



# IIPSAA

IIPS Alumni Association

## E-Newsletter

Volume 6

December 2019



*Invited Biography*

*IIPSAA Activity*

*Alumni Corner*

*Conference Experiences*



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*Designed by: Labhita Das*

*Photography: Vinod Thota, I.V. Prasad*



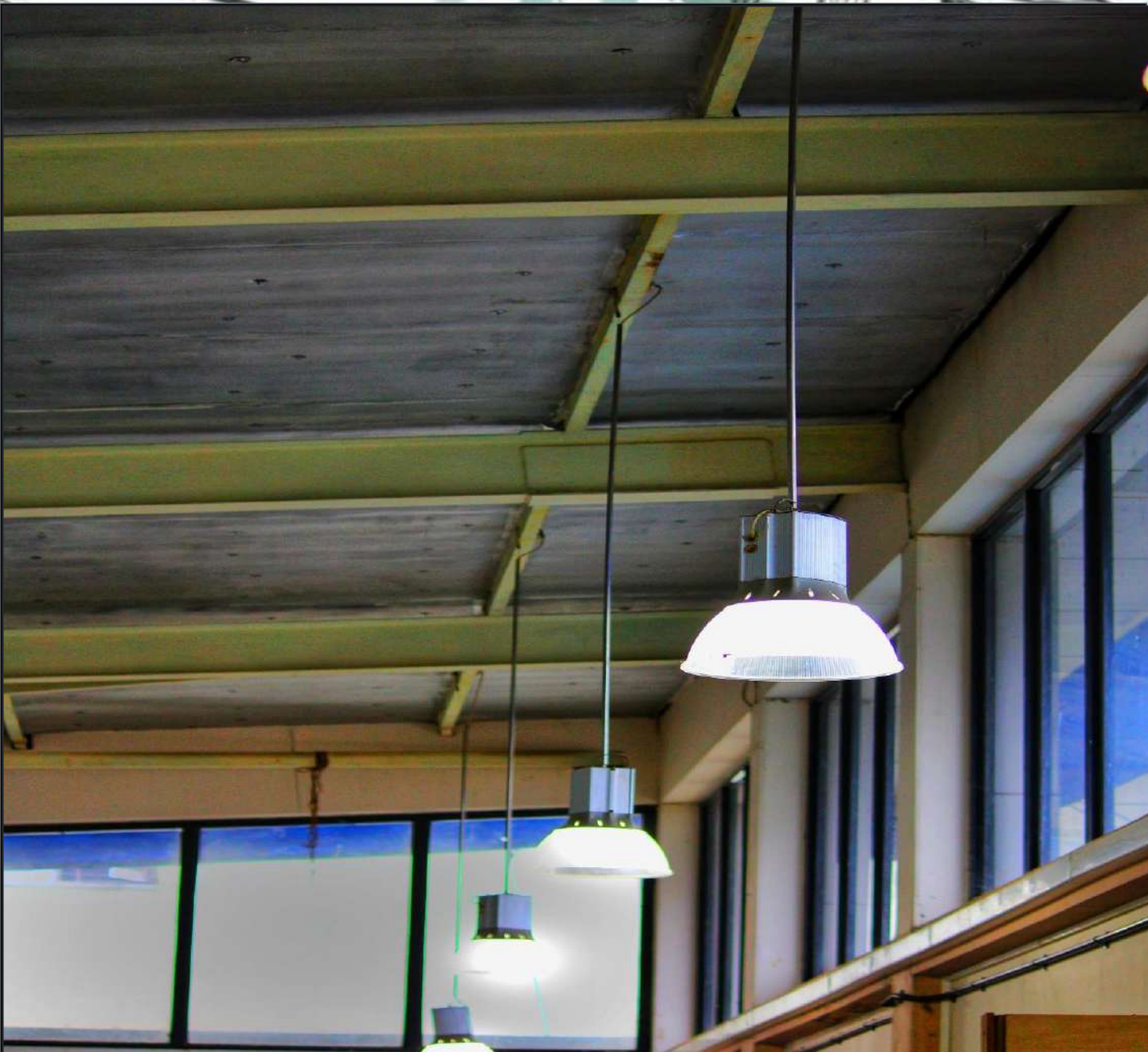


## FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

It is our pleasure to bring out the 7<sup>th</sup> E-Newsletter of IIPSAA in a quick succession. As usual, this issue integrates the old and the new cohorts of IIPS. It contains the recollections of two retired professors who served their entire career in IIPS and still associated with the Institute for its academic activities. The memoirs shared by Harish Srivastava (Retired Professor and Head, Department of Development Studies) and C.P. Prakasam (Retired Professor, Department of Mathematical Demography) provide vivid account of the campus life and academic environment at IIPS during late 1960s and early 1970s. This issue also presents the experiences of three early and mid-career alumni of IIPS. Dr. Akansha Singh (*Postdoctoral Research Associate Statistician, Durham University, United Kingdom*), Dr. Biswabandita Chowdhury (*Senior Project Officer, UNFPA funded Ageing Project at IIPS*) and Mr. Ajeet Kumar (Senior Manager, Programme Management, National eGovernance Division, Ministry of Electronics & IT, GoI) narrate how IIPS laid the strong academic foundation and shaped their careers. Every year several Ph.D. scholars from IIPS visit abroad to present their papers in international forums. This newsletter contains the experiences of two Ph.D. scholars (Mr. Basant Kumar Panda and Miss Ratna Patel) who have visited abroad this year to present their papers in international conferences. Hope the readers will enjoy the reminiscences of our young and old alumni of IIPS. The future issues of the newsletter will provide such narratives. As the editors of the E-Newsletter, we also invite the writings from the alumni about their academic and campus life at IIPS for the inclusion in the future issues. Looking forward to receiving the write-ups.

The young alumni volunteers Deepanjali Viswakarma, Angad Singh, Labhita Das and Aditi are instrumental in designing and bringing out this issue of E-Newsletter. We thank all of them.

Prof. R. Nagarajan  
Dr. Harihar Sahoo



# INVITED BIOGRAPHY

labhita das

[Date]

[Course title]



## Fond memories of an alumnus's more than five decades association with IIPS

### Harish C. Srivastava

Retired Professor and Head, Department of Development Studies, I.I.P.S, Mumbai  
Email: harishcsrivastava@gmail.com



I have been invited by Editors of E-Newsletter of the International Institute for Population Sciences Alumni Association (IIPSAA) Mumbai for a write up based on my more than five decades old fond memories and association with my Alma-Mater-IIPS, earlier known as Demographic Training and Research Centre (DTRC). The Centre was established in 1956 as the first United Nations regional centre for the countries under Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Since its inception, the Centre (now known as Institute) is functioning under administrative control of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, presently known as the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The Centre had provision for United Nation's Expert to facilitate ongoing teaching and research. Several well-known demographers from India and abroad remained associated with it as resource persons or as distinguished visitors to the Centre. I have spent prime good old days of my life on the campus of the Institute as I had stayed there for nearly four decades, first two years as a student and later on as a faculty member for more than three decades. During a span of nearly forty years, the Institute has grown to its present status of 'Deemed to be a University' devoted exclusively to population studies. I have witnessed different phases of the Institute's development and fond memories of my association with the same are fresh in my mind and I cherish them.

I remember the day I was called for my Interview, in the second week of July 1967, for one of the ten Government of India fellowships for Certificate Course in Demography at DTRC, located in Govandi locality away from the main city. I had visited Bombay (renamed as Mumbai) from Lucknow for the first time and stayed with my friend who was residing near Grant Road railway station of Western Railway. On my enquiry about the Institute's location, he showed his ignorance. He advised me to travel by local train from Victoria Terminus (VT) (now known as Chhatrapati Shivaji terminus) to Chembur railway station and from there ask from local people regarding the location of the Institute. It was raining like cats and dogs. I had covered myself with raincoat and gum boots and safely protected my original testimonials inside raincoat. Due to heavy rains, the trains were running late and after waiting for some time I got train for Chembur on platform number one. During those days, local trains used to ply between VT to Mankhurd railway stations. Besides, there was single railway track for to and fro journeys. Interestingly at present too, the same platform is used for going to Chembur and other railway stations on the harbour branch up to the terminus, Panvel railway station.

After alighting from train at Chembur railway station, it was surprising that people were not aware of the Institute (DTRC). Luckily I found a gentleman who was working as a Scientist at the Bhabha Atomic Energy and Research Centre (BARC). He was also not aware of DTRC but was knowing Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). He advised me to board local train from Chembur and get down at the next station known as Govandi, before the terminus Mankhurd. During those days, Local Trains used to ply between VT and Mankhurd railway stations with frequency of twenty minutes and there was a single line railway track for up and down trains. After alighting from the train compartment since it was raining heavy hardly few persons were seen on the railway station and its vicinity. At Govandi railway station too, nobody could guide me about the location of the Institute. I decided to walk down on the narrow road outside Govandi station leading to TISS. After walking around fifteen minutes, I noticed big signboard of the Institute (DTRC). By the time I reached the Institute I was late by an hour from the time given to me for my interview therefore I was not sure whether I would be allowed to appear for the interview, but I was



allowed for the same. I was interviewed by a board comprising of five persons including the Director of the Centre Dr. S.N. Agarwala. My interview lasted for around forty minutes. One instance which happened soon after I was interviewed and I wonder being an interviewee how I got courage to ask the board “may I ask a question before I leave the room? How did I perform in my interview”? Members of the board laughed and told me to wait outside, result would be conveyed to you soon. Obviously I got selected for the course.

At the time I had joined the Institute in July 1967 as a Government of India fellow, its infrastructure was too small as it had only three buildings on the campus giving somewhat deserted look. The campus was barren land covered with tall trees and bushes at the place where present computer centre and library building, residential buildings for the faculty and staff are situated.

