

**ATULCHANDRA BHOWMICK****7<sup>th</sup> January, 1940 - 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2023**

Professor Atulchandra Bhowmick passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at the age of 83 years 6 months and 23 days. He was well-known as an ideal teacher in the field of Museology. His whole life was engaged in teaching and field-based researches in the domain of prehistoric culture and contemporary tribal and folk cultures. He remained a bachelor. He was unpretentious and followed simple living, he was frank in interacting with students, researchers and encouraged them in their research works. He would go out of his ways to help students and the staff of the university. He was also known as a kind hearted and honest person in his university as well as in his academic circles. His passing away on was sad news not only in the Department of Museology, but also to many other departments of the University of Calcutta.

Professor Atulchandra Bhowmick was born on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1940 in the village Pihar in Comilla district of Bangladesh. He was the second of eight children (Ajit, Abhilash, Basana, Mukul, Bakul, Putul and Arun) of Akhilchandra and Yogomaya Devi. His father was one of the founder members of Deshbandhu School, Beliaghata, Kolkata and served as a teacher in this school.

Atulchandra studied primary education in the village school of Pihar. Then he studied at Barkanta High School in Comilla. He passed intermediate education from Maharaja Vir Vikram College, Agartala, Tripura and B.Sc. in Botany, Zoology and Anthropology from Bangabasi College, Calcutta. He obtained a Master's degree in Anthropology with specialization in Pre-history in 1962, a Certificate of Art Appreciation in 1965, a Diploma in Museology in 1966, an M.A. in Ancient Indian History in 1969 from the University of Calcutta. He was awarded Ph.D. in Anthropology from the same university in 1974 under the supervision of Professor Kalyan Gangopadhyay, Curator-in-Charge of Asutosh Museum, University of Calcutta. The title of his thesis was '*Traditional Textiles of Bengal - A Study in Retrospect with Special Reference to Socio-economic Condition of the Weavers and Embroiderers*'. His classmates at the master's level (in Anthropology) were Alope Ghosh, Anadi Laha, Biswajit Sen, Bandana Chakraborty, Gurucharan Ghosh, Narayan Bandopadhyay, Nirmalendu Dutta, Rajat Kanti Das, Samir Bose, Shyamalesh Dutta Ray and Rama Chattopadhyay. He was the recipient of the

Centenary Exhibition Gold Medal of the University of Calcutta in 1974.

Atulchandra Bhowmick served as a high school teacher in Haroa now in North 24 Parganas for a small period in 1960, then joined as Museum Caretaker of the Cultural Research Institute, Government of West Bengal from 1967 to 1969; then Museum Curator, Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta from 1972 to 1976. Later on, he joined as a Lecturer in the Museology Department of the University of Calcutta in 1976. After 29 years of teaching, he superannuated as Professor of Museology in January 2005.

He specialized in Advanced Prehistoric Archaeology, with special interest in Early Indian Pottery, Mesolithic and Applied Archaeology. However, he was engaged in the scientific interpretation of ethnological specimens. Bhowmick studied Palaeolithic tool-making techniques to folk technology, Palaeolithic to contemporary folk culture, folk knowledge to folk tradition, the museum to preservation, plastic art form to performing art, and statistical analysis of village survey data, etc.

He was a visiting fellow in the Department of Anthropology of Dibrugarh University and one of the founding members of the Department of Museology at Rabindra Bharati University. In the mid-1990s at the request of Professor P.K. Bhowmick, he meticulously documented all museum objects of Rard Sanskriti Sanghralaya, Bidisa. He had vast research experience in diversified fields of different disciplines. Besides conducting research under the University Grants Commission's project, he was also awarded the Nehru Trust Research Grant in 1995-1996. He supervised 25 doctoral theses on various interesting topics in museology, anthropology and folklore.

Professor Bhowmick wrote numerous articles on diverse topics in Anthropology, Museology and Folklore. A variety of articles of wide range by Professor Bhowmick indicates his interest in separate subjects. He published 128 articles, both in English and Bengali in reputed academic journals, magazines and edited books. Basically, he was trained in anthropology and later turned to museology. Here we can mention some titles of the principal publications of Professor Bhowmick which were published in famous academic journals, periodicals and edited books like- 'Museums and a Neglected Aspect and National Integration', *Bulletin of the West Bengal Headmaster Association*, Special Issue (1967), 'State Ethnology Museums and the Educational Function', *Bulletin of Cultural Research Institute* (1967), 'Tribal Culture-integration Through Museums', *Bulletin of Cultural Research Institute*, (1968), 'Printed Textiles of Bengal', *The Calcutta Review* (1971), 'A Study on Mask Dance of Seraikella', *Bulletin of Cultural Research Institute* (1972), 'Museum and Library in Mass Education', *Bulletin Bengal Library Association* (1968), 'Museum and the Community', *Folklore* (1973), 'Preservation of Pottery Objects in Modern Museums', *Annual Journal*, Department of Museology, Calcutta University (1974), 'Indian Pottery: Technique of Manufacture' *Bulletin of Cultural Research Institute* (1975), Santal Dance, *Tribal Dances of India* (1999), Eds. Robin D. Tribhuwan and

Preeti R. Tribhuwan, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, Santal: Ethnographic Atlas of Indian Tribes (1999), Ed. Ed. Prakash Chandra Mehta, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, Santal, *Costumes of Indian Tribes* (2011), Ed. Prakash Chandra Mehta, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, Dr. Reboti Mohan Sarkar, *Architect of Anthropology in India*, Volume II (2022), Ed. Sarthak Sengupta, Gyan Publishing House, Delhi and so on. However, one of his pioneering research was on textile design, symbols and motives of Bengal *Sarees*.

On completion volume entitled *Anthropological Discourses: A Collection of Essays on Culture & Heritage* published in 2022 from Anustup was, forwarded by his student Professor Stephen Inglis, Carleton University, Ottawa, he felt contented. Here he discussed from the Stone Age to the present socio-cultural scenario of tribal life with a holistic view of various anthropological issues and included field studies result of on there topics.

Professor Bhowmick attended national and international seminars, conferences and symposiums and he delivered many memorial lectures on famous academicians and personalities.

Professor Bhowmick was a life member of the Indian Anthropological Society, National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists, Sasanka Sarkar Memorial Society and Museum Association of India. He was Joint Secretary of the Museum Association of India and also a member of the development committee of the Ananda Niketan Krishishala, Bagnan; P.C. Mahalanobish Memorial Museum and Archives of the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. He acted as an advisor of the Central Museum of Anthropological Survey of India and the Bangiyo Sahitya Parisad Museum, Kolkata. Professor Atulchandra Bhowmick received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Museum Association of West Bengal in 2016 and was felicitated as an ideal teacher from the University of Calcutta.

Professor Bhowmick loved teaching, loved the subject and loved students. He believed that students were his strength and his identity. He will survive by his students.

**Dr. Nabakumar Duary**  
Anthropological Survey of India  
Ministry of Culture, Government of India

