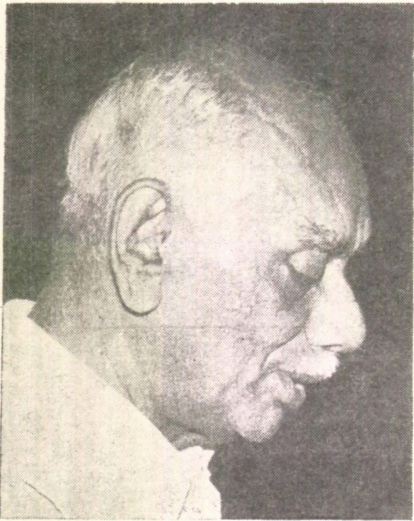


# Silver Jubilee of the Geological Society of India

*(Address delivered by Dr. B. P. Radhakrishna  
at the Inauguration of the Seminar)*



Twenty-five years ago a small group of geologists, based at Bangalore, feeling the need for a well-organized Geological Society devoted to the task of promoting in the most effective manner the cause of advanced study and research in all branches of Indian Geology, took the lead and after drawing a draft Memorandum and Constitution of the proposed Society, circulated it among the prominent geologists of India inviting them to become 'Foundation Fellows' and extend their cooperation and support to the new organization. There was an encouraging response and the Society was formally founded in Bangalore and registered on 28th May 1958 under the Mysore Societies Registration Act 1904. It had on its roll 50 Fellows at the commencement. The Society was fortunate

in having Dr. D. N. Wadia as its first President and Professor L. Rama Rao as the first Editor of the Journal which started publication soon after. The Society owes a great deal to these two veteran geologists for initial guidance and leadership.

The ceremonial inauguration of the Society took place at New Delhi on 23rd January 1959 at a function presided over by Sri. K. D. Malaviya, the then Minister for Mines and Oil, Government of India. In inaugurating the Society, Sri. Malaviya emphasized how important and indispensable geologists had become in the various developments taking place in the world to make mankind happy and prosperous. It will be appropriate to recall here what he said on that occasion. He said: 'No engineering work or industrial project worth the name can be conceived today without the basic help of a geologist; and the more we advance in this modern age, the more we realize how fundamental knowledge in the science of geology can help us to solve many problems of humanity. Not only that, geology helps in our schemes to build up our future also and to fill up the gaps that we have started as a result of the fast consumption of many of our mineral resources.' Continuing Sri Malaviya said that a right step had been taken to form the Geological Society of India to maintain a correct standard of efficiency both for academic as well as for professional geologists. He hoped that the Society will provide a forum of cooperation, communication and publication of scientific work, and will bring together workers in different fields on a common platform for exchange of knowledge and views.

These words uttered twenty-five years ago have particular relevance today. How far the hopes and aspirations of the early founders have been fulfilled is for the

growing community of geologists to judge and evaluate. The seedling that was planted then has now grown into a big tree shedding out its branches all round. As against the modest number of fifty Fellows who founded the Society in 1958, we have today nearly 1000 Fellows on our rolls, drawn from national organizations like the Geological Survey of India, the Indian Bureau of Mines, the Atomic Minerals Division of the Department of Atomic Energy, the Oil and Natural Gas Commission, Universities and Technological Institutes, Mineral Development Corporations and State Departments of Geology and Mining. There are also many individual professional geologists as well as quite a few members from outside India.

The Society has sought to keep the interest of its Fellows active by the publication of a Journal. Originally started with only one number a year, it has steadily enlarged in scope and contents and has become a monthly since 1971. The Journal includes scientific papers embodying the results of important research on all aspects of Indian geology. To mark the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Year the numbers for the current year have been issued with a silver-tinted cover. A word of tribute is necessary on this occasion to the first Editor Professor L. Rama Rao who had the vision to realize that the surest way of achieving the objects of the Society was by bringing out a Journal containing the best work done in the country in geology and related fields. For fifteen years from 1958 till his death in 1974 he laboured hard to build up the Journal. Thanks to his untiring efforts, his sense of duty and his watchfulness in maintaining high standards, the Journal of the Geological Society of India has come to be ranked as one of the leading Earth Science Journals. Geologists owe a deep debt of gratitude to Professor L. Rama Rao for the role he played in the development of Earth Science Studies in this country. He was a very competent Editor. The fact that the format, the arrangement, the style of printing, the quality of the paper, have all remained unchanged over this period is a tribute to his competence. As an independent publication media, the Journal has helped in bringing to light new advances, and has helped in disseminating this knowledge speedily among a large number of geologists. It has helped to kindle interest especially among the young geologists, promoted a sense of self respect and made them realize the power that is lying dormant within them. The Society will continue to keep such interest alive and make it flow into newer channels.