The old building of the Institute which has been demolished recently was the only building having ground and first floor. On its ground floor, it had enclosure for reception, Director’s office, visitors room, academic and administrative departments, library, rooms for the faculty members and a laboratory. Whereas, on the first floor of the building, there was a recreation room used for taking tea for the faculty members, a class room, rooms for the faculty/staff members and a convocation/seminar hall.

Earlier, the campus of the Institute was having only three buildings – Director’s bungalow, Institute’s building, a single storied hostel building comprising only twenty four rooms and a small dining hall for the students - ten Government of India fellows and for the trainees from foreign countries on the United Nations fellowship as the Institute was serving as the regional institute for training and research in demography for ESCAP region with the facility of having a United Nations expert to extend help in teaching and research activities of the Institute. Besides, the hostel building was also having visitors lounge adjacent to it there was place for table tennis and for keeping carrom board.

The present building across narrow lane in front of Director’s bungalow (which has been demolished in recent past), known as Lakme factory was not constructed therefore the hill close to BARC was giving lovely view of natural beauty from the hostel. It used to be more enjoyable during monsoon season with greenery all-around having small waterfalls. It was risky to walk down from Govandi railway station to the Institute, especially late hours in the evenings as the place was lonely with insufficient street light poles. Instances of snatching wallet and wrist watches etc., from the pedestrians were common.

Subsequently with expansion plan of the Institute during seventies and in the early eighties, present two hostel buildings, library and computer centre, faculty and staff flats, guest house buildings etc., were constructed. Though I have fond memory of plenty of instances but I would like to confine with the following two amongst them which makes me happy whenever I visit the Institute.

The present badminton court is the outcome of hard social work my class mates and I did during the year 1967. The place where badminton court exists, earlier it was barren piece of land having big boulders. The then Director Dr. S.N. Agarwala inspired us to do social work and make badminton court. The idea was liked by all of us and the barren piece of land was changed in to badminton court under his guidance. As token of appreciation, Dr. Agarwala arranged our pleasure trip to the lovely Juhu beach same day in the evening also he accompanied us on the trip along with members of his family. Subsequently, he had hosted a lavish dinner party to all students on the lawn of the Director’s bungalow. During my stay on the campus I used to play badminton on the same court in the evenings. Whenever I visit the institute and see people playing badminton on the same court, it gives me immense pleasure. Another source of happiness for me is a grown up Mango tree, close to the badminton court, I had planted more than four decades back. I have seen this tree growing along with the growth of IIPS. The tall almond (Badaam) trees which add to the natural beauty of the campus of the Institute were also planted during early seventies and children residing on the campus used to collect ripped and fallen almond nuts after their return from the school.

People staying on the campus had cordial relation and live like an extended family. They were caring and helpful at the time of need. We used to celebrate festivals like Ganesh Chaturthy, Holi, Dipawali, Eid,



Christmas etc., together with enthusiasm and gaiety. To recollect fond memories of those days, it gives me boundless joy and happiness. A person who has not seen the amazing amicable atmosphere prevailing on the campus during those days would not be able to visualize the same. Similarly, the close relationship among students and faculty members used to be affable. Though I have superannuated from the Institute, but my contacts with some of my colleagues and alumni of the Institute, settled in the country and abroad, are well maintained as we keep in touch with each other by exchanging our greetings and good wishes on the birthdays and festivals. Thanks to mobile, internet and WhatsApp for providing fast communication in this regard. Also thanks to technological advancement – mobile has made it easy to interact with fellow pensioners of the Institute through IIPS pensioners' group.

As the phase of population history during the nineteen sixties and early seventies for countries of the ESCAP region, including India, was passing through crucial demographic transition stage – high birth and death rates coupled with high rate of growth of population, low expectation of life at birth and multiple population related problems, there was need for teaching and research suiting to the prevailing situation. In view of the same, teaching curriculum of the Institute was focused on the aspects related to fertility, family planning, mortality, morbidity, migration etc. Also research projects during those days were aimed to focus on the areas related to the prevailing population related issues, fertility and mortality – levels, trends and differentials, family planning knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) studies, birth averted techniques, age at marriage, population simulation models, etc.

The Institute was renamed as International Institute for Population Studies in April 1971 and it was further changed to its present title in March 1984, to facilitate expansion of its academic activities. The Institute was declared as a “Deemed to be a University” in August 1985. As stated earlier, it is the only Institute of its kind in the world completely devoted to teaching and research in population studies.

Earlier, use of computer packages for data analysis was not popular and we were working on Facit machines for data analysis. While completing our assignments due to fast rotation of machine handle for long time, often my hands used to pain. In the nights one would find ring sound comes out from the rooms in the hostel because students used to work on the machines late hours in nights for completing their assignments.

I was fortunate having taught by the persons of repute in demography, to name some of them, Professor(s) J.R. Rele, K.V. Ramachandran, Asha Bhende, Vatsala Narin, Dr. S.N. Agarwala, Dr. Chidambaram. In addition to the subject matter, I have also learnt some of their personality traits and I wish to share the same with the alumni, particularly with the young ones.

Prof. J.R. Rele has impressed me as a nice person having repository of knowledge on demography. While entering his chamber usually he used to welcome his visitors with smile. Whenever I approached him for obtaining his comments on my drafts pertaining to assignments/research paper articles, he used to check it meticulously with a sharp pensile taking care even of the punctuations and style of references cited. He used to suggest relevant references for improvement of the draft.

Prof. K.V. Ramachandran was a learned teacher and a voracious reader and most of the time while entering his room I found him engrossed in reading a book or journal. He taught me population projections and evaluation and adjustment of data. To make his lectures interesting, often he used to crack jokes. He was known for volunteering himself for taking class of the teachers who could not come to the Institute due to some genuine reason. Prof. Asha Bhende was having plenty of qualities. She was an organized and systematic person with amiable nature and pleasing personality. While interacting with her for seeking advice on any issue, I always found her a patient listener. She used to tell ‘usually people talk more and listen to others less, in fact patient listening helps in learning’. Prof. Vatsala Narain has impressed me by her affectionate behaviour, maintaining social ties with the people and for extending help to the needy persons. In my opinion, best way to remember the persons who have impressed you because of their virtues, is to practice their personality traits in day to day life as it would keep their memories always fresh.



The library of the Institute has grown remarkably well and since inception of the Institute it is one among the best libraries in the world for having rare and rich collection of books, journals and other collections related to population studies. I have seen it growing – earlier we used to search desired book or article through catalogue, now the library is computerized. Since my student days, I found staff of the library well trained in their work and helpful to the students, faculty as well as to the visitors in locating the references.

The Institute is well known for its quality of teaching. In view of changing phase of population related issues, there was a need to expand the scope of demography by revising teaching curriculum and the research activities of the Institute. Accordingly, it was renamed as International Institute for Population Studies in April 1971. Subsequently, to facilitate expansion of its academic activities Institute's name was changed to its present title as International Institute for Population Sciences. Based on its teaching and research output, the Institute was declared as "Deemed to be a University" in August 1985. Probably, it is the only Deemed University of its kind in the world which is devoted exclusively to population studies and awards degrees in Population Studies. In order to expand scope and need of demography/population studies, new courses have been introduced in the teaching curriculum suiting to the need. Just to name few amongst them are M.A., M.Sc., MPS, M.Phil. Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF) in Population Studies. In addition, M.A. and MPS degrees in population studies are also offered through distant education mode. Similarly, knowing the research potential of the Institute, some international and national organizations gave responsibility to work as the nodal agency for carrying out well known research projects viz., The National Family Health Survey (NFHS), District Level Household Project under Reproductive and Child Health Surveys in India, Youth in India Study, Study of Global Ageing (SAGE)-India, Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), Concurrent Evaluation of National Rural Mission, Longitudinal Ageing Study (LASI), etc.,

Although by undertaking the above mentioned prestigious surveys, the Institute has proved its expertise and skill for dealing with large scale surveys, but I think involvement of the Institute's faculty in the surveys has affected quality of teaching for which the Institute was known since its inception. Therefore, it may be fruitful to maintain balance between teaching and research activities of the Institute. As mentioned above, since I had spent around four decades on the campus of the Institute and still keep visiting the same for various programmes. Being an alumnus of the Institute it is my earnest desire that my Alma-Mater flourishes in future and reach peak of its height at the earliest.





## Footprints on the sands of time, on the banks of IIPS

### C.P. Prakasam

Retired Professor, Department of Mathematical Demography, IIPS Mumbai  
E mail: prakasamcp60@gmail.com

#### As a Student:



After completing my Master's degree in 1970 from Sri Venkateswara University in Tirupati (a small town in AP), I was searching for a job. Meanwhile, I found an advertisement in the newspaper calling for admission into CPS (Certificate Course in Population Studies) with fellowship from DTRC in Bombay. I did not show much interest because it was not a job and also in a far city of Bombay. However my father forced me to apply and within two weeks I got an interview call. It became inevitable for me to sit in the train in an unreserved compartment and travel for 20 hours to reach Bombay. After getting down at Dadar station, I was surprised to see such a big crowd. Meanwhile my relative, who came to receive me, patted on my shoulder and pushed me in to the crowded suburban train to reach his bachelor accommodation. Next day with his help I reached

DTRC (later changed to International Institute for Population Studies/ Sciences) for attending the interview. On the way he showed me RK Studio and I was fascinated as I had seen Bombay (VT station) in RK films.

I showed my interview letter at the gate and they allowed me to sit in a room (old building back side of the reception). After a while, a Peon opened the door and asked me to enter the room (Director's room) which was fully air conditioned and neat and clean. Holding my certificates in hand I saw six people sitting on both the sides of the rectangular table (Prof. Avadhani from Andhra University, Prof. K.V. Ramachandran, Dr. J.R. Rele, Dr. Vastala Narayan and Dr. Asha Bhende). They started asking questions on my subject and I could respond well. A gentleman wearing a tie, coat and specs (Dr. S.N. Agrawala) asked me questions about "meaning of Demography". Fortunately, I was able to answer him as my relative gave me a book on Demography (by Kefitz) on the previous day and I read first two pages. With a loud voice, he asked me "stay outside". I came out with my head down. Meanwhile during lunch time I saw my name in the selection list along with other eight members with an instruction to meet Administrative Officer (AO) and Course Coordinator after lunch time.

