

THE FIRST INDIAN GEOPHYTOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

Under the auspices of the Palaeobotanical Society, the First Indian Geophytological Conference was organized from 21 to 24 December, 1975 at the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow. The main idea behind this conference was to provide an interdisciplinary platform for the scientists engaged in researches in Palaeobotany as well as in other branches of Botany and Geology that have a bearing on Palaeobotany. The programme of the conference included Plenary sessions, Contributed-paper sessions and Symposia.

The chief guest of the inaugural function, Prof. K. N. Kaul, Vice-Chancellor, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur, traced back the history of earth sciences and importance of the interdisciplinary approach in biological sciences. In the presidential address entitled, "The role of plants and micro-organisms in the formation of rocks and minerals of economic importance" Prof. R. C. Misra, F. N. A., elucidated how plants and the early life contributed to the making of such geological deposits as Petroleum, Coal, Limestones, Phosphorite, Magnesite, Salt, Bauxite, Amber, Gypsum, Diatomite, Iron, Copper, Manganese, Sulfur and Uranium ores. The General Secretary, Dr. D. C. Bharadwaj, briefly outlined the progress of the Palaeobotanical Society and introduced the programming of the conference.

The Scientific Programme of the contributed-paper sessions, consisted of meetings under the following sections:

- (1) Palynology and Archaeobotany
- (2) Plant Morphology and Taxonomy
- (3) Palaeobotany and Phylogeny
- (4) Stratigraphy
- (5) Plant Ecology and Geography
- (6) Sedimentology and Biopetrology

In the session on 'Palynology and Archaeobotany', papers encompassing the subjects like pollen metabolism, germination in pollen, ancient plant economy and statistical approach to the specific delimitation in spore dispersal were presented. The sessions on 'Plant Morphology and Taxonomy' and 'Palaeobotany and Phylogeny' received the maximum response from the contributors and therefore, these sessions had to be conducted in two meetings each. In these sessions a wide variety of subjects were covered such as—developmental embryology, vascular anatomy, pollen morphology and taxonomy, epidermal morphology, genetic engineering and fossil plants representing all plant groups particularly from Rajmahal, Deccan Intertrappeans of Madhya Pradesh and the southern region.

In the section on 'Stratigraphy', although 12 papers were registered, only five were presented relating to stratigraphy of Permian and Tertiary depositions from India and of the Jurassic from Iran.

The session on 'Plant Ecology and Geography' was poorly contributed while a good number of significant contributions were made to the session on 'Sedimentology and Biopetrology'. The latter session included papers on the study of animal-sediment relationship, heavy mineral analyses and genesis of feldspar-detritus.

On 24th December, two Symposia were held.

(1) Climatic vicissitudes in India during Gondwana times.

(2) Soil-Plant Relationship.

In the first symposium six out of seven invited papers were presented, encompassing the evidences of climate during Gondwana times from the view point of Palaeontology, Palynology, Palaeobotany, Minerology, Sedimentology and Lithology. These papers were really of great significance as they included up-to-date information on the subject. This was also a unique symposium since it brought together a number of parameters on a subject, which usually has been neglected so far.

In the symposium on Soil-Plant Relationship twenty five papers were registered out of which more than half were presented. The contributions were of high standard and very informative. In view of the vastness of the subject covered, it was felt that more time should have been given to this symposium.

The closing plenary session of the conference was held on 24th December, 1975, in which thanks were given to the delegates by the Organizing Secretary, Dr. Uttam Prakash, and appreciative views regarding the conference were expressed by senior delegates representing various research centres. The conference being the first gathering of its type catering to the needs of bio-earth scientists received a very encouraging response and a general feeling has prevailed that this conference must be regularly held on a wider scale of representation.

It is proposed to publish the papers presented at this conference in volumes six and seven of the Society's journal 'Geophytology'.

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