The first twenty-five years may be considered as a period of growth and stabilization. The next twenty-five years should prove to be one of continued development and consolidation. Membership should get enlarged and all active workers throughout the country have to be brought within its fold. There should be greater awareness on the part of Mining Corporations, State and Central Governments regarding the important role which the Society can play in developing high quality research in Earth Sciences and related fields in the country.

The Society had to function during the first twenty-five years in comparative poverty. Its only source of revenue has been the small sum of subscription paid by its members and the realizations through the sale of the Journal. The several activities which the Society is contemplating—initiation and publication of monographic studies on important aspects of Indian Geology, publication of geological and mineral maps, preparation of authoritative accounts on the mineral resources of the country, organization of summer courses to provide training in new concepts and techniques, arranging for group discussions and field conferences, preparation of

text books suited for students who are starved of readily available knowledge within their means—all these will require substantial financial assistance. The Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, convinced of the good work of the Society, has come forward extending its hand of cooperation and made a token grant during the current year for the improvement of the Journal and for increasing its developmental activities. We entertain the hope that such assistance will be forthcoming in an ever increasing measure in the coming years. We can hold the assurance that such assistance will be used wisely and well.

The Society has as its main aim the improvement in the standard of geological research, by providing a forum for free exchange of ideas and a media for quick publication of results and wide dissemination of that knowledge. Our efforts in the coming years will be to promote all such activities which will help advance the above objectives. Greater attention will be paid to the organization of meetings and symposia at different centres to emphasize the all-India character of the Society and to encourage local members to take a more active part in its affairs. Provision of such facilities by learned Societies in other countries have contributed greatly to the advancement of science and we mean to pursue this type of activity with vigour.

As a first step in this direction and to mark the completion of the twenty-five years of service, the Centre for Earth Science Studies, Trivandrum, one of the very active centres of geological research in the country, has come forward to celebrate the occasion in a fitting manner. There is presently a growing awareness among the public of the environmental crisis that is engulfing India. Population growth, increasing affluence, expansion of cities and technological progress, which we are witnessing, although welcome in themselves as signs of progress, have certain grave consequences leading to pollution of our environment.

Pollution has become a baffling problem in modern society. The concern of geologists in such a state cannot be confined merely to the study of past events. They owe a duty to the future well-being of mankind. Academic studies leading mainly to the compilation of documents for industrial, agricultural and water resources are no longer considered good enough. Instead, there should be an effort to go beyond the frontiers of economic policy planning, so that danger points can be identified and our planners made to realize the importance of preserving natural environment which is being increasingly restricted. Earth Scientists, therefore, have to get more and more involved in the problems of the overwhelming majority of our people. So far, geologists have been involved more with mineral exploration and have neglected concern toward environmental degradation that is attendant upon such exploitation of resources. It is good to start our work in the coming decade with this realization before us. 'We should realize that Earth is unique, its environment fragile, and that it must be protected from adverse and unwise human inventions'. The Geological Society, therefore, places great importance on the deliberations of the present symposium, which aims at ushering a new era of awareness of the problems of environment, at creation of a better future with a proper balance between exploitation and conservation.

Such an attitude of reverence towards environment should not prove difficult to cultivate for a country like India, where millions start their daily routine with a reverential prayer addressed to Mother Earth :

*Samudra-vasané dévi parvatastana mandale*  
*Viṣṇupatni namastubhyam pādasparśam ksamasva mé*

‘O! Mother! With the resplendent sea as your outer garment, the lovely rolling mountainland as your body, pardon me my indiscretion in treading on you with my feet.’

In our efforts at improving our environment, we are likely to concentrate mostly on cities and the problems facing the comparatively rich. This should not blind us to the problems faced by a large majority of our people. The father of our Nation, in words which burn their way through, declared years ago ; ‘Every palace that one sees in India is a demonstration not of the riches, but the insolence of power that riches give to the few who owe them to the miserably requitted labour of the millions of paupers in India’. These words should echo and reecho in our minds. We should not be rest content with solving the problems of the privileged only. Our aim should be at universal well-being as embodied in the moving prayer handed down to us by our ancient sages :

*Sarvastaratu durgāṇi, sarvé bhadrāṇi paśyatu*  
*sarvah sadbuddhimāpnótu, sarvah sarvatra nandatu*

‘Let everyone surmount obstacles, let everyone see good, let everyone obtain wisdom, let everyone, everywhere, be happy.’

It only remains for me to tell you how deeply indebted the Geological Society is to the Government of Kerala and to the Centre for Earth Science Studies, for holding this Silver Jubilee Session amidst these lovely surroundings and amidst such enlightened people.

Thank you.

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