



K. Krishnanunni
(1941-2020)

With profound sorrow we record the demise of Shri Kalathinkal Krishnanunni, formerly Director General, Geological Survey of India (GSI) on 4-6-2020, at his native place Palakkad in Kerala. His scholastic accomplishments as well as his subsequent professional career was characterized by his sheer brilliance in whatever he undertook all through his life.

Shri Krishnanunni was at the Indian School of Mines (ISM), Dhanbad during 1959-62, obtained his M.Sc. degree in Applied Geology with distinction. A brief stint as Scientific Officer in the Atomic Minerals Division (AMD) in a team exploring for uranium in the Singhbhum shear zone during 1963-65 preceded his spectacular achievement of topping the first UPSC Geologists Examination in 1964. He joined the Gujarat Circle of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) in early 1965. He served the organization for the next 36 years in different capacities and assignments in various parts of the country with singular devotion, sterling organizational and leadership qualities and high technical competence in his chosen field of remote sensing and photo-geology.

His deputation for training in photo-geology to the then Indian Photo Interpretation Institute (IPI) at Dehradun (presently known as the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing-IIRS) during 1968-69 laid the foundation for his life-long interest and solid contributions to the development of this field in the Indian subcontinent. As a topper at the Dehradun course, Shri Unni earned a fellowship at the International Institute for Aerial Surveys, popularly known as ITC at Delft, the Netherlands during 1969-71, culminating in another Master of Science degree of the institute. On his return to India, Shri Unni was posted to the Photogeology Division at the Central Headquarters of GSI at Kolkata. This gave him an opportunity to launch several national and regional level projects utilising aerial photos and satellite imagery. Also a batch of dedicated youngsters were trained and inducted into this field under his guidance and inspiration.

Shri Krishnanunni was deputed to the then National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) at Hyderabad in 1976 on a two year deputation to assist the Director, NRSA on all technical matters and facilities for remote sensing data acquisition, manpower development

and other related matters in a nascent organization. He was once again deputed as Director, ISRO (NNRMS-RRSSC) during 1986-89 to set up primarily Regional Remote Sensing Centres in different parts of the country to build digital infra-structure for processing remote sensing data, taking up collaborative projects in natural resource assessment and in training manpower and skills as a part of capacity building. The five Regional Remote Sensing Service Centres (RRSSC's) located at Bangalore, Nagpur, Jodhpur, Dehradun and Kharagpur are a standing testimony to the conceptual planning and execution of the project under Shri Unni as today's centres of excellence in application of geospatial technologies for the progress of the country.

Another noteworthy contribution of Shri Krishnanunni was the formulation and implementation of DOVEMAP Project (Development of Village Economy through Mineral Appraisal Programme) in the North-Eastern Region of the country for employment generation and rural development based on local raw-materials/minerals. This project has the potential to radically improve the rural living standards if implemented in the entire country with the village as the focus of development. He was a Life Fellow of the Geological Society of India and the Indian Society of Remote Sensing (ISRS). He was recipient of the Bhaskara Award of the ISRS in 2004 for his life-time contributions in promoting remote sensing activities in the country.

Shri Krishnanunni superannuated on 31 March, 2001 after over three and half decades of meritorious service in GSI and chose to settle at his native place of Palakkad in Kerala. He was universally liked for his urbane and charming manners, his unassuming nature in a hierarchy-ridden technocracy and his wealth of knowledge which he was eager to share with others. Even those who did not know him personally well, had admired him owing to his exemplary way of interaction, and his ever-smiling countenance imprinted in one's memory. Shri Krishnanunni is survived by his wife and two children and an admiring and grateful geoscientific fraternity.

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DOI: 10.1007/s12594-020-1556-3