I met AO (Mr. Joshi) and he said "you have been selected, will be given Rs. 250/- pm fellowship and you have to join immediately after executing an agreement". I did not know what to do and simply signed on the document and requested the AO to permit me to join after a week. I met the Course Co-coordinator. She gave me a list of subjects (16 subjects) with syllabus and explained that this course is intensive and staying in hostel is compulsory. I left Bombay for home and relaxed for one week.

#### Class Room

I stepped into class room on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1970 (class room was on the first floor, left side corner room next to cyclostyling room). Along with me, twelve Indians and ten foreign students were there in the class. Amongst 12 Indians, 8 were freshly passed out from university and selected through interview and remaining four were sponsored by Census/Family Planning departments. Ten foreign students were selected by ESCAP from South East Asian countries. Everybody was new to me. First lecture was taken by Dr. S.N. Agrawala (Director) and he expects everybody to be attentive. In his class we all used to sit like school boys keeping pin-drop silence.



Later Dr. J.R. Rele (calm and dignified), Dr. K.V. Ramachandran (statistician, highly technical), Dr. K.B. Suri (Economics), Dr. Venkatacharya, Mr. L.T. Ruzika, Mrs. Tara Kanitkar, Dr. Vastala Narayan, Dr. Asha Bhende, Dr. Malini Karkal, Dr. U.P. Sinha, Dr. D.N. Sexana and others used to teach. Mr. L.T. Ruzika was sponsored by UNFPA, teaching mortality substantive topic. At that time, none of the faculty had a Ph.D. except Dr. S.N. Agrawala, Dr. Rele and Dr. Vastala Narayan and Dr. K.V. Ramachandran. Each one had his/her own style of teaching. Dr. D.N. Sexana used to teach “Social Science Research” and write clearly on the black board. He used to explain the difference between “social research and scientific research” and quote a book authored by “Goode and Hatt”. Mrs. A. Sebastian was teaching “interpolation and graduations” and used to give very big take home assignments on interpolation and graduation subject. Dr. K.V. Ramachandran was teaching “evaluation and adjustment of age data”. He used to ask us to select one country (for foreign students) and one state (for Indian students) and do the evaluation and adjustment of single year age data of two censuses and ask us to submit within three days. Neither the computer nor the electronic calculators were available. Only FACIT machine was available. All assignments I/we used to do in that machine (I will explain later how FACIT became part of our student life). Dr. U.P. Sinha was teaching Life Tables. He was from Uttar Pradesh and his speech was close to “Hinglish” and tone in *Bhojpuri* style. My roommate was from Bihar and he knows Bhojpuri. Dr. U.P. Sinha used to ask my friend, “have you understood?”, in Bhojpuri and whole class used to laugh. We (students) used to make fun “Lotka in Bhojpuri style”.

First semester classes used to run from 9.30 am to 1.00 pm and afternoon session used to devote Library reading from 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm (Monday to Friday). Saturday (9.30 am to 1.00 pm). Students are required to meet the faculty with their assignment for further discussion. Sunday was a holiday and we all used to look forward for Sunday. Each lecturer used to give big reading list with compulsory and suggested readings along with assignment. Submission of assignment within time limit was mandatory and carry marks. In the afternoon session, coordinator used to take attendance and check in the library. Library was situated in the old building ground floor, connecting Director’s room and opposite wing. There was no card system in the library to issue books. We used to collect books according to our reading list and take it for overnight reading.

### **Hostel**

After returning from home, I joined the hostel on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1970 in the morning. Hostel was one roof rectangular block (look like army barrack designed by famous architect Charles Correa) with around 18 rooms. Hostel was self-contained with dining hall, rooms, lounge and table tennis table. Mr. Hegde (Housekeeper) came out from his room and received me and allotted one room. My room was quite small with two cots, a table and two chairs with a fan attached to the wall (looks like a fan in the railway compartment). In the passage to come out, on the right side was a small attached bath and toilet room with a curtain (no door). Room was compact for two and if you come out, you will enter into the common space and entrance door. House keeper told me that by 10.00 pm entrance door will be closed. He showed me dining hall, which was close to my room and asked me to have breakfast. I sat along with other inmates and introduced myself. Most of them were new to Bombay. As I am a vegetarian, bread (Modern bread), butter, jam with one glass of milk and cornflake was served. I was surprised to see “bread” as a breakfast dish as my mother used to give bread (with *rasam*) only when I was sick. I called the mess boy (Mr. Narayana) and explained my condition. Meanwhile cook (Mr. Chandran) came out and explained me “if you want to study in this Institute, you have to eat this and you should not expect *idli, dosa, sambar and rasam* items”. Also they told me that dinner will not be served on Sundays.

That first week, hostel warden (Dr. U.P. Sinha) called for hostel inmate meeting and gave a big lecture about “how to use hostel facilities” and told “hostel door will be closed by 10.00 pm” (for security reasons) indicating that all should be in their rooms (within the hostel). From hostel main door, we could see the main road on



the west side, barren land on the east side and other side *kachha* road with flower gardens connecting to Govandi station. Since hostel and institute are in the same compound and far away from city, we used to see the city during the Sundays. Chembur market was the nearest market place and most of us used to spend our evenings in Chembur.

During first semester, after having dinner, most of us used to sit with the FACIT machine and start working on our assignments. FACIT is a calculating machine having numbers and space bar like typewriter. A handkey is attached to the machine right side. By rotating this hand key in clock wise direction for addition and anti-clock wise for subtraction, operations are performed. Division will be done by subtraction concept (anti clock wise rotation of the hand key) and multiplication by addition (rotation of hand key clock wise). For changing the units to tens, to hundreds place, space bar was used. Each assignment used to take around four to five hours to complete. After completing assignment, late mid night we all used to come out and play table tennis and go to bed. Daytime classes and library and night time completing assignments with the FACIT machine were the routine work. Though the assignment is same (Ex: Evaluation and adjustment of age data), data sets are different, for foreign students their country's census data and for Indians their state or district data with different census periods. With this, each has to complete their assignment independently. Some students who are having experience (deputed students) used to complete fast and play table tennis. My roommate was from the census department in Bihar with 15 years of work experience and was able to do faster in all assignments. We eight students without work experience (who have been selected directly through interview) experienced tough competition. Scoring more than 60% was a very difficult task. I realized that I should work hard to score highmarks and stand for competition.

My fellowship was Rs. 250/- pm. Hostel mess bill was Rs. 180/- pm. The remaining amount was spent for Sunday sightseeing and dinner. After a heavy lunch on Sunday, we normally headed towards Govandi station to catch a train to Kurla and change another train towards VT (local train was running from Kurla to Mankhurd in a single track and to go to VT we have to change at Kurla). Mankhurd to VT return train ticket fare was Rs. 2. With that Rs. 2/- ticket, in a group we use go to VT, spend time at Gateway of India, and other places, return to Chembur, have dinner in Annapurna hotel for 50 paise and return to hostel before 10.00 pm. Some Sundays I/we used to walk up to Chembur for dinner.

### **Study Tour**

First semester ended with a written examination and viva-voce examination. After first semester examination, study tour was arranged to CPS students to Goa. Mrs. Malini Karkal took us to Goa by ship. We boarded a passenger ship from Indira Dock and it took 24 hours to reach Goa port via Ratnagiri port. During one week stay in Goa, we visited Census Department, Civil Registration Department (birth and death) and other important Churches. Most of the Churches in Goa were managed by Portuguese (Bishops). Their vital registration records are accurate and gave wealth of information about 'family demography'. We all enjoyed and gained practical experience during our visit to various organizations. After returning from Goa, we have been asked to submit a report about vital registration system in Goa. Second semester was towards preparation of term paper with less class room lectures. I had successfully completed CPS and 8 Indian students opted for Diploma course along with me and others left for their places.

DPS is a research oriented course with less classroom lectures. For example: I have been assigned to write a policy report on "Population Policy of Pakistan" under Policies and Programmes subject, "Indentured Labour Migration", "Models in Migration" (Migration), "Population Projections: Bhutan", "Family Planning Programmes in Nepal", etc. Likewise, we have been asked to prepare research documents by reading available books and data. At the end of DPS we have to submit a term paper. I have selected "Growth of Metropolitan City - Calcutta". For this term paper, I thought of using factor reduction method (PCA). Dr. J.M. Seghal taught us computer language FORTRAN-IV and Dr. Venkatacharya taught us computer hardware and software (basic concepts of programming). By using CDC-3600 main frame computer situated at TIFR and with the help of Mr. R.T. Deshpande (Programmer), I could get PCA results after working for one month (now it takes



few seconds by using SPSS). I had successfully completed DPS and I realized that to do research I should develop data analysis skills.

### **As a Faculty**

I left IIPS with DPS certificate in hand seeking for job opportunities and with a zeal to do Ph.D. in Demography. I got a job as Bio Statistician in a medical college. After working for couple of years, I changed my job and joined ICMR institute in Parel, Bombay. By using survey data available with the department, I published 4 research papers. I applied for Ph.D. programme in IIT (Humanities and Social Science department) and got selected for the programme under the guidance of Dr. B.D. Mishra. Due to administrative problems I could not join that programme and meanwhile I got selected at IIPS as Lecturer in Bio Statistics.

