

Chunnilal Khatiyal Award 1998



Introduction by Professor A.K. Sinha

I am pleased to introduce Dr Amit K. Ghosh as the 1998 recipient of Dr Chunnilal Khatiyal Medal. Dr Chunnilal Khatiyal established the award in 1952. It carries a medal and a citation. In order to motivate and recognize excellence in research, this award has been made on the recommendations of Expert Committee constituted by the Director and Chairman of Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany (BSIP) for carrying out best piece of research work during the three years, preceding the year of award.

Amit has a consistently good academic record. He has achieved different scholarships since the beginning of his academic life. Amit completed his schooling in Durgapur (Burdwan District, West Bengal), an industrial town, adjacent to Raniganj and Asansol area, one of the greatest coal measures of India. During his intermediate course of studies he received the Merit Scholarship sponsored by Steel Authority of India Limited, Durgapur. He is also the recipient of National Merit Scholarship during his M.Sc. course of study. His undergraduate degree (B.Sc. Honors in Botany), Masters (M.Sc., Botany with special paper Palaeobotany & Palynology) and Ph.D. degree are from the University of Burdwan. Later on, he successfully completed a Professional Training Course in Geology from the Geology Department, Lucknow University.

Dr Ghosh began his research career as a Junior Research Fellow in the Department of Botany, University of Burdwan. He obtained Ph.D. degree in 1992 for his Ph.D. thesis entitled "Contributions to the Triassic Palaeobotany and Stratigraphy of Peninsular India". Amit continued his research activities in the same university as a Research Associate of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research before joining BSIP.

Amit joined Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany in April 1994 as a Junior Scientific Officer. Since then, he was inspired to work on the morphotaxonomy, biostratigraphy, palaeoecology and palaeobathymetry of Phanerozoic calcareous algae. Not much attention was paid earlier on this aspect of palaeobotany in our organization. The Chunnilal Khatiyal Medal-1998 has been awarded to him specifically for his significant contributions on the morphotaxonomic study including the biostratigraphical, palaeoecological and palaeobathymetrical importance of calcareous algae from the Cretaceous-Tertiary sediments of Bagh beds, Cauvery and Kutch basins. In addition, Dr Ghosh has made some important findings on the sponges and dasyclads from the Ordovician (Takche Formation) of Spiti Basin in 'Tethys' Himalaya and megaspores from the Lower Cretaceous (Athgarh Formation) of Mahanadi Basin. In the 9th Five Year Plan he is actively engaged in a very significant Thrust Area "Petroliferous basins of India". Under this Thrust Area Programme Amit is carrying out intensive studies on Calcareous Skeletal Algae from the Tertiary sequences of Meghalaya and Kutch basins under the project entitled "Marine Micropalaeontology of Petroliferous basins". Each year he used to go to field for collecting samples from measured sections of specified localities which are potentially suitable for his studies.

Personally, I always encourage him for working very hard. In true sense, this young scientist of our institute deserves the honour which he has achieved for his devotion to research work. I feel proud of him and wish him all round success in his future research programme. I will indeed be very happy if Amit continues his studies on calcareous algae and make further meaningful contributions on this aspect.

Response by Dr Amit K. Ghosh

I am indeed deeply honoured and at the very outset I would like to thank the authorities of BSIP for the award of Chunnilal Khatiyal Gold Medal-1998. I should take this occasion to recapitulate the major points in my love affair with fossil plants. Perhaps, my budding interest in palaeobotany was nurtured in my early teens when I was a graduate student

of Botany. As an honours graduate student of Botany, I first visited Permian plant fossil localities around Raniganj and Asansol area of Raniganj Coalfield, West Bengal. My fascination on Palaeobotany intensified further when I joined as a Junior Research Fellow in the Palaeobotany and Palynology Section of Botany Department, Burdwan University after passing the M.Sc. (Botany) examination with Palaeobotany and Palynology as a special paper from the same department in 1987. At that time my greatest interest was in morphotaxonomy of Triassic plant megafossils, megaspores and miospores and their stratigraphical and palaeoecological significance. Later on, in 1992 I submitted my Ph.D. dissertation on Triassic Palaeobotany and Stratigraphy while I was working as a Senior Research Fellow. In the same year I received the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Science (Ph.D.) from Burdwan University. I devoted my research activities in the same University after receiving the award of Research Associateship of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) till I joined Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany.

In BSIP, I started working on the morphotaxonomy, biostratigraphy, palaeoecology and palaeobathymetry of Phanerozoic calcareous algae. These aquatic (moist loving), autotrophic and nonvascular plants (which failed to reach the higher level of archegoniates) mainly from the marine carbonate sediments of Ordovician, Cretaceous and Tertiary sequences of India in true sense captivated my mind.

Dr Chunnihal Khatiyal Medal (for the year 1998) which was established in 1952 has been awarded to me for the best

piece of research work done during the years 1995-1998 (on calcareous algae from Cretaceous-Tertiary sequences of Bagh beds, Cauvery and Kutch basins). In this context I must convey that I have always been very fortunate with my teachers, supervisors, research colleagues, advisers as well as collaborators. In fact, I feel they are all part of my achievement to get this award.

I would like to thank my mother, wife and other family members on this occasion. Though, my father is no more in this world, his departed soul always boosted me to do hard work throughout my research career.

I desire to take this opportunity to thank Professor A.K. Sinha, Director, BSIP for his constant encouragement and keen interest on the study of fossil algae. I am indebted to the Chairman of Governing Body and Research Advisory Council of BSIP and also to the members of Governing Body and Research Advisory Council, BSIP. Last, but not the least I would like to pay my gratitude to the expert committee, constituted by the Director and Chairman, BSIP for recommending me to the Chunnihal Khatiyal Medal-1998. Before I close, I want to express that this award will always cheer me to make further significant contributions in my ongoing studies on calcareous fossil algae.

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