



Professor Arabinda Biswas
(1943–2001)

Born on 28 March 1943, **Professor Arabinda Biswas**, the third son of Late Rev. Amarnath Biswas and Late Mrs. Kananbala Biswas, passed away on 26 October 2001. His wife, Gita, departed a year before him.

After obtaining Masters degree in Geography from the University of Calcutta in 1964, Professor Biswas started his career in 1965 at the Chandernagore College as Lecturer in Geography. Subsequently he taught at the Presidency College, Kolkata (1968-1970), and, in two stints, at the University of Burdwan (1970-1973 and 1982-1998). He received his PhD degree from the same University in 1978. Between 1973 and 1982, he was a Fellow in the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata, and the Deputy Director of the Centre for Regional Ecological and Science Studies in Development Alternatives, Kolkata. In 1987, he established the Indian Geographical Foundation, Kolkata. At the time of his death, Professor Biswas was in the chair of the Head of the Department of Geography, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

Through his firm grip on various dimensions of geography, Professor Biswas had carved out a niche for himself, with a distinct identity of his own. He could delve into any aspect of geography with spontaneous ease. Because of this, it is difficult to identify his area of specialisation. He was gifted with an extraordinary sense

of perception, power of reasoning and articulation. This made possible for him to hypothesise almost any isolated phenomenon within the broader perspective of a generalised system. His acquaintances marvel at the ability with which he could perceive and analyse the complexities of man-nature relationship.

Professor Biswas wrote prolifically on varied themes in many national and international publications. Contemporary issues like agriculture and basin ecology, wetland reclamation, river impoundment, floods and their impact on land and people attracted his attention and he contributed significantly to these topics. Very recently he was working on the ecological importance of forests, gender issues in environment and food and energy systems.

Professor Biswas – or ‘Arabinda da’, as he was known to his colleagues and pupils – had an outwardly bohemian character. Yet he was affable and those who were close to him know how sensitive, generous and caring he was as a person. A renowned educator, he was always ready to support whoever approached him for help and guidance. He was an eloquent speaker and an ardent lover of fine arts. He himself was a gifted poet, singer and painter.

Professor Biswas is survived by his only daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. He will forever be remembered by his innumerable friends, students and colleagues.

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