With the appointment letter I came to IIPS. Along with me Dr. Ravi Verma, Dr. P.K. Bhargava and Shri K.B. Gotpagar met Dr. K. Srinivasan, Director and joined IIPS. I saw a change in the surroundings of IIPS. In place of one roof Old Hostel, I found new six floors big hostel and library shifted to new building (present library building). Some other new buildings have come up. M.P.S. and M.Phil. courses were introduced in place of CPS and DPS. I found that all are Indian students in MPS and M.Phil. courses and their fellowship increased to Rs. 5000/-. FACIT machines were sold as scrap and electronic calculators have been replaced. For statistical analysis, SPECTRUM computer was in use which runs with QBASIC programme language.

After few months of my joining, I discussed with Dr. Srinivasan and registered for Ph.D. programme under Bombay University. For data analysis, I used to write QBASIC language and execute through SPECTRUM computer. Mrs. A. Sebastian, who taught me “interpolation and graduation”, was in-charge for SPECTRUM computer. She helped me in execution of programmes. SPECTRUM had limited capacity up to 10X10 matrix data hence it stops at 10X10 correlation matrix taking three hours’ time. However, with those facilities, I was able to submit my thesis within three and half years.

### **Class Room**

I took my first lecture on Mortality for MPS students. When I saw MPS students, I felt “it has taken around six years for me to stand on the dais from that desk” in the same room. Syllabus wise I found lot of change. Subjects like “Interpolation-Graduation” and “Basic Statistics and Mathematics” have been taken out from the syllabus. Apart from Mortality, I taught Population Projections, Bio Statistics, Computer Applications for Data Analysis (SPSS-DOS version 9), etc.

I took initiative in developing Data Centre and Computer Centre. Dr. K.B. Pathak gave me additional responsibility to take charge of Computer Centre. With special efforts, I was able to establish campus networking, internet and e-mail facilities, and website development. I had organized international workshops on “Development of Population Database Through Networking” under POPIN project and POPLINE resource centre. Produced ten Ph.D. scholars and enhanced my academic work and retired as Professor. The support and encouragement given to me by IIPS (as institution and members) is remarkable. I realised “IIPS” environment is so congenial that one can touch academic horizons if they put efforts.







**11PSAA ACTIVITY**



## Third General Body Meeting of IIPSAA

The Third General Body Meeting of IIPS Alumni Association (IIPSAA) was held on March 7, 2019 at 6.30 p.m. in the Vikas Auditorium, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad, Telangana during IIPS National Seminar (March 7-9, 2019). Some of the Managing Committee members along with Life Members of IIPSAA including Student Volunteer Committee (SVC) were present in the Meeting. The IIPSAA President, Prof. Irudaya Rajan welcomed all the members and the Dr. K.S. James, Director & Sr. Professor, IIPS and Patron of the IIPSAA chaired the meeting. The President narrated the progress of IIPSAA for the last one year in brief and proposed to have one Global Meet of IIPS Alumni through IIPSAA in near future. The President emphasised for membership drive through its members so that it expands all over the country and worldwide. He requested all the alumni to take this responsibility of membership drive voluntarily for IIPSAA.

Dr. K.S. James, The Director & Sr. Professor of IIPS, presented a brief history and gradual progress of IIPSAA since its inception. He also shared his experiences as a member of previous Management Committee. As a Patron of IIPSAA, he addressed its members in Third GB meeting. He made an appeal to all the IIPS alumni and students to join IIPSAA and help in strengthening and expanding the activities of IIPSAA. Prof. James assured that IIPS administration will always support IIPSAA in conducting various activities for alumni and students and also advised the IIPSAA Managing Committee to prepare a proposal and calendar of activities so that IIPS can provide support to IIPSAA for the conduct of the activities. Prof. Archana K. Roy, the General Secretary, presented the minutes of last General Body Meeting for approval which were circulated to all the members by e-mail. The Members of GB unanimously approved the minutes of last GB meeting.

Prof. Roy highlighted the important features of IIPSAA since its inception and presented a detailed report on the activities of IIPSAA in previous year. She also reported that 43 new members were added to IIPSAA in last one year and as of now there are 320 members. The General Secretary stated that though the number is very small, the present Management Committee members are putting more efforts to increase the IIPSAA membership.

Dr. Dhananjay Bansod, the Treasurer of IIPSAA presented income & expenditure statement sheet before the General Body. The IIPSAA General Body unanimously approved the audited statement and income and expenditure statement of financial year 2017-18. The meeting ended with vote thanks given by the Joint Secretary, Dr. Harihar Sahoo.

Participants of GB Meeting 2019







## ALUMNI CORNER



## My Days in IIPS

After my post-graduation in Geography from Jamia Milia Islamia, I was contemplating joining a M.Phil. degree course related to population studies as my specialization was in population geography. At that time, apart from IIPS, JNU also had population studies. I got selected to both the institutes, but I chose the former as there was a monthly fellowship of Rs. 2500/-. Luckily, after the completion of one year MPS (Master of Population Studies) course, I was eligible to study further for M.Phil. with fellowship.

We used to have classes from morning 9:15 to evening 5:30 with a one-hour break for lunch. There were 50 students in our class and all were provided with hostel accommodation. There were two things unique about IIPS – one is we had a co-ed hostel and second classes were akin to our school days. We were kept very busy throughout the day; after our classes we had assignments for homework. Another thing about IIPS which I liked was its diversity. Our class had students from geography, social work, economics, anthropology, statistics and even psychology and also the students came from different parts of India. This enabled us to know about different cultures. The last two months of the course was devoted to writing a seminar paper. This was my first introduction to writing of a research papers. We were all allotted a guide under whom we did our research and we would also take the help of our seniors in writing the research paper. The real challenge was to present the seminar paper in front of all the students of IIPS and defend the research findings.

Though we had a hectic schedule of classes and assignments, our leisurely activities were never compromised. We used to celebrate the birthdays of our classmates at 12:00 midnight in the first-floor terrace with cake, chips and cold drinks. Some of us were found sweating it out at the badminton court or the table tennis arena after 8 hours of classes. IIPS had a tradition of an annual trip to Lonavala during the monsoons. We used to get *puri-bhaji* parcelled for lunch. There were some unofficial gatherings as well. Seniors used to arrange *pandal* hopping in a bus during *Durga Puja*. Most of the festivals ranging from Iftar during Ramzan to Diwali and Christmas were celebrated with equal fervour by the students with full cooperation from the Institute. At that time IIPS was not as big an Institute as it is now, but there everyone knew each other; there was lot of love and affection. After my M.Phil. I joined in the Ph.D. programme, but my best days in IIPS were the MPS and M.Phil. days. We were the last batch to have gone for a field trip to Shimla, New Delhi and Jaipur.

IIPS for me was a place of many firsts – my first seminar presentation was in the IIPS National Seminar during my MPS/M.Phil. days. My first presentation in an international conference happened during my M.Phil. days. IIPS is a platform for fulfilling the aspirations of people who come from humble backgrounds. Overall, my days in IIPS have been a journey of immense knowledge gain. The environment makes us excel in our field of study. No matter where we go, the name of IIPS carries a lot of weight. I remember an incident in China, wherein an old professor from Australia was able to recognize my Institute as his alma mater. I am proud to be a part of such an Institute and feel privileged to be working in a project at this Institute.

**Biswabandita Chowdhury**

Senior Project Officer

UNFPA funded Ageing Project at IIPS





## Proud to be an IIPSian



I completed my MPS (Master of Population Studies) degree from IIPS in 2005 then started my professional career under supervision of Prof. S.K. Singh with an ethnographic research project which was conducted in slum communities having vulnerable socio-economic characteristics. I could work in Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS-India, Round-I) project also. In total, I spent almost 4 years in the umbrella of IIPS. Those 4 years made my foundation stronger for my professional career ahead.

Though the IIPS campus is not so big but one can see and experience the diversified cultural practices of India with global touch within one roof. Classrooms, hostel, library and field life was amazing and taught so many lessons improving my personality and management skills. Faculty and Staff quarters never made me feel that I was away from home.

In-fact, I was an aspirant of UPSC Exams and went to IIPS to give my career a safer side first. But after completing the MPS degree and working in projects, it changed my future career aspirations. I did not appear in the UPSC exam then. The experiences and knowledge gained there, facilitated my social developmental hobbies into profession as well, in result I enjoy each of my assignment and work with greatest satisfaction with result oriented outcomes on lives.

### **Ajeet Kumar**

*Senior Manager, Programme Management  
National eGovernance Division  
Ministry of Electronics & IT, GoI*





## My Journey at IIPS



Before coming to IIPS, I did master in statistics from Allahabad University. After doing masters, I was keen to continue my career in higher research so was looking for the relevant institutes for higher research. During this search, I got to know about IIPS from a previous alumnus. I was glad to be part of Master of Population Studies (MPS) course at IIPS (2008-09 batch) and received training on basics of research in population sciences, application of statistics, computer applications, survey data collection and analyses, preparing a report, taking part in group discussions and professional presentations. Completion of MPS and M.Phil. course had increased my motivation to work in the research sector. What is most interesting about the courses at IIPS is I was not just learning the technical methods but also applying it to the real-world data, which still fascinates me.

After completing this course I continued my journey at IIPS and worked in large scale survey projects with international collaborators in Harvard School of Public Health, WHO and CDC Atlanta and enrolled in the Ph.D. course. I felt extremely lucky to be at such a place where I was able to use a variety of population health data sources, including the National Family Health Survey, District Level Household Survey, Global Adult Tobacco Survey, and many more data and learn about different cross-sectional and longitudinal study designs. I have completed my Ph.D. in Population Studies with the award of Prof. P.N. Mari Bhatt medal for the academic year 2013-2016, which was the best reward I could get for my work.

