

OBITUARY

Prabhakar Raghunath Karmarkar (1935-1995)

A tall, handsome, impressive figure with sharp features, high forehead, bright eyes, a permanently cheerful face, always talking loudly with full involvement in the topic he spoke about, that was Prof. P.R. Karmarkar, known to his friends as a geographer-sportsman. His deep interest in sports, particularly cricket and tennis, made his personality a truly all round one, liked and admired by everyone he came into contact with. His enthusiasm for life was infectious and he always brought joy to any gathering of colleagues and friends.

Born on 11th April 1935 in a scholarly family in Pune, Prof. Karmarkar had a special talent for Sanskrit, Economics and Geography. After graduating in 1957 with Geography and Sanskrit, he completed Master's programme in Geography and Economics from the University of Poona. He completed his Ph.D. thesis in Economic Geography in 1981 on "Agricultural Land Use of the Western Districts of Upland Maharashtra" under the supervision of Prof. V.S. Ganathan. He joined the faculty of the Department of Geography at Sir Parashurambhau College, Pune, in 1959 where he continued to teach the subject till 1983 when he joined the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (Science) as Chief Coordinator and Professor at the University of Poona. In the field of Geography his interest mainly centred on land use studies and political geography. He published a number of research papers

besides six books in Marathi for undergraduate students.

Prof. Karmarkar was actively associated with a number of academic bodies in the subject of Geography and Cartography at the national level in the capacity of life member or executive committee member. His association with the Institute of Indian Geographers, right from its inception in 1978-79, as life member and member of the Governing Council and especially as Secretary of the Institute from 1982 to 1985 has been appreciated by the members of the Institute. He was also associated with the National Association of Geographers, India (NAGI), Indian National Cartographic Association (INCA) and Association of Population Geographers of India. He worked on many committees and bodies related to the subject at the University of Poona. He was also a member of Faculty of Science as well as of the Senate of the University. His contribution to the organization of conferences as well as to Summer and Winter Schools is well known, particularly to geographers in western India.

Prof. Karmarkar's interest in sports, specially in cricket, was widely known. He was an active participant in the interuniversity and national level events during the fifties and later on he was associated with the administration of the game at the State and National levels as Secretary of the Maharashtra Cricket

Association and as a member of the Board of Control for Cricket in India. He was also known as an umpire and commentator of cricket matches. As a sports critic he wrote many articles on sports in newspapers and magazines. In recognition of his services and expertise, he was nominated as a Member of the Maharashtra State Sports Council in 1988.

Prof. Karmarkar had visited a number of universities in western countries and was specially associated with the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), U.S.A. where he was Visiting professor during several semesters from 1984 onwards. He also visited the University of East Anglia, Norwich, U.K., Moscow State University, Moscow, and a number of institutions in France, Belgium, Switzerland and The Netherlands. His academic interest was confined not only to the field of Geography but it also encompassed areas related to environment, water management

and various social activities. This is reflected in his active participation in the production of a number of video-cassette programmes, some of which were jointly produced by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and the University of Poona.

It is difficult to come across a person with such a wide spectrum of interests and organizational ability. The news of the sad and sudden demise of this geographer-sportsman on 22nd March 1995, only five weeks before he was due to retire from the University, came as a deep shock to all his friends and admirers from different walks of life in Pune and in the academic sphere at the state and national level. In his death we have lost an able and active supporter of the Institute of Indian Geographers, a sportsman and a fine human being with a positive attitude to life. He will always be fondly remembered by his colleagues, students and numerous friends.

S. C. Gupte