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Prof Padmanabhan suffered a heart attack at his residence and passed away



Mrityunjay Bose, DHNS, Mumbai, SEP 17 2021, 15:49 IST | UPDATED: SEP 17 2021, 20:45 IST



Thanu Padmanabhan. Credit: Wikimedia commons

Hailing from Kerala and recipient of the coveted Padma Shree, Prof Padmanabhan, a theoretical physicist and cosmologist, was the Dean of the Academic Department at Pune Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA).

He was 64.

He is survived by his wife Vasanthi Padmanabhan and daughter Hamsa Padmanabhan.

Prof Padmanabhan suffered a heart attack at his residence and passed away.

of the most-cited authors in the Physical Sciences in India. His textbooks are some of the most widely-read in the subject, and each of his popular books on science and the history of science is unique in every way.

Prof. Thanu Padmanabhan had a high level of scholarship in many areas of theoretical physics. He has published research works in Quantum and Classical Gravity, Cosmology, and Structure Formation in the Universe. In his entire career, Prof. Padmanabhan authored a phenomenal 300 papers, cited by other researchers around the world around 16,000 times. He supervised 18 Ph.D. students who are themselves leading academics in the top Universities and research institutes of the country. Prof. Thanu Padmanabhan was well known across the global scientific community for his books on Astrophysics and Cosmology, considered landmark references for researchers and teachers worldwide. His passion for innovative teaching methodologies is reflected in his hugely popular books. In India and abroad, he was considered a brilliant teacher, and his lectures provided creative and original approaches to this challenging field of theoretical field of Science. Prof. Thanu Padmanabhan's research gives a new insight into the confluence of General Relativity and Quantum Theory to recognize the critical theoretical problems from a deeper, more fundamental perspective and attempt to solve them.

His long career started in the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research for his Ph.D. in 1979 and receiving an M.Sc. degree in Physics from the University College, Kerala University. He won the Gold Medal of the University for topping both the B.Sc. and M.Sc. courses. Prof. Padmanabhan did his doctoral research work in Quantum Cosmology under the renowned Prof. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar.

passed away this morning as a result of a cardiac arrest,” he said.

K VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, tweeted: “Shocked to hear of the passing of Prof Thanu Padmanabhan. His research linking general relativity and thermodynamics in new ways, and in other areas, has been widely recognized. Scholar, communicator, extraordinary scientist, friend to many. He will be much missed.”

Born on 10 March 1957, Prof Padmanabhan was known for his research on dark energy and gravity. He completed primary education at Karamana High School.

He joined the Government Arts College for pre-degree. He did his undergraduate and post-graduate in Physics from the University College, Thiruvananthapuram.

Later, he joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) for his PhD in Quantum Cosmology. He also spent a year in the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge.

Prof Padmanabhan has authored over 300 research papers and several books.

Prof Padmanabhan served also as Adjunct Faculty of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai), the Harish-Chandra Research Institute (Allahabad), the Raman Research Institute (Bangalore) and the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER, Pune) at different periods in his career. He was an adjunct faculty of IISER, Mohali.

Prof Padmanabhan served as the Chairman (2006–09) of the Time Allocation Committee of the Giant Meterwave Radio Telescope of NCRA. He was the Chairman (2008–11) of the Indian National Science Academy's National Committee which interfaces with the activities of the International Astronomical Union.

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