

India & Media: 101 social scientists express concern over Economic & Political Weekly editor's resignation

Sunday 17 January 2016, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 15 January 2016).

Sunil Khilnani, Ramachandra Guha and Jayati Ghosh are among those who appeal to trust that publishes the prestigious journal to retain C Rammanohar Reddy in a significant capacity.

Full text: 101 social scientists express concern over EPW editor's resignation

A group of 101 social scientists have written a letter to the Sameeksha Trust, which publishes the Economic & Political Weekly, expressing their concern over C Rammanohar Reddy's announcement last week that he was resigning as editor of the prestigious journal, amidst reports of friction with the board.

The departure of Reddy, who will officially step aside in March, was somewhat surprising as he had been preparing a number of special projects to commemorate the journal's 50th anniversary. These plans, in fact, reportedly resulted in some differences between Reddy and the board of the Sameeksha Trust.

On Friday, the group of scientists expressed their apprehensions about the "unusual circumstances" in which Reddy had stepped down. They appealed to the trustees of the Sameeksha Trust to reconsider their decisions and at least involve Reddy as a member of the Board of Trustees, in addition to being allowed to continue the activities he had planned to celebrate the journal's golden jubilee.

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The full statement

Here is the full statement:

Dear Trustees,

We write to you today as longstanding admirers of EPW and as proud members of the “EPW community” that has benefited from the existence of this unique and high-quality journal. We wish to express our concern at what we have heard of the unusual circumstances in which the incumbent Editor of the Economic and Political Weekly, Dr. Rammanohar Reddy, who had decided to step down in April 2016 but had agreed to continue as Editor-in-Chief or in some other position as requested by the Board of Trustees, has chosen to formally announce that he is resigning from his position as Editor and severing all links with the institution.

In our view, Ram Reddy’s decision to accept the role of Editor at a crucial juncture in the history of the journal, despite the considerable personal (and economic) sacrifice it involved, was only the first indication of his commitment to the journal and its objectives. In the eleven years since then, he has succeeded in transforming the journal into a consistently excellent and contemporary periodical, which is widely seen as an internationally unrivalled journal – one that combines fine scholarship with social conscience. He has done much to streamline organisational functioning, significantly improve and diversify journal content, stabilise the journal’s financial position, mobilise additional resources to expand editorial staff and enable EPW to have its own office, give EPW a strong online presence with commercially marketed archival access, and strengthen the EPW Research Foundation. In sum, Ram Reddy as Editor did an exceptional job of re-energizing and contemporizing EPW at a time when many felt it was showing its age and at risk of losing its edge. All this he did in a self-effacing and accommodating style that has won him respect and admiration across ideological lines.

It would indeed be profoundly unfortunate if such dedication, personal sacrifice, and unstinting effort from an extremely successful Editor were to end in an unhappy and ungracious parting of the ways between him and the EPW Board of Trustees. We understand that the Board had questioned the appropriateness of his efforts to produce a set of volumes and a documentary to commemorate the completion in 2016 of fifty years of the journal’s existence, even though he had organised the required funding from outside. In addition, he had been excluded from any role in the future governance of the journal and also kept out of the formal process of finding a successor, even though he clearly is the person most thoroughly involved with and informed about the editorial and financial conditions and requirements of the journal, and therefore conscious of its future needs. We believe that involving him as a member of the Board of Trustees would be a natural next step following his retirement, and one that would be widely welcomed in the broader community of contributors and readers of EPW.

We therefore sincerely request the Board of Trustees to reconsider its decisions in this regard, so that all of us feel secure about the future of the journal and can participate with full enthusiasm in the celebrations to mark the fifty years of EPW’s existence. We propose that Ram Reddy be asked to take up and continue the activities he had planned to celebrate this anniversary. We also strongly urge that he be included and given a role in the process of selecting the new Editor, and that such a selection be done in an open and transparent manner with all Trustees invited to be part of that process. We believe that in the interests of continuity and to build on the achievements registered during his tenure, it would be ideal if Ram Reddy is persuaded to take on a role in the transition to a new editorial regime and in the future governance of the EPW, preferably as a Trustee.

The progressive and democratic character and legacy of the EPW all suggest that once they appoint the Editor, the Chairman and Trustees of Sameeksha Trust, who are non-executive Trustees, must scrupulously respect his or her editorial independence and judgment and must not seek to exercise hands-on control over the way EPW is managed and run, as long as the Editor keeps the Board of Trustees informed. The EPW is in effect a public institution, not only because it receives substantial support from public sources like the Reserve Bank of India, the UGC and the ICSSR, but because, as Ram Reddy puts it in his letter announcing his departure, finally, “it is the larger ‘EPW community’

of writers, readers, staff, and a large circle of associates that has looked after it through good times and bad and helped it grow.”

We are all deeply committed to maintaining the democratic, progressive, and independent character of the EPW. It is in that spirit that we write to you: in the hope and expectation that these suggestions will be taken on board in the decisions that you make in the days ahead.

In addition, we would be happy to help in any way that we can and that you find appropriate. We recall that within a few years of his taking over, Ram had a very fruitful brainstorming session with some members of the “EPW community” on the future directions which EPW could take. We believe that such a meeting might be extremely useful in the current context, and if you choose to call such a meeting with some of us, we would be happy to attend.

