

## **The Dr. Hari Narayan Lifetime Achievement Award of Indian Geophysical Union (IGU) to Prof. O. P. Varma**



With overwhelming feeling of happiness, I am pleased to inform the fellow geoscientists and others that a message has just come from the office of the Indian Geophysical Union (IGU) that *Prof. O. P. Varma* has been selected for the *Dr. Hari Narayan Lifetime Achievement Award of IGU for the year 2016* in recognition of his *outstanding contribution in geosciences*. The award with a medal and a citation will be bestowed on him at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Convention of IGU that will be held at IIT (ISM) Dhanbad from Nov. 8-10, 2016.

The prestigious Dr. Hari Narayan Lifetime Achievement Award was constituted in 2011 by IGU and has since been presented to Sr. Scientists of repute who had established schools and made extraordinary contributions to the cause of Indian Earth Sciences. The past recipients of this award are : *Dr. S. Z. Qasim, Prof. Harsh K. Gupta, Dr. Shailesh Nayak, Prof. V. P. Dimri* and *Prof. V.L.S. Bhimasankaram*.

Prof. O. P. Varma, crossed 92 & known as a geoscientist and crusader for the growth & development of geosciences, both nationally & internationally, may perhaps be the longest-serving geoscientist to get this award in the contemporary time. Profile of his achievements, we propose to bring out in the Journal of Ind. Geol. Cong., Vol.8(2). Hereunder, I propose to reproduce the recommendation letter from the *Secretary, Ind. Geol. Cong. Prof. V. K. S. Dave*, to spotlight salient aspects of his monumental startups & implementation programmes in the field of ore geology, mining geology and mineral exploration and

“I have known the nominee, *Prof. O. P. Varma*, as a great teacher who has dedicated his entire life time for popularization, development and advancement of Earth Sciences in this country for more than four decades. I am immensely pleased to support his nomination for *IGU – Hari Narayan Lifetime Achievement Award*.

Prof. O. P. Varma, the nominated candidate for the aforesaid Award, has spent his lifetime in serving his country and the cause of geological sciences from the beginning of his career embracing learning, teaching and research and then totally in publication, as Hony. Editor, President & now

Executive President in S & T management matters of Ind. Geol. Congress and aware creation about the benefits of geosciences to school-boys & girls and the Indian masses — the IGC being ultimate to him since 1986, which marks a watershed for him in the growth & popularization of geosciences.

In his pioneering efforts to popularize earth sciences among masses, he reached out with a number of suitable programmes and awards to the winners among the participating school boys & girls. Three to four such programmes were implemented during 2011 alone. To widen the scope of awareness building, he moved to common people by arranging lectures in the local languages overwhelmingly well received by the local citizens. Besides these efforts, Prof. Varma has brought out a social awareness program on ‘*Green Earth*’ by building waste disposal enclosures, fixing hoardings and display boards, distributing brochures/pamphlets and organizing thematic drawing competitions in various schools and colleges in Roorkee and other towns as IGC programmes.

On return to India in 1958, he chose to undertake the development of mining geology & mineral exploration syllabi in India’s premier Institution, Indian School of Mines (ISM), globally recognized for such specialized courses. He revised these courses — theory, practical & training programmes in mining geology and mineral exploration— and set-up world-class laboratory, open to researchers from all over the country.

Prof. Varma created a very intimate liaison with the industrial & scientific departments concerned with geological investigations and mineral & mining industry for the good of his students for employment and better training. Success came to his door and he deputed his students for project studies & practical training programmes at major mining centres and field camps of GSI, IBM, MEC, AMD and the like to inculcate in them the latest technologies in mining geology & mineral exploration. As a result, they have occupied top-notch positions both in academies & the mineral industry – *Dr. Harsh K. Gupta, Dr. V. P. Dimri, Prof. K. L. Rai, Prof. G. V. Rajamanickam, Prof. D. C. Srivastava, Dr. M. Sudhakar, Prof. A. K. Sen, Dr. R. N. Padhi, Dr. M. S. Pandian* to name a few.

He is credited for introducing, first time in India, the **M. Tech. Course in Mineral Exploration in ISM from the beginning of 1976-77 Session** and afterwards on his advice Vikram University also introduced the same course, which he inaugurated. During his headship in ISM, he also introduced M. Tech. Engineering Geology Course.

Prof. Varma is also recognized as initiator of the first Executive Development Programme in ISM on “*Mineral Economics*”, which I had the luck of participating. He was, in all possibility, the organiser of the largest number of UGC-sponsored programmes of training on “*Ore microscopic studies & its industrial applications*” year after year. These short-term courses were so popular that even for the year of his retirement, the UGC granted the project for 1984-85 Session. He has been President of Geology & Geography Section of Indian Science Congress, beside that of IGC.

Teaching has been his forte and his accomplishments in teaching have been recognized by the UGC in the award of **National Lecturer in Mining Geology** for the year 1977-78 and two academic awards by ISM after his retirement. Prof. Varma is undoubtedly the most dedicated and sincere teacher that I have come across as a university teacher. He has been very sought-for lecturer for extra-mural programmes in the Indian institutions and industry. It is no wonder that he was lately invited by NGRI to deliver Foundation Lecture and by Bangladesh Geological Society, SAAEG, Indian Science Congress, and BHU for keynote addresses, to name a few. He was invited as a Visiting Professor in the University of Roorkee (now IIT Roorkee) for one year latter his retirement.

Prof. Varma's outstanding unparalleled contributions to the development of geosciences have emerged from his total devotion and dedication to the affairs of Indian Geological Congress. He has been fully occupied as whole-time honorary functionary & Editor who manages all types of publications in a participatory set-up for the last 26 years. The modern well-organised, tastefully furnished and adequately equipped with up-to-date gadgets, the IGC's 6-room secretariat stands in testimony to his monumental

service to Earth Sciences and to the Indian geoscientists still with evergreen urge for creativity and innovations for ever-enlarging nation-wide activities, industry-academia interaction, & scientific collaboration. For over 25 years, he has consistently been widening the scope and creating newer avenues for the popularization of Earth science in India through his IGC office. His dedication is so intense that if sometimes there are no doors & windows, he walks through the wall to get on with his next mission. I am a witness to his acumen for more than half a century, in general and 26 years association in IGC.

Seventy years is by no means a small period in once life to engage himself in professional vocations as a dedicated scientist uninterruptedly — amazingly without break practicing bizarre facets of his expertise in scientific organizations & institutions & freely amidst Indian masses. His endeavours have since gained international recognitions. Well over 92 years of age, Prof. Varma is still very active in his professional activities that centre around the popularization of Earth Sciences through the various activities. Besides IGC, he is a life-member/follow of GSI, Bangalore, MGMI, Kolkata, SAAEG, Bhopal, etc.

Defying his age, Prof. Varma makes the beginning of his career with the passing of each year. In the area of geosciences, he is a prolific writer on various aspects of geology, ore deposits in particular, new area of medical geology and various other thrust areas. Such an internationally known geoscientist and regarded as the most motivating, has been ignored for any life-achievement awards at national level simply because he felt not willing to apply. I agree with his students that he deserves the recognition of his long, unbroken and selfless service to the science and fraternity of Earth System Sciences by the Award. His scientific achievement and published works/articles are so enormous that is really impossible to gather the information and put it on paper.

I am indeed privileged and pleased to have the opportunity to recommend and support his name for the said *IGU – Hari Narain Lifetime Achievement Award*,

  
(V.K.S. Dave)

*Secretary*, Indian Geological Congress

**Date** : 27-08-16

**Place** : Roorkee

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