

B P Radhakrishna (April 1918–January 2012)

Bangalore Puttaiya Radhakrishna (April 1918–January 2012), popularly known as BPR, was born at a time when the struggle for India's freedom had caught the imagination of the masses and had acquired a national character, evolving from fights of the several princely states for their own independence from foreign rule. People from all walks of life were realising that freedom was to become a reality soon and that it would be their responsibility to build a strong nation. BPR's father, B Puttaiya, a well-known public figure of the Mysore State was among those, and so a sense of purpose was in the air when BPR was growing up. BPR imbibed this national spirit and the sense of purpose which left its lasting imprint on all of BPR's work – as a geologist, as a writer of science books in Kannada, as a founding member of the Geological Society of India (GSI) and as founder and editor of the *Journal of the Geological Society of India*.

In 1937, BPR obtained a BSc (Hons) degree with a gold medal from Central College, Bengaluru. Soon after, at age 19, he joined the Mysore Geological Department as a field assistant and retired as its Director, 37 years later. His stint as Director saw a great expansion in activities, especially in mineral resource development and utilisation of groundwater resources of the state. There was a sincere effort to use all his knowledge and abilities to the good of the people of his land – Karnataka in particular, and India in general. His work is a remarkable example of applying one's technical knowledge to the service of the people, transcending narrow career objectives and vindicates the belief that the best science is done when one addresses problems around oneself as opposed to looking for problems from journals and publications. A glance at his books (listed below), which are highly acclaimed in academic circles, will substantiate this.

1. *Groundwater in Karnataka.*
2. *Gold in India.*
3. *Mineral Resources of Karnataka.*
4. *Doddegowdankoppal (Mandya District) Earthquake of 16th May 1972.*
5. *Search for Minerals & Groundwater in Mysore State.*
6. *The Present Status of Geological, Geophysical & Geochemical Studies in Dharwar Region.*
7. *The Closepet Granites of Mysore State, India.*
8. *Mining in Mysore.*
9. *Hydrogeological Studies.*
10. *Fuller's Earth Deposits of Gulbarga District of Mysore State.*
11. *Geology of Karnataka.*
12. *Mineral Based Industries in Mysore State.*



BPR's role in the founding of GSI and its journal was a great service to the cause of geology in India. He was also instrumental in bringing out a series of other publications, memoirs, lecture notes, field guides, mineral resource series and textbooks. He was quite meticulous in organising symposia, group discussions and field workshops under the aegis of GSI. He was in favour of studying geological problems in a multi-disciplinary way. His incredible self-reliance was a hallmark of his personality. He was even unwilling to pursue governmental aid for the Society. In fact, he believed that Fellows of the Society should be diligent in their commitment with intellectual enterprise rather than financial assistance.

BPR was an eminent writer and a wonderful communicator in Kannada. In his first two books in Kannada – *Nanna Thande (My Father)* and *Saarthaka Baduku (A Fulfilled Life)* – he paid his tributes to his father, B Puttaiya, and his teacher, V Sitaramaiah. Later he took to writing, in Kannada, inspiring biographies of eminent scientists – C V Raman, Srinivasa Ramanujan, Charles Darwin, B G L Swamy and Madame Curie.

BPR was elected Fellow of the IASc (1956), INSA (1972), the Geological Society of London (1986) and the Geological Society of America (1988). He was awarded the National Mineral Award by the Government of India (1971), the Rajyotsava Award of Government of Karnataka (1976), the Pramatha Nath Bose Medal of the Asiatic Society (1990), Padma Shri by the President of India (1991), the D N Wadia Gold Medal by the Indian National Science Academy (1993) and the National Mineral Award for Excellence by the Government of India (2000).

BPR had strong reservations about the extremely interventionist modern allopathic medicine devoid of 'bedside manners'. He felt that "... if ever anyone fell ill, he should not be subjected to the tortures of a modern ICU, but life be allowed to ebb away peacefully and naturally at his home amidst familiar surroundings." As per his desire, BPR passed away peacefully in Bengaluru in the house his father had built, and where he grew up, at 1:30 pm on Republic Day, January 26, in 2012.

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