

Shanti Lal Kayastha (1924–2018)

Prof. Shanti Lal Kayastha, who rendered long, exemplary and selfless service throughout his illustrious career of nearly 40 years, in the development and coordination of geography discipline in the country, passed away in Varanasi on 6 January 2018. He was born on 30 March 1924 and had his early education at the famous Government College, Lahore, and later at Aligarh Muslim University. In 1948, he joined Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi as lecturer. He was the first Indian geographer to undertake the study of river basin as a viable unit for integrated resource development and planning. His remarkable work published in *The Himalayan Beas Basin: A Study in Habitat, Economy and Society*, is a significant milestone in mountain ecology and resource management.

Kayastha helped in the transformation of a traditionally strong Department of Geography at BHU, into one of India's best by initiating inter-disciplinary environmental studies. As Head of the above-mentioned Department, he pioneered national forest, water and environmental policy-oriented studies in the country, thus making BHU more prominent with respect to sustainable development through environmental studies. As founder editor of the *National Geographical Journal of India*, he nurtured it for the dissemination of geographical knowl-

edge in the country. He was a full member of the International Geographical Union (IGU) Commission on Environmental Problems. His significant contributions during the IGU Conferences received recognition and opened new avenues for Indian geography and geographers.



Kayastha was recipient of the prestigious Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Medal. He served as the UGC National Lecturer; Senior Fellow of ICSSR; President of the Geology and Geography Section of the Indian Science Congress; Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organization (NAT&MO), Kolkata; President of National Association of

Geographers of India (NAGI), Hyderabad; Member-Secretary of the National Committee for IGU of Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi, and President of the National Geographical Society of India.

Kayastha was an outstanding scholar, teacher and administrator. He was soft-spoken, but firm on issues affecting the Indian societal milieu. Apart from being an eminent scholar, a great educator, a man of vision, scientific integrity, effective leadership quality and tremendous energy, he had a sensitive and warm approach to people and took personal and keen interest in his students' work and welfare. He was a role model for many of us – his students, admirers and well-wishers. He had a passion for photography and was an accomplished swimmer.

With his passing away, the geographers' community has lost a beloved family member but his legacy and contribution to human geoscience will live forever. Kayastha is survived by two sons and four grandchildren.

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