

A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR DEBESH CHANDRA CHAKRABORTY



Debesh Chandra Chakraborty (1943-2014)

With profound sadness and deep regret we share the news of the passing away of the renowned academician and internationally acclaimed economist Professor Debesh Chandra Chakraborty in Calcutta. Born in Barisal (currently in Bangladesh) in undivided Bengal on 20th June, 1943, the professor was beckoned by the heavens on 22nd May 2014.

Early on in his career, Professor Chakraborty served as Research Assistant under Professor Ambika Ghosh in various research projects at Jadavpur University at Calcutta, India, from 1965 to 1971. Thereafter he went on to complete his doctoral thesis in economics in 1973 with Professor Ambika Ghosh from the same university. His teaching career took off as Lecturer in Economics at Jadavpur University in 1971. Subsequently he was Reader and finally took up the position of Professor during 1984 to 2003 at the same premier institution. From 1977 to 1979 Professor Chakraborty took up post-doctoral research at New York University with Nobel Laureate Professor W.W. Leontief and his core group of researchers, a distinction which shaped him into one of the pioneers and forerunners of multi-sector quantitative research in Applied Economics and Input-Output modelling in India.

He served Jadavpur University in various capacities such as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Member of Executive Council as also the Court of the University, besides being Head of the Department and Co-ordinator of the Centre for Regional Studies and Centre for Marxian Studies.

His areas of interest were primarily focused on Quantitative Macroeconomic Modelling, Input-Output Analysis, Economics of Energy and Environment, International Trade, Economics of Information Technology, Regional Economics, Population and Health Economics, and Economics of SAARC and ASEAN countries.

Professor Chakraborty was attached as fellow or visiting-fellow at various universities and institutions such as United Nation-ESCAP in Bangkok, New York University in the USA, Tilburg University and MERIT-Maastricht University in the Netherlands, East West Centre at University of

Hawaii, Korea Institute of Population and Family Planning in South Korea, University of New Castle in U.K., Oulu University of Finland, and the Department of Agricultural Economics, McGill University, Canada.

He has co-authored several books and leaves behind more than a hundred publications in various peer reviewed journals. He contributed extensively to the analysis of multi-sectoral models and was one of the early researchers in that field in India. His works have been widely cited, setting the trend for many young researchers working in that field. Always on the lookout for research on fundamental and emerging issues, Professor Chakraborty continued his engagement in supervising PhD. students and directed large research projects as well even after his retirement; twenty three scholars earned their doctoral degrees under his supervision. During 2007-2013, Professor Chakraborty became increasingly interested in Canadian economic policy particularly agriculture, health and trade. He had a deep understanding of the issues faced by Canada, where he spent a fair amount of his time. He completed several important works on the Canadian economy for the Shastri-Indo Canadian Institute and other funding agencies in Canada.

Professor Chakraborty was an active life member of The Indian Econometric Society and Input-Output Research Association, India. His involvements as a founder member of the International Input-Output Association over the years have richly contributed to maintaining a great deal of interest for Input-Output Analysis in India.

Professor Chakraborty will be remembered for developing the emerging areas of research with special focus on Application of Input-Output framework, Global CGE model and Applied Quantitative techniques in Economics. He was, without any doubt, one of the most renowned and most thoughtful academicians in the field of Input-Output Economics. Generous with his time, the professor showed deep interest in young researchers and new methods, and maintained an important network with renowned scholars around the world.

Even as he fought with cancer since April, he urged his students to pursue their respective research works and encouraged discussions on the same. Having meticulously proof-read his final work titled 'Water Pollution and Abatement Policy in India- A Study from an Economic Perspective', Professor Chakraborty however did not wait to see the printed volume published by Springer.

Professor Chakraborty was one of those rare personalities who could blend academics with issues of our daily life and develop a vision for the societal progress at large. A keen observer with a sharp intellect and empathy for the common man, he befriended people from all walks of life. Above all, he was a wonderful human being always giving his best to his students, friends and colleagues. We will forever remember a man with such deep commitment to academics and society and love for equality and balance.

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