



P. L. Swastan

## PIARE LAL SRIVASTAVA

(1898–1970)

Elected F. N. I. 1935

PIARE LAL SRIVASTAVA, a brilliant student, an eminent mathematician, a specialist in the field of 'Theory of Functions' was an organizer, administrator and educationist of the highest order. A brilliant teacher, he was intimately acquainted with problems pertaining to research, teaching and administration in the country.

### CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION

Piare Lal was born the son of Munshi Jeorakhan Lal on February 11, 1898, in village Uttha of Tehsil Billaour in Kanpur district, U.P. He started his formal primary education at Hathgaon. His teacher at the Town School, Hathgaon saw his brilliance and potentiality and advised his father to shift him to the district town of Fatehpur where he studied in the Government High School up to the matriculation stage. He passed the matriculation examination of Allahabad University in 1915 in first division. He was a Government Scholar having passed in first division with distinction in Mathematics in the Vernacular Final examination in 1910 and having topped in U.P. at the High School Scholarship examination in 1913. In 1915, he joined the Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College at Allahabad and subsequently passed the Intermediate examination in 1917 in the first division.

Principal J. Sen, his mathematics teacher at K. P. Intermediate College, writes :  
*“As an old teacher of his, I can still remember P. L. Srivastava sitting in my classes and displaying amazing aptitude for the study of Mathematics which distinguished him from his dim contemporaries at College. In natural intelligence, quick grasp of principles and his capacity of tackling the most baffling problems, he outshone all his fellow students.....”*

### UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Muir Central College of Allahabad University was a renowned educational centre which attracted brilliant students from all over India. Young Piare Lal Srivastava joined the B.A. first year class at Muir Central College in 1917. He passed the B.A. Examination of Allahabad University in 1919 and obtained first division and first position, breaking records in Mathematics.

He selected mathematics for his post-graduate studies and got first division first position at the M. A. (Pre.) examination in 1921 and then topped at the M. A.



(Final) examination in 1922. In recognition of his brilliant academic performance, the Allahabad University awarded him the 'Homersham Cox Gold Medal' for standing first in Mathematics at the combined B.A. and B.Sc. examination of 1919 and the 'Queen Empress Victoria Jubilee Medal' for standing first in the combined M.Sc. examination of two consecutive years 1921 and 1922.

### TEACHING, RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

The University of Allahabad appointed him as Lecturer in Mathematics in August 1922. The State Government offered him the post of a Deputy Collector which he declined in order to pursue academic activity. Within three years, he was awarded a Government scholarship for higher study in England and he joined the New College of Oxford University in September 1925 to do research under the eminent Mathematician Professor G. H. Hardy. In a record time of two years, Piare Lal Srivastava submitted a thesis on '*Theory of Functions of Complex Variable*' which was examined by Professor E. G. C. Poole and G. N. Watson. He was awarded the D. Phil. degree in 1927 by the Oxford University on this brilliant work. Some of his research papers made a notable contribution to our mathematical knowledge, and passed through the hands of such distinguished mathematicians as Professor Hadamard of France and Professor Littlewood of Cambridge. Dr Srivastava's papers published in *Comptes Rendus and Bulletin Societe Mathematique des France* were communicated by Professor Hadamard. Professor Titchmarsh of Oxford paid rich compliments to him while reviewing his work in "*Science Progress*" of July 1929 and included one of his papers in his book "*Introduction to the Theory of Fourier Integrals*" published in 1937.

Dr Srivastava returned to India and continued his teaching and research activity at Allahabad University. He was an excellent teacher, known for his clarity of thought and expression and more so for his capacity to solve any problem in a most relaxed manner. He was appointed Reader in Mathematics at Allahabad University in 1929. In February 1950, he was appointed a temporary Professor of Mathematics and in July 1952, he took over as a permanent Professor and Head of the Mathematics Department in the University of Allahabad. He organized the teaching and research in the Department very effectively. In view of his popularity, he was requested to shoulder the responsibility as Dean of Student Welfare from 1958 to 1960.