### Current research activities

I am always keen to contribute through my research work in statistical and methodological innovations and applications in the area of population, social science, public health, and study individual behavior. After leaving IIPS, I joined Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium as a post-doctorate fellow in 2016, where my project was granted as an Incoming Postdoctoral Fellowship by Université Catholique de Louvain and cofunded by prestigious Marie Curie Fund Actions. This project was not just a mere continuation of my previous work. It is a new public health research agenda to examine spatial local determinants of child mortality in India. After completing that project, I moved to Durham University in the United Kingdom in 2018 to work as a postdoctoral research associate statistician. I am working on randomized control design data and looking at the direct impact of interventions on child outcomes in the United Kingdom. I am thankful for the training provided at IIPS, which made me confident enough to work in other institutions worldwide in large-scale projects and adapt well to the research environment abroad.

### Advice to the current cohort of population researchers

I would suggest all students over there to take benefit from high-quality research environment provided by the institute and facilities, including access to such a vast library with access to the best journals, books and statistical software. There are huge opportunities for the population researchers not only just in the field of the population but also in public health, biostatistics, social statistics, geography, and economics as population studies is highly interdisciplinary subject. IIPS is a great place for people who do not want to be boxed in by any specific discipline but are willing to take the best scientific approaches and the most useful knowledge from each discipline. Integrating different fields is slightly harder because of the differences in methods, but still very important because of the insights this interdisciplinary nature of research can bring to society.

### Akansha Singh

*Postdoctoral Research Associate Statistician  
Durham University  
United Kingdom*



# CONFERENCE EXPERIENCES





## 13th World Congress on Health Economics

(July 13-17, 2019)

I presented my research paper entitled “Spatial Pattern of Population Ageing and Health Spending in India” at the 13th World Congress on Health Economics held in Basel, Switzerland during July 13-17, 2019. This conference is a biennial meet aimed at shared learning among the entire cohort of health economists and demographers across the world. The theme of the congress was, “New Heights in Health Economics”, a forum to engage around new methodological developments in health economics reflecting high quality, innovations and its policy implications. This was a unique opportunity for me to attend such prestigious conference.

One of the most interesting experiences for me was to meet the key note speaker of the conference, Prof. Raj Chetty, an Indian economist who had received “*Padma Shri Award*” of the Government of India along with many prestigious awards across the globe to his credit. As a scholar working on the issues of ageing and health economics, I was fortunate enough to meet the stalwarts of these disciplines namely Prof. David E. Bloom, Prof. Ke Xu, Prof. Adam Wagsatff, Prof. E.K.A. van Doorslaer, Prof. Peter Zweifel, Prof. Stefan Felder and many others. All of these have carved a niche in the field of ageing and health economics. The conference organizers were very keen in involving young researchers by organising a *Mentoring Lunch* for the Ph.D. scholars to facilitate interaction, collaboration and discussion on current issues with the world’s leading health economists and demographers. I also attended two pre-conference workshops which added exciting information about various issues of health economics. I attended many sessions of the conference which were very informative and insightful on the particular subjects.

Personally I think this conference was very well organized and very successful. I fully enjoyed the one-week event with so many interesting discussions on various topics from the delegates of different countries. Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to people and organisation who have made this event possible and those who have shared their work during that one exciting week in Basel. I urge my fellow students at IIPS to attend the next congress to be organized in 2021 in Capetown, South Africa.

**Basant Kumar Panda**

*Ph.D. Scholar  
IIPS, Mumbai*





## International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH)

(November 4-8, 2019)

This year the International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH) was organised at Xiamen, China, from 4-8 November 2019. This was the 16th conference in the series. The conference had its fair share of achievements in terms of the topics covered at the conference, pre-conference workshops, and through an amalgamation of the participants and eminent speakers from various countries. The central theme of the conference, **“People Oriented Urbanisation: Transforming Cities for Health and Well-Being,”** was indeed depicted through the various presentations covered during the conference. The conference had a well-focussed discussion on the topic of “Liveable Urban Environments, Urban Planning and Design”. This conference indeed contributed to the evidence base for urban health policies and planning. The conference was attended by many government officials from various countries to identify and implement the urban planning.

This conference was excellent exposure to me in terms of identifying the urban challenges and strategies to overcome those challenges. It provided me an opportunity to meet experts from across the regions and disciplines and also helped me in expanding the knowledge base for my research. I have also attended the preconference workshop, and it was truly an amazing experience.

The arrangements made by the conference organizers were magnificent. The participants were treated very cordially. They had arranged the pick-up and drop-off facilities for the international participants. It was indeed my pleasure to attend such a conference and would surely be attending future ICUH conferences.

### **Ratna Patel**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar  
IIPS, Mumbai*





## Professor Shekhar Mukherji (1939-2017): A Tribute



Professor Shekhar Mukherji was born in a humble family on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1939 at Varanasi. He was a 6<sup>th</sup> child among 9 children to his parents. His father was a singer and mother was a religious person. He completed his initial schooling from Anglo-Bangla School, Varanasi.

He was graduated in Physical Science and then post-graduated in Geography from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi. After completion of M.Sc., he started his career as a teacher in Geography. He taught at various schools and colleges in West Bengal between 1959 to 1970. In 1970, he went to attend the First

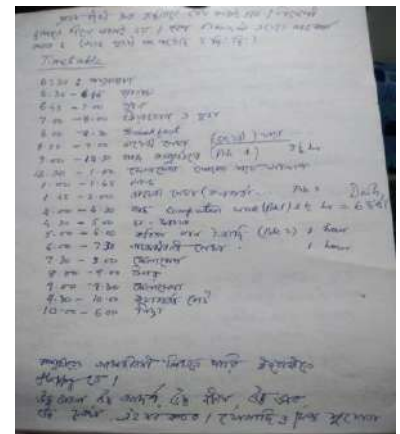
Summer Seminar on Population at East-West Centre, University of Hawaii, USA. There he got the opportunity for joining Ph.D. programme at the Centre which proved as a turning point of his life.

Prof. Mukharji obtained Ph.D. in two disciplines. One from Kolkata University in Geography and another from University of Hawaii in Demography. His first Ph.D. from Kolkata University was on the topic 'Study of Agricultural Land-use and Settlements in Darjeeling Himalayas, West of Tista'. For second Ph.D. at the University of Hawaii, he worked on 'Mobility Field Theory of Human Spatial Behaviour: A Behavioral Approach to Study of Migration and Circulation in Indian Situation' under the supervision of Prof. Murray Chapman. He was a post-doctoral fellow at Australian National University, Canberra, during 1975-76. His research areas were population problem, migration, urbanization, economic development and regional planning of South and South-Eastern Asia.

After returning from Australia, he joined as a Scientific Officer at the Department of Mathematics/Statistics/Demography in BHU, Varanasi under a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (SIR) project during 1976-77. Then he worked as a Deputy Director under CSIR project at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi between 1977 and 1979 with Prof. Ashok Mitra.

In 1979 he joined Viswa-Bharati University as a Reader in Geography and in the year 1983 he became Professor and Head of the Department. He taught at Viswa-Bharati till 1987. Then, he joined in a research project of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) at Institute of Medical Science, BHU in 1987 and worked in this project till 1989. In the year 1989, he joined at International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai as Professor and he served the Institute for twelve years till his retirement in 2001.

*A hand-written note and time table at Bellagio Study Centre, Italy, 1994*





In his 41 years of academic career, he published 28 books and technical monographs. He published over 124 research papers in national and international journals. His last book '*Migration in India: Links to Urbanization, Regional Disparities and Development Policies*' was published in 2013. He extensively worked on the issues of migration and urbanization. His contribution to demography in the form of 'Mobility Field Theory', 'Demographic Field Theory' and 'Spatial Field Theory' are remarkable.

He was elected as the president of Population Sciences Section of XXI Indian Social Science Congress 1997-98. He was a Visiting Professor at the Department of Geography, University of Hawaii in 1992 and Japan Women University and Institute of Development Economics, Tokyo from 1996-99. He was a recipient of a Rockefeller Fellowship at Bellagio Study Centre, Italy in 1994.

I worked on my Master of Population Studies (MPS) term-paper under his guidance. He used to motivate all his students to work for the poor. He was a very strict disciplinarian and was very kind at heart. He was a believer and follower of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy. He was highly religious and had a lot of interest in Bangla literature. He left this world on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Uma Mukherji and his son Mr. Vijay Mukherji. I pay my tribute to our dedicated teacher and researcher and an academician who devoted his life for demography, population studies and human geography. I acknowledge Dr. Uma Mukherji for sharing with me her experiences in the family and career graph of Prof. Mukherji. I also thank the editors for giving me a chance to write a brief biographical sketch of Prof. Mukherji.

