

Prof. Sarbani Patranabis Deb (1966-2022)

Dilip Saha and Colleagues at ISI, Kolkata

Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Geological Studies Unit, Physics and Earth Sciences Division,
203 Barrackpore, Trunk Road, Kolkata – 700108, India

E-mail: dsaha@isical.ac.in

Received: 5 May 2023 / Accepted: 7 May 2023

© 2023 Geological Society of India, Bengaluru, India



Untimely passing away of Prof. Sarbani Patranabis Deb on 31 October 2022 has deeply saddened many of her colleagues, students, and friends in the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) and abroad, and painfully her family. After obtaining her Ph.D. from Jadavpur University and following post-doctoral work at Indiana University as a BOYSCAST Fellow, she joined ISI as an Assistant Professor of Geology. Her association with ISI goes back to 1990s when she joined the institute as a research fellow, becoming a faculty member in due course and rising to the level of professor, head of the department and an academic division all due to her people-skill, research acumen, perseverance, dedication, natural friendliness, and rare innate strength.

Prof. Patranabis Deb was one of the leading sedimentologists and stratigraphers in India, and a fine field geologist. Together with her students and colleagues, she worked extensively in the Proterozoic basins of India, leading to a new geochronologically constrained modern stratigraphic framework for the Chhattisgarh basin, correlations between Proterozoic basins in the Southern Indian Block, and sedimentary tectonics. She combined traditional fieldwork-based approach and sequence stratigraphy tools for sedimentological studies of clastic and carbonate successions, which culminated in publications on Proterozoic basins and craton-evolution in leading earth science journals.

Sarbani was instrumental in establishing several collaborations with scientists in India and elsewhere, namely Indiana University, University of Johannesburg, University of Adelaide, Durham University, University of Warsaw, etc., and was a visiting scientist

abroad. Her work earned her several awards and honours including the National Geosciences Award and the Slater Fellowship of Durham University. Prof Sarbani was a Life Fellow of the Geological Society of India, and was invited to deliver a talk on her work on the Chhattisgarh basin at one of their monthly meetings. She was an elected Fellow of the West Bengal Academy of Science and Technology, life member of the Mineralogical Society of India, member of the SEPM Society for Sedimentary Geology, International Association of Sedimentologists, and Sigma Xi, USA.

She also served the wider earth science community as a member of the editorial boards of Geological Magazine and Geological Journal, and participated as an indispensable member in a number of international field workshops.

Prof. Sarbani would always be remembered as a graceful and kind person who never hesitated to respond to a person in need. Her students could freely walk into her office and discuss their problems, whether research related or personal. A kind yet brave soul, Prof. Patranabis Deb was well liked and respected by people who came in contact with her. She had to be in and out of hospital for treatment during the last one year, but fought her medical battles valiantly; she even taught classes in the interim periods of remission despite failing health.

Prof. Sarbani was devoted to her family and is survived by her geologist husband, two sons, her mother, a brother, and a sister. The best way to pay homage to this great soul is to celebrate her work, her indomitable spirit, her unbounded love and care for people around her, contribution to the community, and carry forward her unfinished work on Proterozoic basins of India.