

ALL INDIA PEOPLE'S SCIENCE NETWORK (AIPSN)

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AIPSN Condolence Resolution at the passing of Professor Parthiba Basu

With the passing of Professor Parthiba Basu, on 4th November 2024 at Kolkata, at the fairly young age of 60 years, the All India People's Science Network (AIPSN), People's Science Movement (PSM) and the larger democratic movement has suffered a heavy loss, losing a colleague whom people from many walks of life would turn to on various political, organizational, administrative and personal issues.

Hailing from a family with a long active background in left and democratic politics, Parthiba Basu joined the PSM in the late 1980's, when he was a doctoral scholar at the newly established Central University, Pondicherry. For several years Parthiba was an active member of the Pondicherry Science Forum (PSF) and maintained links with the PSMs in South India, particularly with those of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. For the last thirty years, he was a leading member of the Pashchim Banga Vigyan Mancha (PBVM).

As an academic and researcher, Dr. Parthiba Basu contributed to wide areas of ecological sciences, with intensive fieldwork followed by modeling, for which had gained recognition amongst his peers, in national and international levels. Notably, he was awarded the Boyscast, Smithsonian and Darwin fellowships. He and his group focused on problems of pollination, which has a deep bearing on food production and food security. He was a core member of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations' Pollination Action Team, where he articulated steps to mitigate pollination loss globally. Under Professor Parthiba Basu's guidance about twenty researchers have completed their doctorate degrees and some more will submit their theses soon.

Dr. Parthiba Basu had several research collaborations at the national and international levels. He considered agroecology to be a field that combined science, transformative practice and social movement. In the last decade or so, he had trained about 100 resource persons in the field of agroecology, who continue to be active in this field giving important inputs in different branches of the field and to different communities and groups.

For the PSMs, he utilized this practical experience to impart training to PSM activists by intensive training in agroecology workshops. He was the convener of the AIPSN's agriculture desk, since the 17th Congress at Bhopal, held in 2022.

Professor Parthiba Basu had a long career in teaching, at the college and university levels, establishing a living bond with students, teachers and administrators. He served both as secretary and president of Calcutta University teachers' association and was an active critic of NEP 2020. He fought for the democratic environment and autonomy in higher education. While activating his organization through different mass actions, he always kept the movement's focus on challenging the ideology of neoliberalism and facing the social threats that this ideology has unleashed upon people's lives.

This challenge has intensified in the last few decades in India, more so, with the rise of communal, obscurantist, fascistic forces and corporate communalism. In such a scenario, Parthiba articulated how PSM ideology, livelihood issues and agroecology itself can be built to counter this. In this, he emphasized "self-reliance for life and livelihood."

His contributions to the PBVM encompassed many areas. Parthiba enriched the AIPSN as a whole, for which he was elected to the Executive Committee of the AIPSN in its 17th Congress in Bhopal in 2022.

Deeply interested in culture and politics, Parthiba Basu was deeply conversant with Bengali literature and was associated with many publications and publishers. While busy with several commitments, he also enjoyed his holidays, with long drives to different parts of the country.

The AIPSN, while mourning Parthiba's passing, will celebrate his contributions to the movement and surge ahead.

The AIPSN conveys heartfelt deepest condolences to his family, friends, and comrades in the PSM and the PBVM. He was very eager to witness a very successful AIPSC 18, to be held in his own city, Kolkata. He will not be there with us at the congress. But its success will owe a great deal to the team, of which Parthiba, till the end of his life, remained a very important and inspiring member.

A Network of 40 People's Science Movements working in 25 states