

Foreword

The Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) was established on 17th December, 1931 by a great visionary Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis to promote research in the theory and applications of statistics as a new scientific discipline in India. In 1959, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India introduced the ISI Act in the parliament and designated it as an Institution of National Importance because of its remarkable achievements in statistical work as well as its contribution to economic planning.

Today, the Indian Statistical Institute occupies a prestigious position in the academic firmament. It has been a haven for bright and talented academics working in a number of disciplines. Its research faculty has done India proud in the arenas of Statistics, Mathematics, Economics, Computer Science, among others. Over seventy five years, it has grown into a massive banyan tree, like the institute emblem. The Institute now serves the nation as a unified and monolithic organization from different places, namely Kolkata, the Head Quarter, Delhi and Bangalore, two centers, a network of six SQC-OR Units located at Mumbai, Pune, Baroda, Hyderabad, Chennai and Coimbatore, and a branch (field station) at Giridih.

The platinum jubilee celebrations of ISI have been launched by Honorable Prime Minister Prof. Manmohan Singh on December 24, 2006, and the Government of India has declared 29th June as the “Statistics Day” to commemorate the birthday of Prof. Mahalanobis nationally.

Prof. Mahalanobis was a great believer in interdisciplinary research, because he thought that this will promote the development of not only Statistics, but also the other natural and social sciences. To promote interdisciplinary research, major strides were made in the areas of computer science, statistical quality control, economics, biological and social sciences, physical and earth sciences.

The Institute’s motto of “unity in diversity” has been the guiding principle of all its activities since its inception. It highlights the unifying role of statistics in relation to various scientific activities.

In tune with this hallowed tradition, a comprehensive academic programme, involving Nobel Laureates, Fellows of the Royal Society, Abel Prize winner and

other dignitaries, has been implemented throughout the Platinum Jubilee year, highlighting the emerging areas of ongoing frontline research in its various scientific divisions, centers, and outlying units. It includes international and national-level seminars, symposia, conferences and workshops, as well as series of special lectures. As an outcome of these events, the Institute is bringing out a series of comprehensive volumes in different subjects under the title Statistical Science and Interdisciplinary Research, published by World Scientific, Singapore.

The present volume titled “Advances in Multivariate Statistical Methods” is the fourth one in the series, and is also a special tribute to mark the birth centenary of Prof. S.N. Roy, who has greatly contributed to the aforesaid theme area of the book and enriched the training programs of ISI as a member of the research team of Prof. Mahalanobis. The volume consists of twenty seven chapters, written by eminent scientists and experienced researchers from different parts of the world. The chapters deal with both theory and applications covering the topics like large dimensional data analysis, directional data analysis, clustering, estimation, distribution theory, Bayesian inference, reliability analysis, sample surveys, and bioinformatics. Excellent reviews mentioning the challenging problems in some thrust areas e.g., large dimension-small sample size which has tremendous applications in data mining and bioinformatics, are also addressed. I believe the state-of-the art studies presented in this book will be very useful to readers.

Thanks to the contributors for their excellent research contributions, and to the volume editor Prof. Ashis SenGupta and the invited editor Prof. Barry Arnold for their sincere effort in bringing out the volume nicely in time. Initial design of the cover by Mr. Indranil Dutta is acknowledged. Sincere efforts by Prof. Dilip Saha and Dr. Barun Mukhopadhyay for editorial assistance are appreciated. Thanks are also due to World Scientific for their initiative in publishing the series and being a part of the Platinum Jubilee endeavor of the Institute.

April 2008
Kolkata



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