1932–1993)

In the sudden and sad demise of Professor Ambubhai T. Desai, affectionately called Ambubhai by his friends and admirers, on 20th January, 1993, the geography fraternity in the country has lost a splendid teacher and a pioneer geographer who propagated geography teaching in north Gujarat. His sixty year span of active and dedicated life is the model of a University teacher. True to his temperament, Ambubhai was active till the last day of his life when he suffered the fatal cardiac arrest during one of his daily walks. He was just over sixty when he died, leaving behind his wife who is a librarian, a son who is an electronic Engineer and a college going daughter.

Born on October 23, 1932 at Panetha, a village in Broach district, Gujarat, Ambubhai studied at Baroda and took his M.Sc. (Geography) from M. S. University, in 1960. He worked as a Lecturer in S.N.D.T. University, Baroda, for a year and then joined the H.K. Arts College, Ahmedabad, as a Lecturer in 1961, the position he held for 27 years. Based in the state capital, Ambubhai's name soon became synonymous with geography, as he took lead and inspired his students and colleagues to improve the status of geography in Gujarat. He wrote several text books in Geography for secondary, higher secondary and degree level students. He has several research papers and articles to his credit.

Ambubhai rose to the position of Pro-Vice-

Chancellor and worked for sometime as the Acting Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University during 1986-92. Before this, he had also held various positions such as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and member of the Senate and Academic Council. As an editor of a monthly journal 'Drushti', he showed remarkable vision while discussing the problems of higher education. Besides being a scholar in his own right, he was an astute administrator and above all an inspiring teacher, very friendly to his students.

Simple living and decency in public life were Ambubhai's hallmark, and he always stood by what he believed to be morally right. A simple man, always wearing *khadi*, he had a firm belief in Gandhian ethics. Warm and affectionate to the core, he had the necessary leadership quality and many in the profession looked to him for guidance and support.

To Geography in Gujarat, Professor Desai's death is an irreparable loss, but in no less measure is it a loss to his friends, admirers, and generations of students he taught, who will miss him and ever remember him as much for his genteel and affectionate treatment as for his sincerity, honesty and ethical values which he cherished. The Institute of Indian Geographers of which he was a life-member mourns his death and pays its tribute to him.

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