*Prof. Mukherji with his wife and son*



**Archana K. Roy**

*Professor, IIPS Mumbai  
Department of Migration and Urban Studies*





## LIST OF IPSAA MEMBERS

Name	Membership	Email address	
01.	Dr. B.K. Gulati	Life Member	gulbk@hotmail.com
02.	Dr. Arni S. R. Srinivasa Rao	Life Member	arni2006@gmail.com
03.	Prof. Arun Kumar Sharma	Life Member	arunk@iitk.ac.in
04.	Dr. Ponapalli Krishna Murthy	Life Member	pkmurthy2001@yahoo.com
05.	Prof. F. Ram	Life Member	fram@iips.net
06.	Prof. Usha Ram	Life Member	usharam@iips.net
07.	Prof. P. Arokiasamy	Life Member	parokiasamy@iips.net
08.	Prof. K.C. Das	Life Member	kcdas@iips.net
09.	Dr. Arindam Ray	Life Member	rayrin@yahoo.com
10.	Prof. Chander Shekhar	Life Member	buddhab@iips.net
11.	Prof T.V. Sekher	Life Member	tvsekher@gmail.com
12.	Dr. Manoj Alagarajan	Life Member	alagarajan@yahoo.com
13.	Dr. Abhishek Singh	Life Member	abhishek@iips.net
14.	Dr. Aparajita Chattopadhyay	Life Member	aparajita@iips.net
15.	Dr. Sourabh Chakarborty	Life Member	saurabh@hotmai.com
16.	Dr. K.G. Santhya	Life Member	kgsanthy@popcouncil.org
17.	Prof S.K. Mohanhy	Life Member	sanjay@iips.net
18.	Prof. K.S. James	Life Member	ksjames@iips.net
19.	Mr. Sunil Sarode	Life Member	s.sarode@iips.net
20.	Ms. Pallavi Gupta	Life Member	pu.gupta.pallavi@gmail.com
21.	Ms. Garima Dutta	Student Member	garimadutta03@gmail.com
22.	Prof. Sayeed Unisa	Life Member	unisa@iips.net
23.	Prof. H. Lhungdim	Life Member	lhungdim.hem@iips.net
24.	Prof. S.K. Singh	Life Member	sksingh1992@yahoo.co.in
25.	Prof. Ladu Singh	Life Member	lslaishram@iips.net
26.	Prof. B. Paswan	Life Member	bpaswaniips@gmail.com
27.	Prof. R. B. Bhagat	Life Member	rbbhagat@iips.net
28.	Prof. D.P. Singh	Life Member	dpsingh1212@gmail.com
29.	Dr. Phrangstone Khongji	Life Member	phrang2000@yahoo.com
30.	Dr. S.L.N. Rao	Life Member	sterlingrao@gmail.com
31.	Dr. Rajiva Prasad	Life Member	rajiviips@gmail.com
32.	Ms. Nabnita Mujumdar	Life Member	singhjayakant.tiss@gmail.com
33.	Dr. Vipul Vaibhav Pandey	Life Member	vipulvaibhav.pandey@gmail.com
34.	Mr. Shubhranshu Kumar Upadhyay	Life Member	upadhyay.iips@gmail.com
35.	Mr. Bashir Ahmad Bhat	Life Member	prckashmir@gmail.com
36.	Prof. M. Guruswamy	Life Member	gmadappa@gmail.com
37.	Prof. Dhaneswar Harichandan	Life Member	dharichandan@rediffmail.com
38.	Mr. Jaykant Singh	Student Member	nabanitamajumder.iips@gmail.com
39.	Mr. Konsam Dinachand Singh	Life Member	dinakon1001@hotmail.com
40.	Mr. Prakash H. Fulpagare	Life Member	prakash_f17@yahoo.com
41.	Mr. Rakesh Kumar Singh	Student Member	rakesh5700@gmail.com
42.	Mr. Raj Narayan	Life Member	rajiips2008@gmail.com
43.	Ms. Sujata Verma	Life Member	sujatastats@gmail.com
44.	Ms. Grace Bahalen Mundu	Life Member	grace.mundu@gmail.com
45.	Ms. Anupam Shukla	Life Member	anushukla473@gmail.com
46.	Ms. Kshipra Jain	Life Member	kshipra@gmail.com
47.	Mr. Rajan Kumar Gupt	Life Member	rajan.gupt@gmail.com
48.	Ms. Ankita Siddhanta	Student Member	ankita.siddhanta@gmail.com
49.	Mr. Arunanand Murmu	Life Member	arun.pantnagar@gmail.com
50.	Prof. T.K. Roy	Life Member	tarunkroy@yahoo.com
51.	Shri K.B. Gatpagar	Life Member	prakash_f17@yahoo.com



52.	Prof. C.P. Prakasam	Life Member	c_prakasam@yahoo.com
53.	Dr. Dharendra Kumar	Life Member	dhir@iihmr.org
54.	Mr. Jetendra Gouda	Student Member	jitushome@gmail.com
55.	Ms. Manisha Dubey	Life Member	manisha.iips@gmail.com
56.	Prof. S. Parasuraman	Life member	sparasuraman@tiss.edu
57.	Prof. Sulabha Parasuraman	Life member	sulabhap@rediffmail.com
58.	Ms. Anjula Srivastava	Life member	anjula.saraff@gmail.com
59.	Dr. Manasi Bawdekar	Life member	manasibawdekar@gmail.com
60.	Mr. Ashwani Kumar	Student Member	ashwaniips17@gmail.com
61.	Mr. Ramu	Student Member	ramu.iips@gmail.com
62.	Mr. Le Truong	Life member	truongpce2005@gmail.com
63.	Dr. Alok Kumar	Life member	alokkumar@hotmail.com
64.	Prof. K. Srinivasan	Life member	sринi_02@yahoo.com
65.	Prof. Subrata Lahiri	Life Member	subrata.lahiri@yahoo.com
66.	Mr. Brajesh	Student Member	iipsalumani2014@gmail.com
67.	Prof. Sumati Kulkarni	Life Member	sumati2610@gmail.com
68.	Ms. Ranjana Kesarwani	Life Member	ranjanaiips@gmail.com
69.	Dr. Kamla Gupta	Life Member	guptak511@gmail.com
70.	Ms. Kakoli Borkotoky	Life Member	kakoli.26nov@gmail.com
71.	Ashish Kumar Gupta	Life Member	ashishatbhu@gmail.com
72.	Mr. Abhishek Kumar	Life Member	abhi85_iips@rediffmail.com
73.	Ms. Kiran Agrahari	Life Member	kiranagrahari@gmail.com
74.	Prof. Irudaya Rajan.S	Life Member	rajan cds@gmail.com
75.	Dr. Shivalingappa Sangappa Halli	Life Member	shivahalli@yahoo.com
76.	Dr. Pradeep Kumar Bhargawa	Life Member	crsi@mdurohtak.ac.in
77.	Ms. Shalini Ishwar Meshram	Life Member	shalin.meshram@gmail.com
78.	Dr. Arup Kumar Das	Life Member	arupdas2006@gmail.com
79.	Dr. Vipin Saini	Life Member	sainivipin21@gmail.com
80.	Dr. Nandita Saikia	Life Member	nandita@iegindia.gmail.com
81.	Dr. Shireen Jeejeebhoy	Life Member	sjejeebhoy@gmail.com
82.	Dr. K.M. Satynarayana	Life Member	kmsathya@gmail.com
83.	Dr. Monika Dasgupta	Life Member	mdasgupta@gmail.com
84.	Ms. Ruby Jain	Life Member	ruby.jain30@gmail.com
85.	Ms. Aparna Mukherjee	Life Member	tiya.mukherji@gmail.com
86.	Mohammad Hifz Ur Rahman	Life Member	mhifzurrahman@gmail.com
87.	Mr. Manish Singh	Life Member	manishsingh.iips@gmail.com
88.	Dr. Shalini Verma	Life Member	shalini.emails@gmail.com
89.	Dr. Parimita Dutta	Life Member	paromitaiips@gmail.com
90.	Mohd. Shannawaz	Life Member	shahnawaz725@gmail.com
91.	Dr. Harihar Sahoo	Life Member	harihar@iips.net
92.	Ms. Namita Sahu	Life Member	namitasahoo2002@yahoo.com
93.	Ms. Tanimas Basu	Student Member	tanimabasu23@gmail.com
94.	Mr. Uttam Jakoji Sonkamble	Life Member	uttamiips@gmail.com
95.	Mr. Uttamacharya	Student Member	rahulvbb@gmail.com
96.	Mr. Bidyadhar Dehury	Life Member	bidyadehury@gmail.com
97.	Mr. Prashant Kumar Singh	Life Member	prashants.geo@gmail.com
98.	Ms. Mousumi Gogoi	Life Member	gogoi.mousumi2008@gmail.com
99.	Ms. Lucky Singh	Life Member	lucky.5bhu@gmail.com
100.	Ms. Itismita Pradhan	Life Member	Itismitaipradhan16@gmail.com
101.	Mr. Anil Hiwale	Life Member	hiwaleanil@gmail.com
102.	Mr. Naveen Kumar Roy	Life Member	roynaveen@rediffmail.com
103.	Ms. Kaveri Madhukar Patil	Life Member	kaveripatil26@gmail.com
104.	Mr. Anshul Kastor	Life Member	anshulkastor@gmail.com
105.	Mrs. Neeta Govind Mali	Student Member	nitu24.6070@gmail.com
106.	Mr. Pushpendra Kumar	Life Member	pushpendra.geo@gmail.com
107.	Mr. Myank Prakash	Life Member	mayankprakash12@gmail.com
108.	Ms. Soumi Mukherjee	Life Member	soumi.mukherjee2k@gmail.com
109.	Ms. Biswabandita Chowdhury	Life Member	brahmi.on.hills@gmail.com
110.	Ms. Sarita Gunaji Pawar	Student Member	saritaiips@yahoo.co.in



