

Memorial **(Professor J. R. Rele)**

On Tuesday, the 13th of November 1990, Professor J. R. Rele, former Director of International Institute for Population Sciences, Bombay and former Vice President of Indian Association for the Study of Population passed away. Every one who knew him and came in contact with him is saddened over the sudden passing away of an eminent demographer and a thorough gentleman.

Born in 1931, Professor Rele, after a brilliant academic record, joined the International Institute for Population Sciences, Bombay (erstwhile Demographic Training and Research Centre, Chembur). Rele had also been an alumnus of this Institute as he was trained at the DTRC in its very first batch (1957-59). Within four years of his rejoining the Institute he was elevated to the post of a Professor. As an acting Director he steered the Institute through the turbulent period of 1973 to 1976. He became the full-fledged Director of the Institute in 1977. After leaving IDPS, Professor Rele joined the Division of Population and Social Affairs, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok as Technical Adviser. Just before his death he was Adjunct Professor of Public Health and Affiliate Graduate Faculty in Population Studies, at the East-West Population Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Professor Rele held a Master's degree in Statistics, Diploma in Demography and Ph.D. in Sociology from University of California, under the guidance of Professor Kingsley Davis. Thus a beautiful blend of a statistician, demographer and sociologist could be seen in his research work. His work on estimation of fertility and mortality through an application of the concept of stable population has contributed a great deal towards the development of the discipline of population sciences. His method known as Rele's method of estimating fertility and mortality using age-sex distribution obtained from various censuses is useful for countries with incomplete or unreliable data like India. The method has the advantage that it can be applied to any type of population—unstable and affected by migration—in his words, "to any eccentric population".

Those who had been fortunate to be his students can never forget his efficient style of unfolding even very difficult topics. It was a pleasure to hear JRR explaining GRR and NRR.

Professor Rele was a soft-spoken, mild-mannered and a modest person. He possessed a strong inner character and did not falter to stick to his convictions though it was at times disadvantageous to him. During Emergency, Professor Rele had reservations about the introduction of compulsory sterilization bill in Maharashtra. After Emergency, Professor Rele was proved to be right and his stand was vindicated.

It was a great pleasure to be with Professor Rele as his colleague. The sudden demise of Professor Rele is a tremendous loss to the community of Indian demographers. We at UPS will miss him.

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