

Obituary

Prof. S. Neelakantan

(19 December 1935—19 March 2023)



It is with profound sadness that we note the passing away of Prof. S. Neelakantan, former director of MIDS. Prof. S. Neelakantan began his career with a brief stint as an advocate at the Madras High Court (1958–60). He joined as Assistant Lecturer of Economics at Government Arts College, Ooty in October 1960. His doctoral research was on *Property Rights, Indian Constitution and Economic Change*. He received his doctoral degree in 1979. He returned to government service as Professor and Head of Economics department of Government Arts College, Tiruvarur in 1979.

In 1980, Prof. Neelakantan was appointed as Professor of Economics of the Madras University and was posted to its Post Graduate Centre at Tiruchirappalli. As the only Professor of Economics of the then newly started Bharathidasan University, he guided many research scholars. His areas of interest included Law and Economics, New Institutional Economics, transport economics, development economics and human capital.

In 1986–87, Prof. Neelakantan won a Fulbright Fellowship and went to Washington University, St. Louis where he learnt New Institutional Economics from Douglass C. North (later Nobel laureate in 1993). Influenced by Prof. North's ideas, Prof. Neelakantan published a paper, in 1988, on *Stability and Change during the Rule of Slave Dynasty in India, AD 1206 to 1290: An Interpretation through New Institutional Economics*.

By 1990, Prof. Neelakantan was Professor and Head of the Department of Economics, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli. With decades of service as a teacher of economics, he joined MIDS as its Director in July 1990. As MIDS director, he brought in many administrative changes for the betterment of the institute, faculty and staff, that reflect to this day. He retired from MIDS on 31 December 1995.

He lived in Tiruchirapalli till 1998 before retiring to his hamlet, Chettipalayam in Karur District. Even after his retirement, his association with MIDS continued. He authored three books in Tamil—*Oru Nagaramum Oru Gramamum* (2008), *Chevviyal Porulatharam: Adam Smith muthal Karl Marx varai* (2012), and *Navasevviyal Poruliyal* (2021). Further, the Tamilnadu Textbook Society has republished two of his books on Neoclassical Economics recently. His manuscript on *Socioeconomic Change in Western Tamilnadu* will soon be published by MIDS.