

Meghnad Jagdishchandra Desai



Lord Meghnad Jagdishchandra Desai has an interesting biography which is quite motivating as well. Moreover, his varied interests and engagements display his never-say-die attitude and his belief in the fact that one is never too young or too old to learn. And, his career graph spans a spectacular curve.

Meghnad Desai was born on the 10th July, 1940 in Vadodara, Gujarat. Meghnad was extremely brilliant since his childhood days. Completing his matriculation at 14 years of age, Meghnad joined the Mumbai School of Economics where he completed his postgraduation. Later, he won a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. He went there in 1960 and acquired his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1963.

Meghnad Desai started his professional career in the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of California, in 1963. Later, he served as Lecturer of Economics at the *London School of Economics* (LSE) since 1965 and its Professor from 1983 to 2003. Economist Meghnad Desai is a famous development economist. He has taught a number of subjects in LSE. In the 1970s, he taught an idiosyncratic version of economic principles to freshers at the LSE (starting with Piero Sraffa). He established the Centre for the study of Global Governance in 1992. He served as a member in the boards of a number of companies – national and international.

Meghnad Desai was made **Lord Desai** of St Clement Danes in 1991. He was awarded **PADMABHUSHAN** in 2008, Pravasi Bharatiya Puraskar (Distinguished Overseas Indian Award) in 2004 and Bharat Gaurav by the Indian Merchants Chambers in 2002. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the London School of Economics in July 2005. He is recipient of several Honorary Degrees from famous universities such as Kingston, Middlesex, East London, London Guildhall and Monash University, Australia.

Lord Desai was co-editor of the *Journal of Applied Econometrics*. He has written extensively, publishing a substantial number of books and over 200 articles in academic journals and had a regular column in the British radical weekly *Tribune*, the Indian business daily *Business Standard*, *Indian Express* and *Financial Express*. A selected number of his academic papers was published in two volumes in 1995: *The Selected Essays of Meghnad Desai*. His other books include: *Marxian Economic Theory* (Lectures in economics, Gray-Mills Publishing Ltd, 1974), *Applied Econometrics* (Philip Allan Publishers Ltd, 1976), *Marxian Economics* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1979), *Marx's Revenge: The Resurgence of Capitalism and the Death of Statist Socialism* (Verso, 2002), and *The Rediscovery of India* (Penguin India, 2009). In 2015, Desai wrote a valuable piece on contemporary world economy, viz. *Hubris: Why Economists Failed to Predict the Crisis and How to Avoid the Next One*, and in 2017 he wrote *The Raisina Model: Indian Democracy At 70* (Penguin India, 2017) where he evaluates the history and evolution of the democratic institutions of India since independence and introspects the Mahalanobis-Nehru led Indian developmental model including the second five year plan. On the other hand discussing trends in contemporary world politics, Desai predicts "The future is unpredictable; the future is young" in his recent book *Politicshock: Trump, Modi, Brexit and the Prospect for Liberal Democracy* (2017). His versatile interest is further reflected in his two books around the Hindustani cinema, viz. *Nehru's Hero: Dilip Kumar In The Life Of India* (2004), and *Pakeezah: An Ode to a Bygone World* (2013).

Covering a huge ground from Karl Marx to Dilip Kumar, all these books stand testimony to his proficiency in diverse fields. A mere glimpse at the titles of the books that he has published is enough to prove that he is an extremely prolific writer. His interests are quite wide-ranging – from Marxism and literature to fiction and film studies. In India, he recently established the Meghnad Desai Academy of Economics (designed for graduate students), since he felt that there is a need for such an institution which will guide students to the practical application of their education.

Meghnad Desai has also been an active member of the British Labour Party since 1971. In 1991 Meghnad was adjudged 'Baron Desai' of St. Clement Danes in Westminster. Lord Meghnad

Desai is also an outstanding speaker in the British House of Lord. Recently he served as the director of the Center for the Study of Global Governance. This great economist also worked as an active member for a number of parties and organizations.

Lord Meghnd Desai has been invited to the Indian Statistical Institute on the occasion of 53rd Convocation of the Institute on 10th January 2019 to deliver the Convocation Address.

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