

## Dr. M.N. Das: A Profile



Dr. Manindra Nath Das, a renowned statistician, was born on February 1, 1923 at Khalishpur, district Khulna, Bangladesh. After obtaining his initial education in Khulna, he joined the Calcutta University from where he received a Master's degree in Statistics in 1945. He also obtained a Ph. D. degree from Calcutta University in 1965. Soon after obtaining his M.Sc. degree, he joined the Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute (IASRI) in 1946 and began his illustrious research and teaching career. At IASRI, he held the positions of Professor, Senior Professor and eventually Director. During his long stint at IASRI, he made path breaking contributions to different areas of Statistics, notably in Design and analysis of experiments. Dr. Das' research encompassing multiple areas reflects an amazing versatility and depth. He always paid attention to the most challenging problems and came up with ingenious ideas that enhanced our understanding significantly. It is near impossible to describe all the research contributions of Dr. Das in a limited space, and so, in what follows only a few examples of his major contributions is provided.

One of the early contributions of Dr. Das was on reinforced incomplete block designs. These designs were subsequently found to be extremely important in the context of control-test comparison experiments. In 1960, Dr. Das introduced a new class of designs, called circular designs, which are closely related to the well-studied cyclic designs. Another major contribution of Dr. Das was on developing a somewhat unified method of constructing confounded designs for asymmetrical factorial experiments. This work was subsequently followed up by several important and widely cited papers on asymmetrical factorial designs. Since the introduction of rotatable designs by Box and Hunter in 1957, several researchers, including Dr. Das concentrated on the methods of construction of these designs. In a major paper in 1962, Dr. Das (with one of his students) demonstrated how second and third order rotatable designs could be constructed via balanced incomplete block designs. This work was widely cited and several other researchers subsequently followed the basic method proposed by Dr. Das to generate new families of rotatable designs. Another area of research of Dr. Das was on finding incomplete block designs for biological assays. His work in this area has now become a classic. Designing experiments with mixtures was yet another area in which Dr. Das made significant contributions. He also authored/coauthored several books, which have been received well in academic circles. In particular, his book on Design and analysis of experiments is now a standard reference and is followed as a text in several Indian universities.

After spending three decades at IASRI, he joined the Central Water Commission as Director of Statistics and retired from there in 1981. While being a great researcher, Dr. Das was always mindful of his responsibilities as a teacher. He was a motivating teacher, often presenting the concepts and results from an intuitive angle. He supervised the research of more than 30 Ph. D. students. As a research supervisor, he was extremely kind to his students, often discussing their problems well beyond the office hours.

Dr. Das received many honours. He was elected the President of the Statistics Section of the Indian Science Congress in 1980. Based on his lifetime contributions, he was awarded the Professor PV Sukhatme National Award in Statistics from Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India. He also received the Sankhyiki Bhusan Award from the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics. He was the founder president of the Society of Statistics, Computer and Applications, Vice President of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, Chair Editor of the journal, Statistics and Applications and was on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics.

Though he left us for heavenly abode on 09 January 2012, he will always live in the hearts of his students and colleagues. He will be remembered not only for his academic excellence but also for his kindness towards one and all, and for his humility and simplicity.