

## Keshav Narhar Pusalkar (1930-2022)

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I am deeply saddened to report about sudden demise of Shri Keshav Narhar Pusalkar, a veteran field geologist and former officer of AMD, on the December 21, 2022 due to cardiac arrest, after brief illness. Family sources informed that he passed away peacefully at his residence in Nagpur.

Shri Keshav Narhar Pusalkar (KNP) was born on January 6, 1930 in Akola, Maharashtra in a lower middle-class family. His father, late Shri Narhar Laxman Pusalkar, shifted from Akola to Banaras, for livelihood and better education of his children, where he had few relatives. With the help of his relatives, he opened a canteen in the hostel of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi for upbringing his family – wife, two sons, and two daughters.

Shri K. N. Pusalkar's childhood was tough and full of hardships, but he never compromised with his studies. He obtained his M.Sc. in geology from prestigious institute BHU in the year 1956 fulfilling his father's dream.

Shri K.N. Pusalkar began his professional career as geologist in Rourkela Steel Plant, Orissa. Subsequently, he joined Atomic Minerals Division (AMD) of the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India, on 24.2.1958 in Delhi. He worked in different capacities in many areas across India. He faced very challenging and scary moments while working in Chambal ravines in north-central India and also in inhospitable terrains of Bastar, but tackled them with enormous courage. He has made significant contribution in establishing xenotime resources, a source of yttrium and heavy rare earths (HREs), in riverine placers in streams around Kunkuri in Chhattisgarh. This pioneering

work on xenotime made Shri Pusalkar a pioneer. He also worked for rare-mineral-bearing pegmatites in central India. Shri KNP was also a good petrologist. Many of us worked under his guidance and supervision. He was always available to us for help both in office and family fronts. His dominant hobby was making different dishes. On several occasions many of us enjoyed various types of dishes and pickles prepared by him. We had nicknamed him 'Colonel', and used to refer him amongst ourselves, in his absence, with the same name.

Shri K.N. Pusalkar took voluntary retirement from AMD on 01.02.1989. Afterwards, he remained in the company of his family members, friends, admirers and books.

Shri Pusalkar's wife, Smt. Padma Keshav Pusalkar was in true sense a home maker. For obvious reasons, KNP used to remain away from his family for 8-9 months in a year. During his absence, Smt. Pusalkar single handedly raised her two sons and two daughters up to their immense satisfaction. Shri Pusalkar lost his wife on February 18, 2018.

Shri Pusalkar was a very sincere and religious person. He used to perform 'Satyanarayan Puja' himself thrice in a year at home for seeking God's blessings. He was strictly vegetarian.

Shri K.N. Pusalkar is survived by two sons - Milind and Arvind, two daughters – Manik and Aparna and grand-children. All are well settled in Nagpur and doing best in their respective fields. He will always be fondly remembered by family, friends, admirers, colleagues and a host of geoscientists. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. May the departed noble soul rest in eternal peace.