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Obituary

Professor D.T. Lakdawala (1916-1992)

The Indian Society of Agricultural Economics learnt with profound sorrow the sudden and sad demise of Professor D.T. Lakdawala on April 15, 1992. He was a renowned economist, a competent teacher and a research scholar endowed with sharp intellect and broad vision. As Professor M.L. Dantwala puts it: "His humility was an adornment of his scholarship."

He was born on October 4, 1916 and had his early education at Surat. He obtained his M.A. degree from the then School of Economics and Sociology of the University of Bombay during the late thirties and Ph.D degree from the same University in 1943. He joined the School of Economics and Sociology of the University of Bombay in November 1943 as a member of its faculty and developed his skills of teaching and research, successively holding the posts of Professor of Economics and Director of the Department of Economics. During his academic career spanning over 35 years in the University of Bombay, he made notable contributions to development of economic planning and thought, public finance and trade policy, education, regional planning and fiscal policy and formulation of the economic policies of the Government of India. He also conducted and directed several socio-economic surveys of a pioneering nature. He guided a large number of research students for the Ph.D. degree. He retired from the University on March 31, 1978. For his excellence in teaching, he received the Best Teacher Award of the Government of Maharashtra in 1974.

He was the founder Director of the Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research and founder member of the Gujarat Economic Association in Ahmedabad. At the time of his death, he was the Honorary Director of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. He was also associated with a number of Commissions and Committees set up by the Central and State Governments. Among them were the Fifth Finance Commission, University Grants Commission, National Commission on Labour, Dearness Allowance Commission, Administrative Reforms Commission, Working Group on Community Development and the Working Group on Fiscal and Financial Resources and the Expert Committee on Unemployment. He was Chairman of the Cost of Living Index Committee of the Government of Maharashtra and Chairman of the Taxation Inquiry Committee of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. As Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission (1977-80), he brought to bear his erudite scholarship and wide experience on the formulation of the Fifth Plan, with the major thrust on removal of unemployment, raising the standard of living of the poorest sections of the population and provision by the State of some of the basic needs for the deprived sections of the society.

He wrote a number of books and published a large number of research papers in academic journals. Some of his important publications include "Justice in Taxation in India", "International Aspects of Indian Economic Development", "Taxation and the Plan", "Union-State Financial Relations", "Commodity Taxation in India" "Survey of Public Finance", "Surveys in Economics Research", etc.

Professor Lakdawala took active interest in the promotion and working of professional academic associations. He was associated with the activities of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics and was elected President of the 35th Annual Conference of the Society and presided over the Conference in November 1975. The theme of his Presidential Address was "Direct Taxation of Agriculture". Besides, he had presided over the Annual Conferences of Indian Economic Association, Indian Labour Economics Society and the Gujarat Economic Association. He was a recipient of Dadhabai Navroji Award twice for distinguished work in economics. He was a National Fellow of Indian Council of Social Science Research. In his death, the Society has lost a friend, philosopher and guide, and the nation and the academic profession, a renowned economist and humanist.

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