



Professor K. R. Dikshit

(1st October 1927 – 1st August 2025)

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops – Henry Adams

The international geographical community mourns the passing of an intellectual colossus and is deeply saddened by the passing of Professor Kamal Rampreet Dikshit, affectionately revered across the subcontinent as Prof. K. R. Dikshit who left us on August 1, 2025, leaving behind an indelible and foundational legacy that shaped the trajectory of modern Indian geography. Born on October 1, 1927, in the quiet non-descript village of Kalijpur, Ghazipur district, Uttar Pradesh, Prof. Dikshit's life was a testament to lifelong dedication, intellectual curiosity, and transformative leadership in academia. Prof. Dikshit was not only an inspiring educator and an intellectual ideal but also a passionate advocate for the advancement of geographic studies in India. Through his visionary leadership, he transformed the academic landscape, influencing generations

of students and scholars by encouraging critical inquiry.

Professor Dikshit's academic odyssey was marked by an unyielding pursuit of excellence across continents. His formal education laid a strong foundation: a B.A. from Agra University in 1950, an M.A. in Geography from Banaras Hindu University in 1954, a Ph.D. in urban geography from the University of Pune in 1961, and the prestigious D.Litt. from the Sorbonne, University of Paris, in 1965. These achievements reflected his commitment to rigorous scholarship and his growing expertise in geomorphology and regional studies.

His career began with characteristic humility as a high school teacher in Ghazipur (1949–1952). He transitioned to higher education in 1956 as a Lecturer at Dayanand

College, Solapur. He later taught at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda before joining the University of Pune in 1965, where he served as Professor until his retirement in 1987. As a global ambassador of Indian geographical thought, his insights were sought-after nationwide and internationally. Post retirement, he was invited to lecture at Panjab University (Chandigarh), North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Shillong, Universität Karlsruhe in Germany, and Technische Hochschule Darmstadt. His international engagements enriched his perspective and allowed him to foster cross-cultural academic dialogue.

A true institution builder, Prof. Dikshit founded the Institute of Indian Geographers (IIG) in Pune in 1979 and served as its first President. He provided dynamic leadership to several other premier bodies, including as President of the Indian Institute of Geomorphology in 1987, the Society for Prehistoric and Quaternary Studies in 2000, and the National Association of Geographers, India (NAGI). For twenty years, he edited the *Transactions of the Institute of Indian Geographers*, guiding it to become a Scopus-indexed journal of international standing. He also served on numerous editorial boards, shaping scholarly conversations in geography for decades.

Prof. Dikshit's research transcended narrow disciplinary boundaries and was both wide-ranging and deeply insightful. Professor Dikshit's bibliography stands as an analytical map of the subcontinent's diverse terrains. His major works include *Geography of Gujarat, Maharashtra in Maps; Environment, Forest Ecology and Man in the Western Ghats: The Case of Mahabaleshwar Plateau*, and *North-East India: Region, People and Economy*. He co-edited a key volume on *India's*

Geomorphological Diversity. Even at an advanced age, he demonstrated exceptional productivity, co-authoring with Jutta K. Dikshit the two-volume series *Regional Geography of Pakistan: A Study in Spatial Relations* and *Land, People and Economy of Pakistan: A Geographic Perspective*, published by Routledge in 2025.

In his twilight years, Professor Dikshit turned his critical lens inward, evaluating the philosophy and pedagogy of geography in India. He was a staunch advocate for decolonizing the discipline, seeking out the indigenous roots of Indian space and landscape analysis through works like *The Roots of Indian Geography* and *A Changing Western Perspective on Geography and the Indian Context*.

As an influential voice on national syllabus framing committees, his sharp critiques—including *Why We Teach What We Teach in Geography at Indian Universities*, *Reorienting Geography at the University Level*, and *Geography at Indian Universities*—demanded that curriculum align with the socio-spatial, environmental, and ecological realities of contemporary India. His vision for members of national-level syllabus framing committees emphasized the importance of creating a more relevant and impactful geography education that resonates with the realities faced in India today.

In recognition of his monumental contributions, he received several high honours, including the *Bhoogol Ratna* Award from NAGI on December 26, 2016, the inaugural Prof. R. P. Misra Memorial Award for Lifetime Achievement in Regional Development and Planning, and the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Award from the National Geographical Society of India in 2021.

To generations of scholars, Prof. Dikshit was the ultimate mentor. He stripped geography of ivory-tower abstractions, anchoring it firmly in rigorous fieldwork and meticulous empirical observation. Under his magisterial guidance, students explored a vast, holistic canvas of geography. Generations of students and young scholars benefited from his clarity of expression, emphasis on fieldwork and careful observation, intellectual humility, and genuine encouragement. He guided research across diverse domains — settlement geography, urban studies, forest ecology, geomorphology, regional planning, and cartographic thought — always stressing the importance of linking geographical knowledge to real-world issues of social justice, environmental sustainability, and balanced regional development.

His vision extended to strengthening geography as a discipline in Indian universities. Through his writings and participation in national syllabus committees, he consistently advocated for more relevant, context-sensitive, and rigorous geography education that could address India's unique challenges.

Prof. K. R. Dikshit was more than just an esteemed scholar; he exemplified the essence of knowledge and served as an inspiration for many in the field of geography. Throughout his career, Prof. Dikshit dedicated himself to a thorough and rigorous study of geography, making a profound impact on many aspiring geographers and enthusiasts. His contributions to Indian geography are not just significant; they are foundational in shaping the perspectives and practices of future scholars. With his passing, we have lost not only a brilliant scholar and the architect of visionary educational initiatives

but also a leader who was deeply humane and principled.

With his departure, Indian geography has lost one of its most respected and complete scholars — a man who not only produced knowledge but also built enduring institutions and inspired countless minds. His legacy lives on in the departments he helped strengthen, the journals he shaped, the students who carry forward his teachings, and the scholarly works that continue to guide researchers.

With the passing of Professor K. R. Dikshit, we have lost the complete geographer: a principled leader, a brilliant mind, and a deeply humane mentor. His lifetime commitment to integrating spatial science with social justice, ecological sustainability, and regional equity remains a guiding light for the future.

The entire geographical fraternity extends its heartfelt condolences to his family, especially his wife Jutta K. Dikshit, and all those whose lives he touched. Prof. Dikshit's remarkable journey, marked by humility, dedication, and excellence, will continue to serve as a beacon for future generations of geographers in India and abroad.

Though his voice is silent, his influence continues to affect eternity.

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