### HONOURS

He was elected Fellow of the National Institute of Sciences of India in 1935. Dr P. L. Srivastava was a close associate of Professor Meghnad Saha and was associated with the National Academy of Sciences, India, to which he was elected Fellow in 1931. He served as its Hon. General Secretary from 1935 to 1938 and again from 1945 to 1948. He was President of the Academy from 1955 to 1957. He delivered the Presidential Address at the Silver Jubilee Session of the National Academy of Sciences in December 1955 on "*Dirichlets' Series*". He again presided over the 26th Annual Session of the National Academy of Sciences in February



1957 at Aligarh and delivered the Presidential Address on "*Theory of Functions and allied topics.*" The National Academy of Sciences received his guidance and support throughout his life time.

### FAMILY LIFE AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

Having lost his mother when he was hardly six months old, Srivastava spent his early life with his uncle, aunt and father besides his elder brother, Sri Gajadhar Prasad and a sister. Living in a joint middle class family, he developed qualities of simple living, tolerance and adjustment.

In 1921, he was appointed personal tutor to the Raja Saheb of Korea, a princely state of the Central Provinces and Berar. It is during this assignment that he met Shyam Kumari Srivastava, daughter of Munshi Raghbir Prasad, who was the Superintendent of Korea State and later became the Dewan of Kanker State. Piare Lal Srivastava married Shyam Kumari in May 1922. "*Mem Saheb*" was a source of great strength to the happy family consisting of four sons Prabhat, Sushil, Rajendra and Ajit and one daughter Pratibha. Sushil was a Lt. Col. in the Army and the other three sons are highly placed business executives. Dr Srivastava was a very successful social figure. His serene and ever smiling countenance attracted a number of friends. He did not lose his temper under the most provocative circumstances. His capacity to argue a case and persuade others to accept his point of view was his biggest asset. In recognition of his academic brilliance and service to society, he was given the title of *Rai Saheb* in 1939.

### EDUCATIONIST, ORGANIZER AND ADMINISTRATOR

As an educational organizer, Dr Piare Lal Srivastava took active interest in the affairs of the Kayastha Pathshala, a premier educational trust of North India, founded by the Late Munshi Kali Prasad Kulbhaskar in 1873. In 1950, he took charge of the Kayastha Pathshala as its Receiver and immediately embarked upon a programme of educational expansion. He noticed that a large number of students who wanted to pursue the study of Sciences at the Degree level were unable to do so due to limited accommodation in the University. He planned degree college under the K. P. Trust primarily for teaching B.Sc. classes and succeeded in starting the Chaudhaary Mahadeo Prasad degree college associated with the University of Allahabad. This college now teaches B.A. B.Sc., B. Com., and LL.B. classes and is the largest Associated college of the University. In 1952, Dr Srivastava was elected to the High office of the President of Kayastha Pathshala. He remained President of this great institution from 1952 to 1956, from 1962 to 1966 and again from 1967 till he expired after a brief illness on July 13, 1970. During his tenure, he upgraded the Agriculture College to postgraduate level, affiliated to the Kanpur University and started a training college, besides a Girls's school. It can easily be said that Allahabad owes a great deal to Dr Srivastava because it is due to his foresight and determined efforts that Kayastha Pathshala today provides education to a large number of students in science, agriculture, arts, commerce, law and education in its many institutions. His devotion to duty and precision in thinking



were among other qualities, responsible for his success in the educational organization.

He served the cause of education as member of the Legislative Council of the State of Uttar Pradesh also. He remained a Member of the Council for about ten years representing graduates and teachers. In this capacity he took active part in several educational legislations.

He showed excellent administrative capability in the field of education when he worked as the Vice-Chancellor of Bihar University, Muzaffarpur from 1962 to 1965. His contribution to the development of Allahabad University, while working as member of its Executive Council, court and other bodies is well known.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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KRISHNAJI

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