

Obituary of Prof. Upendra Man Malla

(November 24, 1932 – November 26, 2019)

Geographers and Academic world of Nepal cannot forget the name of late Prof. Upendra Man Malla whose disciples are spread throughout academic institutes, bureaucracy and educational sectors from school to university level.

Prof. Upendra Man Malla, known as father of Geography in Nepal and one of the founder members of the Central Department of Geography established in 1959. Moreover, Prof. Malla was known as multi-dimensional personality bureaucrat, planner and educationist.



He was born in Wotu, Gucchatole on 24th November, 1932. He studied in Durbar High School and became board 1st in 1947 SLC batch. He earned his higher level academic degrees of Intermediate of Arts (I.A.), Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Honours and Master's in Geography from Patna University, India. He received throughout first position in the first division from SLC to M.A. He earned his B. Lit. degree from Oxford University, United Kingdom in 1957. The title of his dissertation submitted to Oxford University was "Human Geography of the Valley of Nepal" which provided broad framework of changing human society and their activities between 1800 and 1950's in Nepal Valley. The Kathmandu Valley was called Nepal Valley when he accomplished his dissertation in 1957.

He started his professional career as a Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Nepal Government in 1954 and later promoted as Deputed Acting Secretary in the same ministry during the period 1954-1956 before he went to Oxford University under British Council Scholarship to pursue his B. Lit. degree. After returning Nepal

from Oxford University, he was transferred to Tri-Chandra College as an Assistant Professor under the Ministry of Education. Prof. Malla was involved in different research works such as the study of Sherpa people in Khumbu region, Nepal in 1957 along with Prof. Christopher von Furer – Haimendorf, Ausrarian Anthropologist.

He had worked as Member-cum-Secretary of District, Zone and Development Region Division Committee (1961) by the government of Nepal. The committee divided the country into 4 Development Regions, 14 Zones and 75 Districts in 1962. He was the first Dean of Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tribhuvan University from 1973 to 1976. As visiting professor, during this period, he had visited many universities of the USA and interacted with many professors. He invited a Fulbright Professor Robert Stoddard from USA to teach Quantitative Geography at the Master's level at Central Department of Geography, T.U. He was teaching the subject till then. He had played a significant role in introducing Quantitative Geography in M.A level at our department.

Prof. Malla served as member of the National Planning Commission, His Majesty's Government of Nepal for two full term from 1979 to 1989 looking after social sectors—health, education, resources and environment. In 1989 he returned to the Central Department of Geography, TU and resumed teaching till he retired in 1995. Even after his retirement he was an expert of the Geography Subject Committee in Tribhuvan University. He never hesitated to provide directions for the enhancement of the subject. He had continuously provided guidance for further enhancement of Geography and its research activities. He had contributed to frame cutting edge syllabi of Geography at par with international standard even after his formal retirement.

In addition to teaching at the Central Department of Geography, Prof. Malla had worked as researcher, project manager, in national and international research institutes like CEDA (Nepal), CERID (Nepal), CDC(Nepal), BSP (Nepal) and WHO, ICIMOD, IUCN–Nepal.

Prof. Malla was also a founder member of the Nepal Geographical Society (NGS). He was actively involved in organizing the first International Geographical Congress in 1967 which was held in Kathmandu. In this congress renowned world Geographers participated. Similarly, he was also involved in organizing another land mark conference of Geographers in Pokhara in 2004. Prof. Malla led Nepal Geographical Society more than thirty years of its history from 1966 to 2017.

Among his various national and international publications, the first noted publication is the book *Nepal Ko Bhaugolik Sampati* published by Educational Enterprises in 1964.

The Central Department of Geography has lost an eminent geographer who had played a significant role in various fields of regional/administrative division of Nepal, educational reformation, administration and research. He is remembered forever for his dynamic and visionary leadership, academic integrity, friendly and frank behaviour with his colleagues, students and fellow researchers. Prof. Malla left this world on 26th November 2019. The Central Department of Geography family has felt great loss due to his untimely demise. The CDG family wish eternal peace for the departed soul of late Prof. Malla and extend deepest condolence to his family members.