111.	Mr. Prahlad Kumar	Life Member	prahladkumar26@gmail.com
112.	Mr. Jitendra Gupta	Life Member	jiitend@gmail.com
113.	Ms. Ritika Mukherjee	Student Member	writtika.mukherjee@gmail.com
114.	Ms. Atreyee Sinha	Life Member	moon.on.rocks@gmail.com
115.	Mr. Shiva Nand Chauhan	Life Member	chauhanshiva@gmail.com
116.	Mr. Narendra Kumar	Life Member	narendra07bhu@gmail.com
117.	Mr. Awdhesh Yadav	Life Member	awdhesh.stat@gmail.com
118.	Mr. Kaushalendra Kumar	Life Member	kaushalendra.1983@gmail.com
119.	Mr. Satish Kumar Chauhan	Life Member	satishkmr289@gmail.com
120.	Mr. Praveen Kailash Chokhandre	Life Member	praveenchokhandre@gmail.com
121.	Mr. Khullak Meson Maring	Life Member	kmmaring@gmail.com
122.	Dr. Sharifa Begum	Life Member	sharifa.bids@gmail.com
123.	Dr. Agnihotram Venkta Ramana Kumar	Life Member	avrkumar@hotmail.com
124.	Ms. Amrita Gupta	Life Member	amritagupta7@gmail.com
125.	Mr. Arvind Santu Jadhav	Life Member	arvina27@gmail.com
126.	Dr. B.P. Thiagarajan	Life Member	ponman2k@yahoo.com/
127.	Dr. G. Rama Rao	Life Member	garimella@gmail.com
128.	Dr. Somnath Mukherjee	Life Member	somnathmukherjee_bcc@yahoo.com
129.	Ms. Akansha Singh	Life Member	akanshasinghiips@gmail.com
130.	Ms. Kirti Gaur	Life Member	gaurk.iips@gmail.com
131.	Dr. Murali Dhar	Life Member	m.dhar@iips.net
132.	Dr. Archana K. Roy	Life Member	royarchana@iips.net
133.	Ms. Aishwarya	Life Member	aishwaryar840@gmail.com
134.	Dr. Rajiv Ranjan	Life Member	rranjan@micronutrient.org
135.	Ms. Ankita Srivastava	Student Member	ankita.srivastava148@gmail.com
136.	Mr. Raman Mishra	Student Member	raman.mishra10@gmail.com
137.	Ms. Chhavi Paul	Student Member	chhavi.paul@gmail.com
138.	Mr. Guru Vasishtha	Student Member	guruvasishth15@gmail.com
139.	Mr. Aman Raj Gupta	Student Member	aman1987raj@gmail.com
140.	Mr. Amit Kumar	Life Member	amitgeoips@gmail.com
141.	Ms. Poulomi Chowdhury	Student Member	rheamoitraiips92@gmail.com
142.	Mr. Donald Ricaldo Mawkhlieng	Student Member	mawdonric@gmail.com
143.	Mr. Jitendra Kumar	Student Member	jitu.kumar327@gmail.com
144.	Mr. Radhe Shyam Mishra	Student Member	radheshyammishra111@gmail.com
145.	Prof. R. Nagarajan	Life Member	nagarajan@iips.net
146.	Mr. Bedanga Talukdar	Student Member	bedanga.talukdar@yahoo.com
147.	Mr. Bibhishan Bhuyan	Life Member	bibhishanabhuyan@gmail.com
148.	Ms. Prashika Rajendra Kurlikar	Student Member	prash.kurlikar@gmail.com
149.	Mr. Sanyam Kapur	Student Member	kapur.sanyam@gmail.com
150.	Ms. Tanya Shrivastava	Student Member	tanya31191@gmail.com
151.	Ms. Risha Singh	Student Member	rishasingh51@gmail.com
152.	Mr. Laeek Siddiqui	Life Member	laeekraja@gmail.com
153.	Dr. Neeta Mazumdar	Life Member	mazumdarneeta8@gmail.com
154.	Ms. Ankita Kumari	Life Member	ankita.iips@gmail.com
155.	Ms. Vidya Yadav	Life Member	vidyayadavkp@gmail.com
156.	Mr. Jaymangal Chandra	Life Member	jaymangalchandra@gmail.com
157.	Mr. Prakash C.D.Meher	Student Member	prakashmeheriips@gmail.com
158.	Ms. Mamta Rajbhar	Life Member	kmmamta.manu@gmail.com
159.	Dr. U.S.Mishra	Life Member	mishra@cds.ac.in
160.	Dr. Mala Rangnathan	Life Member	malaramanathan@yahoo.co.uk
161.	Dr. Ravi Bhushan Prasad Verma	Life Member	ravi2@verma
162.	Mr. Ajit Kumar Yadav	Student Member	ajitkumaryadav1989@gmail.com
163.	Dr. Ulmiri Venkata Somayajulu	Life Member	ulmiri.vs@gmail.com
164.	Dr. K. S. Seetharam	Life Member	kseetharam@hotmail.com
165.	Dr. Sarang Pradipkumar Pedgaonkar	Life Member	sarang@iips.net
166.	Dr. Laxm Kant Dwivedi	Life Member	laxmikant@iips.net
167.	Mr. Pradeep Subhashrao Salve	Student Member	pradeep8889@gmail.com
168.	Mr. Jang Bahdur Prasad	Life Member	jbiiips12@gmail.com
169.	Mr. Rakesh Kumar	Student Member	rakesh.smith1987@gmail.com



170.	Mr. Bal Govind Chauhan	Student Member	govind.iips@gmail.com
171.	Ms. Suchandrima Chakraborty	Student Member	suchindramachakraborty@gmail.com
172.	Mr. Chhathu Kumar Sahu	Student Member	chhathukumars@yahoo.com
173.	Mr. Sidheswar Birua	Student Member	sidh.birua.bhu@gmail.com
174.	Ms. Rajeshwari Annuppa Biradar	Student Member	rajeshwaribiradar@ymail.com
175.	Mr. Mausam Kumar Garg	Life Member	mausamkumar39@gmail.com
176.	Mr. Ruchita Bhalchandra Sakpal	Life Member	ruchita.sakpal.8@gmail.com
177.	Mr. Kabir Pal	Life Member	kabirpal2008@gmail.com
178.	Mr. Hanumant Kashinatha Waghmare	Life Member	hanumantw@gmail.com
179.	Mr. Himanshu	Life Member	himanshudcsk@gmail.com
180.	Ms. Mithlesh Chourase	Student Member	mithlesh.1303@gmail.com
181.	Mr. Rajaram Yadav	Student Member	raja.smile85@gmail.com
182.	Ms. Amrapali Mukherjee	Life Member	mukherjee.amrapali@gmail.com
183.	Mr. Abhishek Kumar	Life Member	abhionline91@gmail.com
184.	Mr. Rahul Rajendra Koli	Student Member	rahul.stat1987@gmail.com
185.	Mrs. Dorthy Sudatar Tayade	Life Member	aorothy2108@gmail.com
186.	Dr. Vijaya Pradip Khairkar	Life Member	vpkhairkar@unipune.ac.in
187.	Mr. Balasaheb Madhukar Bansode	Student Member	bansodebalasaheb7@gmail.com
188.	Mr. Sachin Ramesh Lokhande	Student Member	sachinlokhande33@gmail.com
189.	Mr. Ajay Gupta	Life Member	ajaygiips@gmail.com
190.	Ms. Sritapa Chatterjee	Student Member	chatterjee.sritapa@gmail.com
191.	Mr. Sharad Kumar Suman	Student Member	shadworld@live.com
192.	Ms. Anita Pal	Student Member	palanita78@gmail.com
193.	Mr. Kumar Chiman Sinha	Student Member	chiman.iips29@gmail.com
194.	Mr. Sanjit Sarkar	Student Member	sanjitiips@gmail.com
195.	Mr. Ravindra Chowdhary	Life Member	rony.pooniya1191@gmail.com
196.	Dr. Dhananjay Wamanrao Bansod	Life Member	dhananjay@iips.net
197.	Dr. Dipti Govil	Life Member	dgovil@iips.net
198.	Dr. Manas Ranjan Pradhan	Life Member	manas@iips.net
199.	Mr. Amit Sachan	Student Member	sachanamit31@gmail.com
200.	Dr. Ruchi Jain	Life Member	ruchi_iips@yahoo.co.in
201.	Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh	Life Member	krasajay@yahoo.co.in
202.	Ms. Nidhi Jain	Life Member	jain_nidhi29@yahoo.com
203.	Ms. Bharati Maurya	Life Member	bharati.iips@gmail.com
204.	Dr. Bidhubhusan Mahapatra	Life Member	bbmahapatra@gmail.com
205.	Dr. Ravi Prakash	Life Member	ravi.prakash@phfi.org
206.	Dr. Radhakrishnan	Life Member	s.radhakrish@gmail.com
207.	Ms. Usha Radhakrishnan	Life Member	ushajohn2k@yahoo.com
208.	Arun Kumar Yadav	Life Member	arungeoiips@gmail.com
209.	Mr. Olkendra Prashad	Life Member	lokenderlokender@gmail.com
210.	Dr. Sucharita Pujari	Life Member	sucharitapujari@gmail.com
211.	Dr. Ravichandran	Life Member	ravichandraprc@gmail.com
212.	Dr. Rahul Dev Bhawsar	Life Member	rbhawsar@rediffmail.com
213.	Mr. Abhishek Saraswat	Student Member	asaraswat98@gmail.com
214.	Mr. Mukesh Ranjan	Student Member	mukeshranjan311984@gmail.com
215.	Mr. Junaid Khan	Workshop Fee	junaid@iips.net
216.	Mr. Mahadev Diganbar Bhise	Student Member	mbhise@iips.net
217.	Dr. Ravi Kumar Verma	Life Member	rverma@icrw.org
218.	Dr. Niranjana Saggurti	Life Member	niranjansaggurti@gmail.com
219.	Dr. Saritha Nair	Life Member	nairs@icmr.org.in
220.	Mr. Abhishek Gautam	Life Member	agautam@icrw.org
221.	Dr. Nilanjana Pandey	Life Member	npandey@popcouncil.org
222.	Ms. Vandana Gautam	Life Member	vanadana.gautam@gmail.com
223.	Dr. Damodar Sahu	Life Member	sahuicmr@gmail.com
224.	Dr. Sanjay Kumar	Life Member	skumar@unfpa.org
225.	Ms. Tillottama Ghosh	Life Member	waggymaggy@gmail.com
226.	Dr. Rahul Sadashiv Bawankule	Life member	rahulbams2010@gmail.com
227.	Dr. Arvind Pandey	Life member	arvindpandey@icmr.org.in
228.	Prof. N.S. Bist	Life Member	nsbist55@gmail.com

