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INDIAN SOCIETY OF
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BOMBAY

OBITUARY

J. P. BHATTACHARJEE

The Indian Society of Agricultural Economics records its deep sorrow at the sad and untimely demise of Dr. Jyoti Prasad Bhattacharjee on 28th May, 1986. Dr. Bhattacharjee was a renowned agricultural economist and made notable contributions to the development of agricultural economic thought and policy in India. He took his M.A. degree in Economics from Calcutta University in 1943. After obtaining his Ph.D. degree in Agricultural Economics from Illinois University, U.S.A. in 1953, he worked for the next two years as Assistant Economist at the Food Research Institute, Stanford University, Stanford, California. On his return to India in 1955, he joined the newly set up Agro-Economic Research Centre for East India at Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. As its founder-Director, he planned, organised and conducted studies in rural change, farm management and other surveys, and analysed the impact of agricultural programmes on agricultural and rural development. He won recognition for the Centre for its pioneering work in agricultural economic research in Eastern India. He left the Centre in March 1960 to join the Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of the Planning Commission, Government of India as its Director. During his five-year tenure at PEO, he guided its activities as an independent body for evaluation of India's agricultural and community (rural) development programmes, helped to develop the methodology and organisational arrangements including an all-India network for evaluation and contributed to the formulation of Five-Year Plans. He had also worked as Member and in a few cases as Chairman of various Committees and Panels constituted by the Government of India.

In November 1965, he accepted an international assignment as Deputy Director of the Investment Centre of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. He assisted in the formulation and implementation of the programme of work and budget of the Investment Centre, comprising co-operative activities with the World Bank, Asian, African and Inter-American Development Bank and the FAO Bankers' Programme. He also led missions concerned with Agricultural Sector Review and Project Identification and Preparation Assistance to countries and participated in the World Bank Missions. In 1973 he joined the FAO/IBRD Co-operative Programme soon after its establishment and played a major role in the building of FAO's Investment Centre and contributed to the development of multilateral financing of investment projects in rural development, irrigation, etc. The highest challenge in his career came when he was appointed Director, Policy Analysis Division of the FAO at Rome in 1974. During the period of ten years when he worked in this Division with distinction, he thoroughly reorganised and gave action orientation to the FAO's work in the field of economic and policy analysis. He retired from the FAO in January 1984.

He was closely associated with the activities of the Society since 1955 and served as a member of its Executive Committee and Research Programmes Committee.

He was elected President of the 25th Annual Conference of the Society and presided over the Conference in December 1965. The theme of his presidential address was "Agricultural Economist and the Agriculturist".

He had taught graduate level courses in development economics and published a number of papers in professional agricultural economics journals both in India and abroad. He had participated in many national and international conferences of professional associations of agricultural economics. Among the notable contributions to his credit are "Studies in Indian Agricultural Economics" which was edited by him and published by the Society in 1958, "Studies in Rural Change: Sahajapur" (1958), and Evaluation Reports on the Working of Community Development Projects brought out by the PEO during the period 1960-65.

He endeared himself to his professional colleagues by his personal qualities of sharp intellect and humaneness. In his demise, the country has lost an eminent agricultural economist and the Society a highly respected member.

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