

Obituary

Prof Rajinder Kumar



(September 9, 1934- February 7, 2022)

Prof Rajinder Kumar, FNAE, Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Honorary Professor at JNCASR born on September 09, 1934 passed away on February 7, 2022. He was elected to INAE Fellowship in the year 1987 and was affiliated to Engineering Section IV (Chemical Engineering).

Prof. Kumar was born in Punjab and was educated in Punjab and Delhi Universities. He joined Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, then known as Tata Institute, in 1958 and remained associated with the Institute in various capacities for 64 years till his passing. After his superannuation in 1995, he continued his association with the chemical engineering department at IISc and was also an Honorary professor at JNCASR. A brilliant chemical engineer, Prof Kumar was among the pioneering contributors to an analytical approach to chemical engineering problems in India. His various contributions on multiphase phenomena, in particular bubble and drop phenomena, sonochemistry, foam beds, to mention a few of the many themes he investigated, are well cited and have inspired large tracts of research in those areas. A feature of his approach in research was a keen awareness of the practical angle even as he dwelt in esoteric theoretical concepts. His contributions to what have come to be known as Appropriate technology are well known and documented. Prof Rajinder Kumar, had made significant research contributions in the field of Chemical Engineering including Multiphase Phenomena. He was among the pioneering contributors to an analytical approach to chemical engineering problems. His various contributions on multiphase phenomena, in particular bubble and drop phenomena, sonochemistry, foam beds are well cited and have inspired further research. A feature of his approach in research was a keen awareness of the practical angle along with theoretical concepts.

Prof Kumar's contributions to the engineering profession have been equally stellar. A large part of the credit for building up the chemical engineering department to the status it occupies today as one of the foremost centres of research and learning in the country, goes to him. His contributions on various Government bodies and boards have been very significant. He served IISc in various administrative capacities, and also served on the governing body of CSIR.

Prof Kumar was one of the most highly decorated chemical engineers in the country, with the SS Bhatnagar award from CSIR, Vasvik award, Om Prakash Bhasin award and SS Bhatnagar medal of INSA, to mention a few. He was a Fellow of INSA, IASc and INAE. For his multifarious contributions to the profession and the nation, the Government of India awarded him the Padma Bhushan in 2003.

Above all, Prof Kumar was a warm human being, always jovial and friendly. He was a great nurturer of young talent. His direct students as well as a much larger body of students he touched directly or indirectly have themselves gone on to make very significant contributions to the engineering profession and the country.

May God bless his soul to Rest in Peace.

Written by Prof. A.K. Suresh, FNAE