

# Six Decades of the Geological Society of India: Some Reflections

Founded in 1958, the Geological Society of India is one of the oldest scientific societies in the country. Today, it has attained the position of a leading communicator of Earth Sciences in India – through its scholarly publishing, topical scientific conferences, educational activities and outreach to the general public and school-children. It also provides impartial scientific information and analysis to support policy-making and informed public debate about the challenges facing humanity from the geological perspective.

This is the 60<sup>th</sup> year of its existence and it is but appropriate at this juncture to reflect on the achievements of the Society in her publication related activities and the way ahead.

## The Journal

The founding fathers of the Society rightly felt that one of the foremost objectives set for the Society was to bring out a scientific journal incorporating salient results of ongoing research activities in the field of Earth Sciences in India and elsewhere.

Starting in a modest way with the issue of only one annual number in 1959, the Journal has grown into a monthly issue since 1977 and reaches a large section of geoscientists in academia, governmental organizations and mining industry in India and abroad. The tradition left by our predecessors has made the Journal appear with unflinching regularity each month without missing a single issue over these many years, which in itself is a major achievement in our context.

An attempt has also been made on a continuing basis to improve the quality of the content as well as the aesthetics of page make-up, reprography and printing technology. In the past one decade the Society also started co-publishing the electronic version of the Journal with *Springer Nature India*, which has helped in greater international visibility and ease of access by earth-scientists around the world. The online processing of papers (from submission to review and revision) has reduced the time lag in publication of papers. The impact factor of the Journal though not very high, has shown a steadily increasing trend year after year with the enhanced international recognition. The Society also brought out special issues of the journal relating to important thrust areas with the aim to project the state of art work being carried out in the country on these aspects. Eminent Earth Scientists have been invited to contribute review articles in their field of specialisation. Though this endeavour has met with only limited success, it is being pursued vigorously. We appeal to all the Indian Earth Scientists to submit their best

work to the Journal which will further improve its impact factor and help building up our own journal. In this context it is pertinent to quote B.P. Radhakrishna (2001, *JGSI*, v.57, pp.7-12) '*There are some critics (fortunately few in number) who now and then pass sweeping comments complaining that the high standard is not being maintained. They generally forget that the Journal can only reflect the quality of research being carried out in the country –if there is little water in the stream it is the fault not of the channel, but of the source. The knowledge that competent referees will judge articles is itself a strong incentive to write well*'.

Recently, the Council of the Geological Society of India has constituted a Board of Associate Editors consisting of subject-experts in different sub-disciplines of Earth Sciences. This effort is taken to hasten the review process and early publication of accepted papers. The responsibility of the Associate Editors will be either to review the paper themselves or forward it to peer reviewer(s) for their opinion. The Associate Editor sends his/her recommendations for acceptance of the paper or otherwise to the Chief-Editor along with all the relevant correspondence and records. This entire process is scheduled to be completed within three months' time.

## Other Publications

Sometime back it was envisioned that the geology of the individual States of Indian Union should be brought out as text books. Most of the States have been covered and this text book series have become popular among the students of geology. Further, some of the text books of some states have been revised and updated with latest information on the geology, structure & tectonics and mineral resources. Efforts are being made to revise the remaining text books also. Greater efforts are being made to cover other States which are remote. The Society has also brought out text books on Mineralogy & Crystallography, Structural Geology, Metamorphic Petrology, Elements of Palaeontology. The 2-volume comprehensive text book on the Geology of India brought out by the Society has become a standard reference work not only for students and researchers in India but also globally. The Society also started bringing out special publications including the papers presented at conferences/seminars after due processes of peer review.

The general public in the country are poorly informed about the mineral resources of the country. To fill this gap, the Society initially brought out books on the Mineral Resources of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and the Mineral Resources of

Karnataka is currently under revision. Efforts are being made to bring out the mineral resources of other states. The Society has also published books devoted to specific mineral commodities of India, namely on gold, tin, platinum, diamond, coal and lignite deposits. These books give a comprehensive account of these deposits including mode of occurrence, distribution, genesis, reserves and resources.

