

Obituries



Prof. S.R. Basu
1942-2010

Indian Geography was truly blessed to have a scholar academician of Prof. S. Basu's caliber. His unexpected demise has created an irreplaceable and irrevocable vacuum not only in the field of Geography, but in the lives of so many who were fortunate enough to be blessed by his association. Personally, for me the loss has been immense and I cannot express in mere words the sense of absolute bereavement and grief that I feel when I sit here to write down a few words of the memories of a person from whom I learnt so much.....

Yes, Subash Da- my Guide, my friend and my philosopher but above all my DADA: with whom I have shared such invaluable memories ever since the cool winter evening of December 1980 when I first met him at Ballygunge Science College, Kolkata. To me, Subash Da was not only an extraordinary academician but a guide, who with his absolute dedication, sincerity and service to education, taught us. I recall the time we spent in the harsh environment of Zaskar –Siachen. His inspiration and caring touch gave me the strength to successfully complete the strenuous mission. Prof.

S.R. Basu has been a pioneering faculty of the Department of Geography and Applied Geography, North Bengal University and has had an undeniable and significant contribution in laying its strong foundation- for which, I will always be indebted to him. In the Department – he has always been an unfailing source of wisdom, inspiration and encouragement.

Born in Khulna District of the undivided Bengal on December 7, 1942, he studied in Presidency College, Calcutta, at the undergraduate level and obtained his Master's degree in Geography from the University of Calcutta in 1965. He was awarded his Ph. D. degree from the University of Calcutta in 1974 for his pioneering research work on "*The decay and associated problems of river dynamics of the Bhagirathi Valley*" under the able guidance of Prof. N.R. Kar. He received the D. Litt. degree in 2007 from the University of Calcutta for his gigantic work on "*landslides in Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalayas*".

Prof. Basu started his teaching career as a lecturer in Geography in Presidency College, Calcutta in 1968. He left the College to

join the Department of Geography, University of Calcutta in 1974. In 1977 he joined the Department of Geography, North Bengal University as a Reader where he became the Head of the Department during 1993-1995. He retired from the said post in December, 2007. After his retirement he was given the charge of Head to start the Department of Geography in Rabindra Bharati University. He received the University Gants Commission Emeritus Fellowship in 2009.

Professor Basu's contribution to geomorphology in India may be considered to belong to at least three phases of study. In the first phase, most of his works were done in the field of river geomorphology, particularly on alluvial channel. In 1977, he joined the University of North Bengal, where he carried out intensive studies on piedmont geomorphology, particularly on alluvial fans. Subsequently, his interest turned towards the fragile slopes of the Darjiling Himalayas. In this phase, his sustained involvement with process geomorphology found culmination in a very important and prospective field of research in present-day geomorphology, i.e. Land-slide studies.

Prof. Basu is well known for his pioneering work in the field of river dynamics of Bhagirathi and Hugli, landslides in Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalayas, groundwater hydrology, Arsenic and other environmental issues. In his credit Prof. Basu published more than 65 research articles, 14 books and monographs and 8 projects. **He supervised 19 Ph. D. thesis at the universities of North Bengal and Calcutta.** He was one of the founder members of the Indian Institute of Geomorphologists (IGI), elected as the President of the Institute (IGI) for the year 1998-1999 and as the associate Editor of the Indian Journal of Geomorphology for the period 2000-2005. He was elected as the Honorary Secretary of the Geographical Society of India for several consecutive terms since 2004 and served the Society in the same post till the end of his life.

I share the inexpressible sorrow and loss of his bereaved family and extend my heartfelt condolence to all family members. Subash Da will always live on in my memories: always revered, always loved and cherished forever.

May his soul rest in Peace.

Professor Subir Sarkar
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