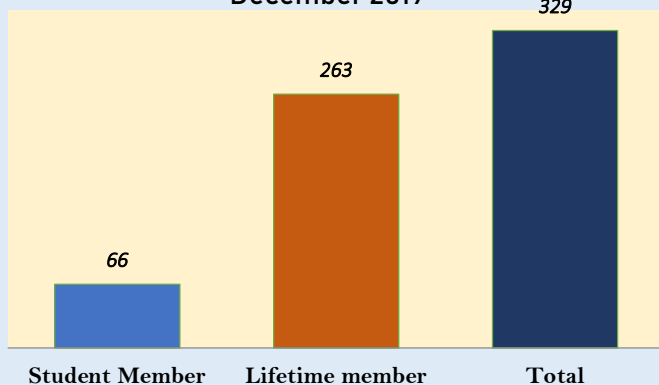


229.	Dr. Rajat Shrivra Adhikary	Life Member	radhikary@popcouncil.org
230.	Ms. Kajori Banerjee	Life Member	wonthing12@gmail.com
231.	Ms. Seri Chanda	Life Member	srei1988@gmail.com
232.	Ms. L.K. Wonthing	Life Member	kajori.b2012@gmail.com
233.	Mr. Mukesh Ravi Ranjan	Life Member	mrr.iips@gmail.com
234.	Mr. Santosh Bhagwanrao Phad	Life Member	santoshphad@gmail.com
235.	Mr. Lalit Kumar Rawat	Student Member	lalit299956@gmail.com
236.	Mr. Navaid Ali Khan	Student Member	navaidkhan85@gmail.com
237.	Mr. Imtiyaz Ali	Student Member	ali@iips.net
238.	Mr. Raj Kumar Verma	Student Member	rajverma_bh@yaho.co.in
239.	Dr. M.V. Vaithilingam	Life Member	vaidhya_iips@rediffmail.com
240.	Mr. Riohini Laxman Sapkal	Life Member	rohini.sapkal@rediffmail.com
241.	Ms. Shraboni Patra	Life Member	shrageo@gmail.com
242.	Mr. Ashish Upadhyay	Life Member	ashu100789@gmail.com
243.	Ms. Swati Srivastava	Life Member	sswati146@gmail.com
244.	Dr. Hanimi Reddy Modugu	Life Member	hreddy@icrw.org
245.	Mrs. Barasharani Maharana	Life Member	barsha.iips@gmail.com
246.	Mr. Kamalesh Kumar Patel	Life Member	kamaleshkumar.patel@gmail.com
247.	Ms. Divya Kumari	Student Member	mishradivya08@gmail.com
248.	Ms. Ankita Shukla	Student Member	ankita17shukla@gmail.com
249.	Ms. Vaishali Chaurasia	Student Member	vchaurasia09@gmail.com
250.	Mr. Rishabh Gupta	Life Member	rishabhgupta.bhu@gmail.com
251.	Mr. Solomon Debbarma	Life Member	sollu37@gmail.com
252.	Ms. Priyanka B. Bomble	Student Member	priyankabomble05@gmail.com
253.	Mr. Rahul Mishra	Student Member	iips.rahul@gmail.com
254.	Ms. Ragini J. Mishra	Student Member	ragini.1502@gmail.com
255.	Mr. Y. Selvamani	Student Member	selvinsw@gmail.com
256.	Mr. Sharban Sarkar	Student Member	shraban.sarkar@iips.net
257.	Mr. Brijesh Kumar Yadav	Student Member	brijeshyadav4431@gmail.com
258.	Mr. Pradeep Kumar	Life Member	pradeepiips@yahoo.com
259.	Mr. Rajeev Kumar	Life Member	jeh.rajeev.jeh.kumar@gmail.com
260.	Mr. Ambarish Kumar Rai	Student Member	ambarish.k.ra@gmail.com
261.	Mr. Gyan Chandra Kashayp	Student Member	statskashyap@gmail.com
262.	Ms. Sunita Patel	Student Member	sunitapatel56@gmail.com
263.	Ms. Enu Anand	Student Member	enu@iips.net
264.	Dr. Suryakant Yadav	Life Member	suryakant_yadav@iips.net
265.	Dr. Pralip Kumar Narzary	Life Member	pralipkn@gmail.com
266.	Dr. Sudhir Shrinivas Kulkarni	Life Member	naigaon55@outlook.com
267.	Dr. Arvinda Meera Guntupalli	Life Member	arvindaguntupalli@gmail.com
268.	Prof. Prem Saxena	Life Member	premsaxena2004@yahoo.com
269.	Ms. Debashree Sinha	Life Member	debashreesinha04@gmail.com
270.	Ms. Adrita Banerjee	Life Member	adrita.banerjee@yahoo.co.in
271.	Mr. Strong P. Marbaniang	Student Member	marbaniangstrong@gmail.com
272.	Mr. Ravi Kant Soren	Life Member	ravikantsoren@gmail.com
273.	Dr. Moolamattam V. George	Life Member	moolamattomgeorge@yahoo.com
274.	Dr. Atul Rameshchandra Gandhi	Life Member	gandhiar@gmail.com
275.	Dr. Arun Kumar Sinha	Life Member	aksinham.gmc@gmail.com
276.	Dr. Pandurang Jamanrao Sontakke	Life Member	pandurang.sontakke@gmail.com
277.	Mr. Rakesh Kailas Bhadane	Life Member	rakeshbhadane@yahoo.com
278.	Dr. Sanchita Dhananjay Sarang	Student Member	sanchitasarang@gmail.com
279.	Dr. Manoj Kumar Raut	Life Member	mraut@NUTRITIONINTL.ORG
280.	Dr. Jayachandran Vasudevan	Life Member	Jayachoo@gmail.com
281.	Dr. Vaijayanti Sanjeev Patwardhan	Life Member	drvpatwardhankem@gmail.com
282.	Mr. Yogesh Sudhakar Kherdekar	Life Member	ykherdekar@gmail.com
283.	Mr. Subhash Chandra	Life Member	subhash.sati@rediffmail.com
284.	Ms. Udita Chatterjee	Life Member	reachuditachatterjee@gmail.com
285.	Dr. Beena Narayan Tripathi	Life Member	beena.tripathi@ies.edu
286.	Mr. Prashant Ananda Vaidande	Life Member	vaidande31@gmail.com
287.	Dr. Dharmlingam	Life Member	dharma.arunachalam@monash.edu



288.	Mr. Rajesh Kumar Rai	Life Member	rajesh.iips28@gmail.com
289	Ms. Deepika Phukan	Life Member	deephukan93@gmail.com
290	Ms. Priyanka Vijay Janbandhu	Life Member	priyankajanbandhu@gmail.com
291	Dr. Khyati Avinash Aroskar	Life Member	4khyati@gmail.com
292	Mr. Angad Singh	Life Member	anagdhsigh219@gmail.com
293	Ms. Sreeja Nair	Life Member	sreejanair302@gmail.com
294.	Ms. Varsha Pandurang Nagargoje	Life Member	varshanagargoje@gmail.com
295.	Ms. Minakshi Vishwakarma	Life Member	minakshiiips@gmail.com
296.	Ms. Deepanjali Vishwakarma	Life Member	deepanjali.vishwakarma7@gmail.com
297.	Mr. Umenthala Srikanth Reddy	Life Member	umenthala.srikanth@gmail.com
298.	Ms. Debolina Bhaumik	Life Member	bhaumikdebolina@gmail.com
299.	Ms. Sayantani Chatterjee	Life Member	621sayantani@gmail.com
300.	Mr. Prashant Bhimrao Dongardive	Life Member	prashantbhimrao@gmail.com
301.	Mr. Mohd. Usman	Life Member	usmaniiips@gmail.com
302.	Ms. Rati Parihar	Life Member	ratiparihar23@gmail.com
303.	Mr. Prashan Kumar Mudi	Life Member	prasannamudi@gmail.com
304.	Mr. Samarul Islam	Life Member	samarulislam@gmail.com
305.	Ms. Pramita Debnath	Life Member	pfreetoflyd@gmail.com
306.	Ms. Bidita Dhar	Life Member	dharbidita@gmail.com
307.	Mr. Abhishek Sharma	Life Member	2n.abhishek@gmail.com
308.	Ms. Nutan Kumari	Life Member	nutan.dudi@gmail.com
309.	Mr. Prakash Kumar	Life Member	prakashkumar@iips.net
310.	Ms. Tanushree Dutta	Life Member	tnsrductta@gmail.com
311.	Mr. Nelson Eranklin Soy	Life Member	nelsonsoy4@gmail.com
312.	Ms. A.H. Sriithi Anil Kumar	Life Member	shrutz91@gmail.com
313.	Mr. Suyash Mishra	Life Member	suyashmishra1592@gmail.com
314.	Dr. Harshada B. Pawar	Life Member	mayankhvp85@gmail.com
315.	Dr. Vijay Sambhaji Patil	Life Member	Drvijayspatil82@gmail.com
316.	Mr. Suhas Karamdas Mankar	Life Member	suhas@iihmr.edu.in
317	Mr. Soman K.K.	Life Member	kksoman9@gmail.com
318	Mr. Sekhar Chauhan	Life Member	shekhariips2486@gmail.com
319	Mr. Satya Narayan Panchal	Life Member	panchal.sn@gmail.com
320	Dr. Latashori Keithellakpam Kshetrimayum	Life Member	hopard.rci@gmail.com
321	Dr. Lakhn Singh	Life Member	lakhan.nird@gov.in
322	Dr. Digambar Abaji Chimankar	Life Member	digambar.nird@gov.in
323	Ms. Apurva Ponnappalli	Life Member	apurva.ponnappalli2014@yahoo.com
324	Dr. Malaisamy Muniyandi	Life Member	mmuniyandi@yahoo.com
325	Mr. Raviraj N	Life Members	raviraj.iips@gmail.com
326	Mr. Rajiv Kumar Bhardwaj	Life Member	rajivkbhardwaj@gmail.com
327	Mr. Vaibhav Avinash Joshi	Life Member	vaibhavajoshi@yahoo.com
328	Ms. Ratna Patel	Life member	ratnapatelbhu@gmail.com
329	Mr. N. Brahmanandam	Life Member	brahmameco@gmail.com

### Status of IIPSAA Membership December 2019



### Student Volunteers

Ms. Deepanjali Viswakarma

Mr. Angad Singh

Ms. Labhita Das

Ms. Aditi