

Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Department of Applied Geology, 5-6 August, 2016, Dr. Hari Singh Gour Vishwa Vidyalaya, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, India

The Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Department of Applied Geology, founded on 5th August, 1956 by Dr. William Dixon West commenced around 10 a.m. on 5th August, 2016 at the Department's entrance foyer in front of the bust of Dr. W. D. West, the founder. A large number of alumni gathered to formally cut a cake on this occasion graced by the Chief Guest, Prof. S. K. Tandon, currently JC Bose Professor at ISER, Bhopal and formerly Professor, Dean and Pro-Chancellor of Delhi University and the Honourable Vice Chancellor of Dr. Hari Singh Vishwa Vidhyalaya, Sagar, Prof. R.P. Tiwari, and a former Alumni. Prof. Pramod Oliver Alexander of the Department and Dr. P. Krishnamurthy, formerly of the Centre of Advanced Study in Geology and later with the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), Department of Atomic Energy, representing the 1960s were the 'senior citizens' among the numerous younger oldies. Some of the distinguished alumni of the 1970s on this occasion included N.K. Dutta, formerly acting Director General, Geological Survey of India, Kolkata and P. S. Parihar, formerly Director, Atomic Minerals Directorate, Hyderabad besides numerous others from the 1980s and 1990s representing the coal, cement, steel and other industries. The youngest generation being the newly recruited 1st year M.Tech. Applied Geology students representing a wide spectrum of candidates from all over India besides Nepal that was recalling the M.Tech. batches of 1960s and 1970s.

Commemorating the occasion a National Seminar on '***Advances in Geosciences***' was organised by the Department. The Seminar was held at the Wadia Hall of the Centre of Advanced Study in Geology. The function began very traditionally with invocation and lighting of the lamp and garlanding the portraits of Prof. West and Prof. D. N. Wadia.



Fig. 1. Paying respects to the founder late Prof. William Dixon West on the occasion

Prof. L. P. Chourasia, Head of the Applied Geology Department formally welcomed the guests, invitees and students. He gave a brief account of how the Department grew out of the Geology Department that began with undergraduate course in 1946 when the University was founded and became a post-graduate Department of Geology in 1950 under the stewardship of Prof. G.W. Chiplonkar. After receiving a generous grant to the Department from the Manganese Ores India Ltd (MOIL) in 1953, the then VC Prof. R. P. Tripathi invited W. D. West, the first Director of the Geological Survey of free India to join and upgrade the Geology Department in 1953. West modified the M.Sc (Geology) syllabus to suit the challenging demands of 'holistic' geologists with thrusts on

mineral exploration that India was needing at that time, with a strong foundation in both the field and applied aspects started the newly christened 'Department of Applied Geology' in 1956 with an M.Tech. course in Applied Geology. Considering the contributions that the Applied Geology Department made in the Indian National scenario, the UGC established



Fig 2. Release of the Abstract volume of the National Seminar by the Chief Guest Prlf. S.K. Tandon

its first centre of Advanced Study in Geology at Sagar with Prof. West as its founder Director in 1963. The Geology Department merged with the Applied Geology Department in 1964. Prof. Chaurasia recalled as how the Sagar M.Tech students dominated the competitive exams of the GSI during the 1960s and 1970s when most of the toppers or top ten positions were held from the alumni of the Department. He also briefly narrated the events that led to the rechristening of the Sagar University as Dr. Hari Singh Gour Vishwavidyalaya in 1983 after its founder, who gave a very large contribution from his personal savings to found the university in his native village and declined to have his name for the University. The university got its up gradation to a 'Central University' on 15th January, 2009 and by an act of Parliament.

Prof. A.K. Shandilya, Organising Secretary of the National Seminar on 'Advances in Geosciences' gave a brief outline of the Seminar that had a wide variety of contributions, mainly invited from the alumni of the Department besides other invited lectures. This was followed by the formal release of the abstract volume of the National Seminar by the Chief Guest Prof. Tandon.



