

Obituary

Prof Vinay Kumar Srivastava
(03.12.1952-23.12.2020)

Professor Vinay Kumar Srivastava started his anthropological journey by joining B.Sc (Honours) in Anthropology in Hans Raj College, University of Delhi, where he also completed his M.Sc. and was awarded with gold medals in both. Srivastava was also a gold medalist of Masters in Sociology, Delhi School of Economics. He did his M.Phil. from Department of Chinese and Japanese Studies from University of Delhi and his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, U.K. in social anthropology in 1994.

He was appointed as a lecturer in sociology at Hindu College, University in Delhi, Thereafter, he joined the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, as a lecturer in social anthropology and henceforth became Reader and Professor. Srivastava held several administrative positions too. He was the teacher-in-charge of the Department of Sociology; Hindu College thrice and later became the Principal. He was Head of the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi from 2014 to 2017 and retired after having served as a teacher for more than four decades. He joined as Director in Anthropological Survey of India in August 2017. He was also Director-in-Charge of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies. He was a member of National Commission for Sub-categorization of the Other Backward Classes under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India and also a member of the Commission that Government of India set up for De-notified, Nomadic, and Semi-nomadic Communities (2015–2018).

Prof. Srivastava has more than 20 books and 100 research articles to his credit. He was the Chief Editor of *Journal of the Anthropological Survey of India*, and also one of the two Editors of *Social Change*, both published by Sage.

He was not just one among many anthropologists but he was a leader par excellence for anyone who had walked even once in his life. He touched so many lives, helped so many people, and inspired score of young anthropologists by his mesmerizing deliberations on any topic of social significance. He made them walk in the right path, the path of anthropological wisdom, exemplified by his own life and experience. His critical analysis and understanding of the

anthropological concepts and theories, and his unwavering and most forceful appraisal of the methodological specifics in the simplest possible way had made him a teacher par excellence. He had been a man of inspiration for a large number of students of Indian anthropology and sociology. His deliberations on everyday phenomenon, the recent one having been his in the exponential view of '*COVID, as a Social Stigma*', and his view of '*COVID vis-à-vis the Tribes of India - An anthropological Response*', etc., cannot escape any enlightening individual from capturing at the bottom of truth of one of the most enigmatic global phenomena of the contemporary world.

His untimely demise has brought shocking waves across the anthropological community. Indeed, a great loss, particularly because he was not only an erudite scholar, but also a truly nice human being. We wish and pray that his soul may rest in eternal peace, and may his memories continue to guide us at all times to come.

Avick Biswas
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
Vidyasagar University