

OBITUARY



Prof. J.C. Sharma
1932-2021

It was extremely sad and emotional moment for me when I got to know about the sad demise of Prof. J.C. Sharma on 8th November, 2021 at Chandigarh. He was having health issues for quite some time and fought till the last. I had a very long association of 48 years with him firstly, as a student from 1972 till 1977 and then as a colleague from 1977 till 1994, when he finally retired after completing 34 years of glorious service. Our association continued till his last. His family celebrated his life by arranging a shanti path where his contemporaries Prof. Bhalla and Prof. Prakash paid tributes to him and it took me down the memory lane when I joined this department and attended his first class in M.Sc. first year. He introduced us to the subject of Anthropology which was absolutely new to us, in a very simple language to develop interest in it. He taught us both theory and practical in Archaeology that year with total dedication and got familiarised with various types of stone tools in classroom as well as in the field. In the second year he taught us population genetics and practical in Osteometry and Craniometry with utmost precision. He wrote a book also on these techniques in Hindi. He was a very disciplined and strict teacher who wanted students to be punctual and extremely attentive in class to grasp basic concepts in the subject. He used to give topics to students to prepare for seminars and then discuss it in the class to enhance their confidence and knowledge and nurtured them to become good academician and researchers. I deem it as a rare honour and privilege to be associated with him as a colleague also and had the opportunity to learn a lot from him which helped me in my day to day teaching as well as in research.

Prof. J. C. Sharma, an internationally renowned scholar and distinguished anthropologist, my esteemed teacher and colleague, was born on 6th September, 1932 at Kanpur. He did his M.Sc. (Anthropology) from University of Delhi in 1956 and Ph.D. in 1963 from Punjab University under the supervision of Prof. S.R.K.Chopra on the topic "*Age changes in body size and proportions of Maharashtrian children aged birth till 21 years*". He got married to Mrs. Vishakha Sharma, a social anthropologist and is survived by a daughter and son who are

well settled in their lives. Prof. Sharma started his professional career in anthropology as an Assistant Research Officer in Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and worked at G.R. Medical College, Gwalior from 1957 till 1960. In 1960, he joined the newly created Department of Anthropology at Panjab University, Chandigarh, as a Lecturer in physical anthropology and became Reader in 1968 and Professor in 1984. He was the Chairperson of the department from 1981-1984. He was an excellent teacher and taught not only physical anthropology but also trained students in archaeology. He was a dedicated researcher. His research work on genetic contribution to pubertal growth and development studied by longitudinal studies based on data on twins has been internationally acclaimed and widely cited. He visited U.S.A. to attend International Congress of twin studies and went to Canada also for a short visit. Besides his work on Maharashtrian and Punjabi children, he did extensive field work on tribals and other population groups of Himachal Pradesh. He published on dermatoglyphics of Lahulis and on four tribal groups of Bastar. He studied nutritional anthropometry of Konds of Orrisa and published it in a book. During his entire career of thirty four years of teaching and research Prof. Sharma has guided 10 PhD students and published nearly sixty research papers in the field of human genetics, dermatoglyphics, nutritional anthropometry, physical growth and development, dental anthropology, archaeology and human evolution in various national and international journals of high impact factor like *Annals of Human Biology*, *Annals of Human Genetics*, *Acta Genet. Med. Gemellologia*, etc. He attended various national conferences and chaired sessions besides delivering invited lectures. He was member of various learned societies at national and international level, like International Society for Twin Studies; International Association of Human Biology; International Association of Human Auxology and Current Anthropology, Indian Society of Human Genetics, Indian Science Congress, Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society; Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists, etc. He was elected sectional president of Anthropology and Archaeology Section in 1992, of Indian Science Congress. He retired on 30th September, 1992 and got reemployed till 1994. He was a very simple helpful, generous and affectionate person, who remained academically active even after his retirement. He would readily accept our invitation for chairing a session or for delivering key note address and attended cultural functions with great zeal. He extended every type of help and advice as and when needed. He made liberal donations to Anthropological association of the department and encouraged students to take part in extracurricular activities besides academics for overall personality development. Prof. Sharma left for his heavenly abode on 8th November, 2021, leaving behind a void which can never be filled but he will be remembered for generations to come for his immense contributions in the field of anthropology. I feel it as a personal loss and offer my sincere gratitude and tributes to him for shaping my life.

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