Address by Guest of Honour, Dr.P.Krishnamurthy

Dr. P. Krishnamurthy, Guest of Honour, recalled as how Prof. West, with expertise in diverse fields ranging from field mapping,, structural geology, petrology, seismology, geomorphology,

economic geology besides others guided the destiny of the Department and Centre during the 1960s. Deccan Traps was a major area of study at the Centre. West facilitated the presence of world famous experts in different disciplines of geology visited the Centre of Advanced Study of Geology at Sagar and trained young researchers. These included Prof. Dixey (geomorphology), Prof. G.P. L. Walker (Flood basalts), Prof. M.R.W. Johnson (structural geology) and numerous others. He reminisced as how West had arranged for the rare bore hole samples with picrite basalts of the Deccan from Saurashtra (which he had studied earlier)lodged at the National Geological Museum, GSI, Kolkatta for the authors PhD programme at Edinburgh under K.G. Cox during the early 1970s. Krishnamurthy also opined that the Department to commemorate the occasion should bring out a special monograph on '**Contributions to Earth Science and Technology**' from the scores of alumni of the Department and Centre.

Prof. Tandon, Chief Guest, recalled as how Sagar became a centre of attraction for geologists in spite of its tedious accessibility during the 1960s.He reminisced as how as a young researcher at Chandigarh, an Advanced Centre of Geology at that time, Sagar was leading the show. He admired as how Prof.



Address by the Chief Guest, Prof. S. K. Tandon



Address by the Honourable Vice Chancellor
Dr. R.P.Tiwari

West built a solid foundation for young geologists with the best possible field training that were not available elsewhere in India. This feature, he opined, made Applied Geology graduates of Sagar special and unique.

Honourable VC, Prof. Raghavendra P. Tiwari, a distinguished alumni of the Department, in his presidential remarks recalled as how the Department and the University progressed over the years in spite of challenges on many fronts that were tuned into opportunities. Prof. Tiwari sought innovative means to utilize the services of distinguished alumni to further strengthen the teaching and research component of the Department. Welcoming the suggestion from Dr. Krishnamurthy on the monograph on '**Contributions to Earth Science and Technology**', Prof. Tiwari opined that such a monograph can be attempted as a 'soft' copy option to save resources .

Dr. Krishnamurthy, on behalf of the Geological Society of India, Bengaluru handed over to Honorable VC, Prof. Raghavendra P. Tiwari, the Dr. Naqvi Gold medal of the Society that was to be presented to him at the 2015 AGM of the Society held at Ladakh.

The inaugural function ended with a formal vote of thanks by Prof. S. H. Adil of the Department for all the guests, invitees and students. The national Seminar was held in six technical sessions with a total of 35 presentations on various topics with ten (10) key note lectures at the beginning of the technical session from the distinguished alumni and other eminent geoscientists. The abstract volume is available in the University's web site.



Felicitations of Dr P . Krishnamurthy by the Honourable VC, Dr. R. P. Tiwari

There was a special lecture in the evening at 7 p.m. on Prof. W.D. West by Prof. Vishnu Pathak, former Director, School of Arts and Information Sciences. Pathak fondly recalled the keen interest that Prof. West evinced in the local arts and cultural aspects of the Bhundelkhand region and in fact has made a film directed by him. This was followed by a cultural programme conducted by the M. Tech Student Society, especially by the new entrants – an innovative way of welcoming the freshers to the Department. The report would not be complete without a mention to the exemplary local hospitality of the delegates topped up by the delicious lunches and dinners with exquisite taste, out beating the starred hotels and would remain a constant attraction to visit Sagar!



A group photo of some old alumni along with the current batch of students and the new M.Tech. entrants

Dr. P. Krishnamurthy, Geological Society of India, Bengaluru & Prof. A. K. Shandilya, Department of Applied Geology, Dr. Hari Singh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh