

**Dr. Dibya Kishor Singh, Former Professor of Geography, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, India**

Professor Jayant K. Routray<sup>†</sup>



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Professor Dibya Kishor Singh was born on 20 October 1934, a descendant of the royal family of Hindol, formerly a princely state of Odisha, India. In 1957, he obtained his BA (Geography Honours) degree from Ravenshaw College followed by a Diploma in Statistics in 1958. Prof. Singh passed his Masters in Geography in 1959 from Banaras Hindu University and earned his PhD in Urban Geography from Gauhati University in 1972. His specialisations were Urban Geography, Regional Planning, Cartography and Quantitative Methods, but he was an excellent teacher of both physical and human geography. He served as a Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Reader and Professor in Geography in West Bengal, Saugor, Gauhati, and Utkal Universities sequentially from 1960-1996. He was awarded Fulbright Scholarship in 1966-67 (Indiana University, USA), Commonwealth Foundation–Royal Geographical Society Bursary Award in 1980 (Bristol University, England), Visiting Fellow in

the Human Settlement Division of Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand in 1992 and in the Spring Centrum of Dortmund University, Germany in 1993.

Prof. Singh bears the credit of supervising 20 MPhil and 17 PhD theses besides one DSc Scholar in Geography. He published approximately 100 research papers, articles in peer-reviewed reputed Indian journals and edited books, and research monographs including book chapters on Regional Planning edited by R. P. Mishra.

He had served as an Editor, *Eastern Geographer* in addition to serving as editors to other research publications. Besides, Prof. Singh contributed as resource persons in different workshops and refresher courses for college teachers in India; served as an Executive Member of many Professional and Cultural Organisations. He was a Life Member of more than 20 Geographical and Professional Societies including Fellow of Royal Geographical Society, London; Member of American Association of Geographers; and as a Life Member of National Association of Geographers, India of which he also served as a Vice-President. His contribution for shaping and spearheading geography education and research in Odisha and bringing qualitative changes in the Post Graduate Geography Curriculum of the Utkal University and later in India through University Grants Commission (UGC) are noteworthy.

From 1991-1997, Prof. Singh served as a member of National Committees in Geography Panel of INSA for two consecutive terms. He was also a member of the Geography Panel of UGC (1997-2002). In 1993, Prof. Singh served as an Advisory to the Editorial Board Member, *Encyclopaedia of World Geography* published by Andromeda Publishers, Oxfordshire, U.K. In addition, he authored Geography Textbooks in English, Odia and Assamese languages. Prof. Singh also authored the UGC Project book titled *Shelter Environment and Settlement: Planning*

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of *Rural Orissa* and made two seminal contributions on “Assam Valley” and “Meghalaya” in the famous book *Geography of India* edited by Professor R. L. Singh.

As a member of the Indian Section of the International Theosophical Society, Prof. Singh served as the Secretary of the Utkal Theosophical Federation for two terms (1999-2005). He was also instrumental in bringing out publication of spiritual books in Odia for the Federation and served as a President of Saraswati Shishoo Vidya Mandir, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar from 1998-2005.

Earned recognition for writing short stories, poems, travel and spiritual essays in Odia while serving as the president of *Chalapath All-Orissa Writers` Conference*, *Sweta Sanketa*, *Biplaba* and as Adviser of *Smruti-Lipi* and *Asha-Shrotaswimi* in Odia literature. The Odia short-story books *Pooja-Phul* was selected by Orissa Sahitya Academy for the Raja Ram Mohan Library. Prof Singh was also a brilliant translator. The short-story books titled *Pallavi* by J. K. Mahantsa describing the current Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee in Bengali and *Duranir Rang* (Odia title *Dura Durantara Abha*) in Assamese by Junu Mahanta have been translated into Odia. Further, more than a hundred Bengali poems of Rabindranath Tagore have been translated by him into Odia and published as a book of poems entitled *Nishabda Prahari*. This book has been selected by the Orissa Sahitya Academy for Raja Ram Mohan Library. In 2007, respectively in July and

November, two books were released—*Akinchit Anubhav* and *Purushottam Kshetra O Shree Jagannath* (Short Stories). In 2008, he translated the book of short stories titled *Abagahan* from Assamese into Odia.

He also served as the President of Chinmaya Mission, Bhubaneswar, Secretary of Spiritual Regeneration Movement Capital Project, Orissa of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and a dedicated worker for the foundation of the Maharishi College of Natural Law, Bhubaneswar. Also as an Executive Member, he worked for the development of Buddha Vihar, Orissa, Bhubaneswar. He was also one of the founders of Janata College, Satmile, Hindol and worked as a Secretary and later as a Vice-President of the Orissa Section of the All-India Madan Mohan Malaviya Mission and a Member of the Rotary Club, Bhubaneswar Metro.

A multidimensional personality always with great zeal and enthusiasm had extended his arms for a variety of activities and institutions with humanitarian touch, recognised among the peers, and respected by students, staff, and common people. He was a man beyond the boundaries of all regions and above all religions, associated with a variety of organisations and immensely contributed for the community and social development. He had achieved excellence in the areas, where he worked and attempted to do. He will remain as a very special and rarest person in the minds of his fellow geographers, peer groups, and friends in Odisha, India and abroad.