



Professor Sudepta Adhikari

(09. 09.1949 - 29.02.2020)

The very unexpected, sudden and sad demise of the renowned Prof. Sudepta Adhikari on 29.02.2020 came a great loss for Indian Geography. He served Patna University as a teacher and a scholar for almost 45 years. Besides, he also took many administrative responsibilities for the betterment of the University including as Department Head (2006-09), Dean of the Faculty of Social Science (2010-12), Pro Vice-Chancellor (2013-14) and Vice-Chancellor (2011).

Although Prof. Adhikari's sincere interest and true love was political Geography, particularly in Critical Geopolitics and contemporary problems of South Asia's Political Geography. His works reflect a great degree of versatility covering a large range of interest and contribution to numerous fields of interest including but not confined to Geographical Thought, Regional Planning

and Social Geography with a particular interest in the area of the geography of Social Well-Being, Quality of life, Social Security, Women Empowerment and Gender Equity. He worked tirelessly to create a separate identity for Political Geography as an independent branch of Indian Geography at a time when this branch was facing near extinction from most departments of geography. He wrote more than 50 research papers relating to Political Geography and Geopolitics only which were published in reputed national and international journals and/or as book chapters. He enriched the field of Political geography by writing two very well-received books and a monograph namely, Political Geography (1996), Political Geography of India: A Contemporary Perspective (2008) and Perspective of Indian Geopolitics (2017) respectively. His first book named Fundamental of Geographical

Thought (1992) was a landmark contribution to Indian Geographical thought for which he acquired fame among the geographical fraternity in India and abroad. He also wrote a book on Social Geography named Social Geography: A Spatial Analysis, but did not survive to see the printed copy which is being published from Orient Black Swan.

Professor Sudepta Adhikari was born on September 9, 1949, in Patna. His father Late Baidyanath Adhikari was a teacher by profession and his mother Late Binapani Adhikari was a virtuous lady who guided and educated him to be a good and conscientious human being. He completed his early education at Ram Mohan Seminary School in Patna and passed the pre-university examination in 1965. As a student, he was a self-motivated and dedicated learner. He completed his graduation with Geography honours and post-graduation in 1966 and 1970 respectively and was awarded a gold medal from Patna University for holding the first position in the university examination. He got a National merit scholarship from University Grants Commission, New Delhi (1968-1970). He was awarded scholarship to pursue higher studies in Russia twice but could not avail of these opportunities.

He joined Patna University as a lecturer in Geography in 1971. He served Patna women's college from 1974 to 1980. In the meantime, he qualified for Indian Railway Traffic Service in 1976. He also cracked the IAS examination twice but opted for Indian Police Services and went to National Police Academy, Hyderabad for training in 1977. Despite getting such coveted jobs he ultimately decided to stay at Patna and return to academics. Thereafter, in 1980 he obtained a Ph.D. degree under the supervision of

Prof. Dr. L.N. Ram on the topic 'India's Major Territorial Disputes: A Politico-Geographical Analysis'. He spent most of his working period at B.N. College, Patna (1980-2006). He became Professor in 1987 and served Patna University from 2006 to 2014 as a Professor. He was an excellent teacher, a good speaker and more importantly a very good listener. He was generous with his time and was always ready to listen to the problems of his students. He regularly taught Political Geography, Geographical Thought, Regional Planning and Research Methodology. His classes were immensely popular because of his lucid style of teaching and depth of knowledge. He guided 21 Ph.D. students mostly relating to political geography and social geography. Apart from that he also helped many scholars by solving their queries with great patience and care.

Other than Patna University he also taught at Mizoram Central University (1997, 2000), M.S. University Baroda (2009), North Bengal University (2011) and Burdwan University (2015) as a visiting Professor. He delivered many memorial lectures among which most recent was Md. Taher Memorial lecture (2019) on Ethnicity and Politics of Identity in North East India, at Guwahati University. Besides, he also delivered Prof. V. A. Narain Memorial lecture on 'Geopolitik (Geopolitics), Critical Geopolitics and Post-Modern Geopolitics at Patna University; Prof. R.N. Dubey Memorial lectures (2016) at Allahabad University; Prof. Satyesh Chakraborty Memorial lecture (2015) on Conceptualizing Critical Geopolitics and the image of Kashmir as Represented at Department of Geography, University of Burdwan. He also delivered lectures in many international seminars held in countries like

the USA (Washington), Netherland, Israel, South Korea, UK, South Africa, France, Japan, Tunisia and Bangladesh.

He was the Executive member, National Association of Geographers, India, 1991-92, Vice President, National Association of Geographers, India (Eastern Region, 2007-08) and President, Association of Geographers, Bihar and Jharkhand, Patna, 2014-16. He received Brajkishore Samman for his contribution to Social Sciences (Geography) from Brajkishore Smarak Pratistan, Bihar Vidyapith Campus, Patna, 2016 and Bhugal Bhushan Award from The Deccan Geographical Society, Pune in 2016.

He was very down to earth and had the unique ability to touch the heart of people within seconds. Among his friends and colleagues, he was a true gentleman, always

full of charm, humour, and positivity. He was highly disciplined in his daily life but at the same time, he knew how to enjoy and cherish each moment. In his spare time, he loved listening to music, gardening, reading children's stories, travelling or simply having a good conversation. In his demise, Indian geography has lost a true scholar and a great human being.

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