

All India Kisan Sabha

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30th August, 2022

AIKS Dips Banner in Memory of Prof.Abhijit Sen, Economist & Friend of the Peasantry

Prof.Abhijit Sen, renowned economist, expert on agriculture, rural economy and planning passed away after a brief illness. He has been closely associated with the All India Kisan Sabha and has represented the interests of the peasantry in different capacities in the Government. AIKS dips its banner in memory of Prof.Sen and extends condolences to his family and friends.

Prof.Abhijit Sen had a long academic career spanning over 4 decades. He has a PhD from Cambridge University for his thesis titled 'The Agrarian Constraint to Economic Development: The Case of India'. He had joined Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1985 and taught in Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP) till recently. He held different positions in JNU like the Chairperson of the CESP and Dean of School of Social Sciences. He also taught earlier in renowned universities like Sussex, Oxford and Cambridge.

He was appointed as the Chairperson of the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices during the United Front Government and continued in the position from 1997 to 2000. He was a member of the Planning Commission from 2004-2014. In the Planning Commission he was the strongest votary for Universal Public Distribution System, increase in public expenditure on agriculture and the importance of making agriculture remunerative. He headed important bodies on food grain policy, rural credit, fertiliser policy, agricultural marketing etc. Prof.Abhijit Sen was also a member of the 14th Finance Commission. The High Level Committee of Experts on Long Term Grain Policy with Prof.Sen heading it recommended Universal PDS for rice and wheat and for the CACP to be made a statutory body whose recommendations would be binding.

The wide expertise he had on the rural economy, agricultural pricing, rural credit and other issues ensured that different Governments sought his assistance. Even as an appointee of the Manmohan Singh led UPA Government on the Planning Commission he remained a firm advocate of Universal PDS and remunerative prices for farmers often dissenting with the official position. Prof.Sen has also served in different capacities in the UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Asian Development Bank. He also has contributed as a member of the State Planning Board in West Bengal and Tripura.

His seminal work on poverty, employment and inequality after the implementation of neoliberal economic policies as well as different writings are important contributions for understanding the Indian economy. Prof.Abhijit Sen contributed to the deliberations of the All India Kisan Sabha on many occasions and helped in formulating our position on different issues as well as in framing our alternatives to the neoliberal economic policies. He was a popular teacher in Jawaharlal Nehru University who did not shy away from taking a pro-student position supporting the students' movement whenever it faced attacks.

In his passing away we have lost a friend of the peasantry. AIKS pays our respects to him.

Sd/-
Ashok Dhawale
President

Sd/-
Hannan Mollah
General Secretary