

Obituary



A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops

-Henry Brooks Adams

Early morning of the 29th July (2016), when I was asleep, suddenly my phone rang up screaming- it was my colleague and friend Dr Kajal whose wet voice broke to me the most unexpected news- our beloved Ray sir was no more. Dr Prakash C. Ray, known to his students popularly as Ray sir, bid us adieu much to our utter dismay, at a ripe age of only 55 years. The news of his demise was very hard for every one of us to digest. With deep grief and sorrow, I want to pay homage to this noble soul with a few words.

Born on the 20th April in the year 1961, Ray sir had a bright academic career right from his childhood. With an urge to serve the society to the fullest, he took up the profession of Medicine in R.G. Kar Medical College, Calcutta University, and was awarded the degree of MBBS in the year 1984. Sir had a deep intrigue for the beauty within the complexity of the numerous chemical processes that drive the normal functioning of the human body, which, when deranged, leads to the development of various diseases. So he took up the subject of Biochemistry as his choice for post graduation. Due to his academic brilliance and hard work, he had the privilege to pursue his post graduation in the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, from where he received his degree of MD (Biochemistry) in the year 1989. His MD thesis was completed under the guidance of renowned neurochemist Dr. Shail K. Sharma. During this period, he also took active part in an INDO-US project in neurochemistry with monkey model, granted to Dr. Shail K. Sharma and Dr. Marshal Nirenberg.

Out of his passion for passing on his knowledge to the next generations, Ray sir took up teaching as his profession. He had spent 28 years of his life teaching Medical Biochemistry to MBBS, BDS, BSc (Nursing), MSc and PhD students at AIIMS-Delhi, MGIMS-Sevagram, Rural Medical College, Loni Bk, Shirdi and finally, Maulana Azad Medical College-Delhi, where he joined in the year 2008 and went on to become the Head of the Department few months before his demise. In the meantime, he also completed WHO Fellowship (2004-05) in Medical Biotechnology.

Ray sir was a core researcher- his main fields of interest were macrophage cell biology, cancer biology, membrane biochemistry and medical phytochemistry. He had supervised various thesis/dissertation/fellowship projects during his tenure as a teacher cum researcher. He had 30 publications of research works in various National/International indexed journals to his name. Ray sir was also associated with hospital biochemistry clinical laboratory service for 12 years.

Owing to his academic career and personality, Ray Sir was a preferred external examiner/thesis evaluator by various institutions across India for MD (Biochemistry), PhD (Biochemistry), MBBS and BDS examinations like Dibrugarh University, Gawhati University, Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences- Assam, Pune University, Nagpur University, RIMS-Imphal, KGMC-Lucknow, AMU, BHU, Baba Farid University, Indraprastha University, Rohtak Medical College, Subharti Medical College, AIIMS-Delhi, AIIMS- Bhubaneswar, to name a few amongst many. He was an expert in Biochemistry faculty selection board at the newly constituted AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, Jodhpur, Patna, Bhopal, Rishikesh, as well as BHU. Sir also delivered guest lectures at Departments of Biochemistry of Assam Medical College, AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, and KGMC-Lucknow and at Assam State conference AMBI.

To add to the recognition of his diverse abilities by his peers, Ray sir also held the posts of Joint Secretary for 5 years for AMBI-Delhi Chapter, Joint Secretary of AMBI (National Body) for 3 years. He was working as the Secretary of AMBI-Delhi Chapter at the time of his demise. He was also a life member of Indian Immunology Society, since 1989, Association of Medical Biochemist of India (AMBI) since 1992, Society of Neurochemistry- India (SNCI) since 2013 and Society for Cancer Research (SCR) since 2013. He was a regular attendee at AMBICONS and presented various important papers therein.

Personally, I had the privilege of being a student of this great teacher only for a short period of about two years. Apart from his abilities as a teacher, what struck me was his personality. He was a man of strict principles- always followed discipline and punctuality, and expected everyone to abide by the prevailing rules and regulations. He hated corruption in any form from the core of his heart and always stood by his honest principles. He was also a down to earth and approachable person- we could freely discuss our problems with him to which he heard patiently and compassionately and always came out with appropriate solutions. There is a big void with his untimely departure which cannot be fulfilled. Ray sir will always remain in our hearts and will continue to inspire generations of students.

Dr Priyanki Baruah