Under Popularisation of Science series, the Society has brought out several publications on different fundamental aspects of Earth Science for school children. The first book under this series was on "*Story of Oceans*" in 8 languages. It is the endeavour of the Society to bring out such richly illustrated publications with Indian examples also in future, on aspects which have not been covered hitherto.

The Geological Society of India realizes the importance of awareness building among the youth of the country on environmental issues of grave concern like the toxic levels of pollution in our urban conglomerations and remedial measures from the geological perspective. Basic knowledge about the history of our earth should become a part of our school syllabi and suitable school level books are an urgent necessity and the Society will redouble its efforts to fill this vital gap.

Mention may be made of the relentless effort made by the Geological Society of India to persuade government departments like the Geological Survey of India to make available geological maps prepared by them at great labor and effort to the wider geological community in the country and not to lock them up in their shelves. The current ease of access of geoscientific data including maps from governmental agencies is, in no small measure, due to the forceful editorials penned by stalwarts in the columns of the Journal. This also bestowed due recognition on field geologists who very often brave adverse and harsh conditions in the mapping effort.

### **Diamond Jubilee Year**

As part of the Diamond Jubilee year (2018-19) activities, the Society has undertaken to organize Seminars/Symposia in different parts of the country primarily to take stock of the present mineral resources position of the country from the perspective of future requirements and environmental concerns. In addition to mineral resources, water resources as well as shale gas and hydrocarbon resources are also to be covered under this programme. Emphasis is on strategic and critical mineral resources of importance in defence, energy and modern digital IT-based industries as well as on ocean resources. A consolidated suitable publication on mineral/water/hydrocarbon resources for future generations is also being planned as a culmination of this effort and cooperation and support from the academia, industry and governmental agencies is an imperative for the success of this venture.

### **The Future**

If one is to name the single most valuable contribution of the Geological Society of India during its sixty years of existence to the wider Earth Science community in the country and the world, is the firm establishment of the Journal of the Geological Society of India as an authentic earth-science publication from India owing to its punctuality of publication, its scientific content largely devoted to the Geology of the Indian Subcontinent and its increasing international recognition. This has been made possible by the selfless services rendered by many eminent Earth Scientists of the country with the prime objective of advancing the frontiers of knowledge in the field of Earth Sciences with special reference to India and to make India stand tall in the comity of nations. Many tasks set before them as aims and objectives of the Society are yet to be realized though a good foundation has been laid.

The Society intends to include more review articles, lead articles, invited articles from subject experts. It is also contemplated to publish theme-based regular issues which include articles on similar theme or include it as special section in a regular issue. Greater efforts are needed to promote this line of activity. We call upon the newly elected Associate Editors to coordinate with Chief-Editor to identify topics well in advance.

Another important line of activity that the Journal intends to provide is to encourage mining industries to send brief articles/notes on modern mining technologies, techniques, regulations and acts (e.g. MMRD Act) so as to have a greater interaction which will enable the country to develop minerals and metals so vital to its economy keeping in mind the environmental issues that threaten to overtake us. The Society strongly encourages all the Geo-institutions and University Geology Departments catering to Earth Sciences to send brief report (not exceeding 4 pages) so that everyone is aware of the research activities that are being carried out in the country.

Needless to say that the field of Earth Sciences is all the more vital to society and the world at this crucial phase of mankind's history, when global climate change and increased risks of natural disasters are looming large over the mankind. The Geological Society of India is grateful to the support it has been receiving from its Fellows/Members, enlightened public and policy makers, governmental and private organizations, educational institutions as well as many well wishers from around the globe connected by our common professional interests. As we complete six decades of our existence, we rededicate ourselves with renewed vigour to the objectives so succinctly framed by our founding fathers.

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