

A TRIBUTE



Professor Arup Ghoshal (April 25 1945 - July 22 2016)

Professor Arup Ghoshal, Honorary Secretary of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society (IPS) passed away on the 22nd of July, 2016 in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) following a brief illness.

Graduating from the Applied Psychology Department of Calcutta University in 1970, he joined the same department as a teaching faculty member in 1973 to which he was attached till his retirement in 2005, serving thirty two long years.

During these 32 years he has many credits to his name:

- He was the main inspiration behind starting the Clinical specialty in the department as it is today. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the status psychology is enjoying today in our state is due to the lion share of effort put in by Prof. Ghoshal.
- The psychological assessment and psychotherapy unit, known as the 'Service Programme Unit' (SPU) of the department was in a sickly state. He took charge of the same from 1983 giving it a robust shape and converting it into a centre of excellence where patients, both children and adult, were referred by different hospitals and psychiatrists from far and wide. Service was provided at a very nominal amount. His understanding of psychological tests, particularly, projective tests, was profound to the extent that his reports had a special mark of being written by him. He became the Head of SPU till his retirement.
- He was an excellent teacher. Under his tutelage many students became psychologists, who are well established today.

- Numerous PhD students received their doctorates under his able guidance.
- For ten years he also taught students of Psychiatry, DPM and MD in the department.
- Forming a registered association named, 'Eastern Zonal Psychological Association' for the first time in our state in 2002.

After joining psychology he became deeply interested in psychoanalysis, starting his personal analysis as part of psychoanalytic training under Dr. T. K. Chatterjee from 1970 in the classical Freudian method (which is prevalent even now). He became a member of the Society soon thereafter. He was a practicing and trainee analyst for a long period of time.

He took charge as the Secretary from 2005. At this time also IPS, rather psychoanalysis in general, was going through a crisis of sort. Starting with only four students and total apathy for psychoanalysis, young students finding other modes of psychotherapy like CBT, more attractive, his able guidance managed to make a 360 degree turn around where there are a hundred and four students now! More are waiting to join.

Although being firmly Freudian, he was greatly influenced by the work of Erik Erikson and Carl Rogers. Besides other things, he preferred to use the term '*client*' instead of '*patient*' as he felt that the word '*patient*', adds to the stigma already associated with individuals suffering from some kind of psychological distress. He believed in unconditional acceptance of a client and also felt that the influence of social factors had to be considered. He was very confident in dealing with individuals suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder.

The IPS is the oldest Society in Asia, at 96 years old. He was planning the centenary celebration with an international conference which was supposed to be fitting for such an occasion and our Society.

After joining as Secretary at the age of 60 years, that too after his retirement, he devoted not only his best but extra effort to put IPS on the world map, working hard and for long hours. He invited many renowned psychoanalysts to give lectures or take workshops from all over the world and across India during his tenure. He was invited by IPA to participate in a panel discussion at its 48th Congress in Prague, 2013. He was planning many expansions, awareness and outreach programs not only in Kolkata but in other states of India and also in some of the neighbouring countries! Since he was a trainee analyst, he had many students taking training in psychoanalysis besides numerous clients.

On a more personal note, he was an individual of cultured and refined taste, enjoying the finer nuances of life be it good music to having very good tea in a fine china cup. He was always well groomed and dressed for the occasion. He was widely read both in English and Bengali literature. Movies were another of his hobbies, often giving examples from them to clarify a point while teaching. Travel was his passion, going away on a trip every few weeks.

He was a very good human being, always helping others, even if that meant going against the tide he never hesitated. He was a living example of empathy and acceptance. He was called from far and wide to give lectures which were well attended as he infused his lectures with lively examples and humour. Despite his fame and position till the end he remained modest and humble. He was not only a lover of human beings but of animals as well, feeding a flock of crows everyday with his own hand.

During his life time he suffered from many major illnesses most important of which was cancer of larynx when he was just 35 years. However, nothing could affect his indomitable spirit and positivity towards life.

He had all along wanted to live life on his own terms not compromising his autonomy, he had expressed the wish that he would not like to live a vegetative life, would rather prefer a dignified exit with his faculties intact.

In fact, that is how he left. Till the end he retained his senses, baffling the attending doctors. He continued to advise the running of IPS from his ITU bed in hospital.

It is needless to say that his passing away has left a void in the IPS and the field of psychology which will be hard to fill, as it will be difficult to find a person who can match up to his knowledge, zeal, enthusiasm, sincerity, honesty and love for the subject.

And for many personally, they have lost their best friend, philosopher and guide.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and daughters-in-law, numerous analysands, students, friends, members and the staff of IPS.

May his soul rest in peace.