1. Itty Abraham, National University of Singapore
2. Dilip Abreu, Princeton University, USA
3. Isher Ahluwalia, Chairperson, Indian Council for Research into International Economic Relations, Delhi
4. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Former Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Government of India
5. Sabina Alkire, George Washington University, USA
6. Venkatesh Athreya, former Professor, Bharatidasan University, Tamil Nadu
7. Amiya Kumar Bagchi, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata
8. Abhijit Banerjee, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA
9. Pranab Bardhan, University of California, Berkeley, USA
10. Amita Baviskar, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University
11. Rana P. Behal, Delhi University
12. Aditya Bhattacharjee, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University
13. Neeladri Bhattacharya, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
14. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata
15. Akeel Bilgrami, Columbia University, New York, USA
16. Sugata Bose, Harvard University, USA
17. Achin Chakraborty, Director, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata
18. Pinaki Chakraborty, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi
19. C. P. Chandrasekhar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
20. Partha Chatterjee, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata
21. Sudip Chaudhuri, Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata

22. Anuradha Chenoy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
23. Kamal Mitra Chenoy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
24. Angus Deaton, Princeton University, USA
25. Ashwini Deshpande, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University
26. Satish Deshpande, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University
27. Ritu Dewan, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai
28. Biswajit Dhar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
29. Navroz Dubash, Centre for Policy Research, Delhi
30. Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Ashoka University, Delhi
31. Rajmohan Gandhi, University of Illinois, USA
32. Jayati Ghosh, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
33. Ramachandra Guha, historian, writer, Bangalore
34. Irfan Habib, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
35. K. N. Harilal, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram
36. Barbara Harriss-White, Oxford University, UK
37. Zoya Hasan, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
38. Neeraj Hatekar, Director, Department of Economics, University of Mumbai
39. Himanshu, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
40. Christophe Jaffrelot, Director, CERI, UniversiteSciences Po, Paris
41. Devaki Jain, economist, Delhi
42. Praveen Jha, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
43. T. Jayaraman, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
44. Surinder Jodhka, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
45. Mary E. John, Centre for Women's Development Studies, Delhi
46. Chitra Joshi, Delhi University
47. Kalpana Kannabiran, Director, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad
48. K. P. Kannan, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram
49. S. Mahendradev, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of development Research, Mumbai

50. Mukul Kesavan, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi
51. Sushil Khanna, Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata
52. Sunil Khilnani, Kings College, London
53. Atul Kohli, Princeton University, USA
54. K. L. Krishna, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi
55. N. Krishnaji, economist, Hyderabad
56. Maithreyi Krishnaraj, researcher, Mumbai
57. Sashi Kumar, Chairman, Media Development Foundation, Chennai
58. Kalyani Menon-Sen, researcher, Delhi
59. Shireen Moosvi, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
60. Chandan Mukherjee, Ambedkar University, Delhi
61. Rinku Murgai, The World Bank, New Delhi
62. Dilip Nachane, Indira Gandhi Institute for Development Research, Mumbai
63. R. Nagaraj, Indira Gandhi Institute for Development Research, Mumbai
64. S. Narayanan, former Ambassador of India to WTO
65. Pulin Nayak, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi
66. Parthapratiim Pal, Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata
67. Suhas Palshikar, University of Pune, Pune
68. Rohini Pande, Harvard University USA
69. S. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
70. Prabhat Patnaik, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
71. Utsa Patnaik, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
72. Seeta Prabhu, economist, Mumbai
73. Srinath Raghavan, Centre for Policy Research, Delhi
74. Indira Rajaraman, Member, Central Board of Governors, RBI
75. N. Ram, Chairman, Kasturi & Sons Ltd, The Hindu group of newspapers, Chennai
76. M.V. Ramana, Princeton University, USA
77. T. T. Rammohan, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad

78. Mahesh Rangarajan, Ashoka University, Delhi
79. Vikas Rawal, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
80. Amit Shovon Ray, Director, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram
81. Partha Ray, Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata
82. D. Narasimha Reddy, Institute of Human Development, New Delhi
83. Tirthankar Roy, London School of Economics and Political Science, London
84. E. A. S. Sarma, former Secretary, Government of India
85. Abhijit Sen, former Member, Planning Commission, Government of India
86. Pronab Sen, Chairman, National Statistical Commission
87. Mihir Shah, former Member, Planning Commission, Government of India
88. Dipa Sinha, Ambedkar University Delhi
89. Atul Sood, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
90. Ravi Srivastava, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
91. S. Subramaniam, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai
92. Padmini Swaminathan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad
93. S. K. Thorat, Chairman, ICSSR, New Delhi
94. Jeemol Unni, Director, Institute of Rural Management, Anand
95. A. Vaidyanathan, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai
96. Achin Vanaik, Delhi University
97. K. Velupillai, economist, Stockholm, Sweden
98. K. Venugopal, former Secretary, Government of India
99. M. Vijayabaskar, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai
100. Robert Wade, London School of Economics and Political Science
101. Yogendra Yadav, Swaraj Abhiyan

P.S.

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