

Rajendra Kumar Bhandari

Dr R.K.Bhandari, born on 10 February 1941 in India, obtained his first degree in Engineering from the University of Rajasthan and his post graduate degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai. He obtained his degree of D.I.C and Ph.D from the Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London in 1970.

Academic Qualifications: PhD (London), DIC (London), M.Tech (Geotech Engg), B.E. (Civil Engineering)

Professional Affiliation: F.I.C.E (London), F.N.A.E (India), F.I.E (India). F.I.G.S (India)

Fields of Specialization:

Geohazards, especially Landslide Research and practice; Natural Disaster Reduction; Disasters Crisis Management

Professional Attainments:

Dr R.K.Bhandari is an internationally acknowledged geohazards specialist known particularly for his outstanding contribution in the area of landslide research and practice. Jointly with Legendary Professor J.N.Hutchinson, his work on the landslides of the Bouldnor Cliff of the Isle of Wight in the UK yielded, *for the first time*, a fundamental explanation to the occurrence of low-angled mudslides in the stiff-fissured clay slopes. His work on the landslides of the Himalayas climaxed in the publication of the first small scale landslide atlas of India and in exposing the pitfalls in adopting open-ended landslide hazard mapping procedures *sans* field check. He was also the first to introduce instrumentation and monitoring of landslides in India in the late 1970's and thereafter bring the subject to the centre stage at the International Symposium on Landslides 1980, held in New Delhi, of which he was the General Secretary, as well as in the state-of-the-art report on Landslide Instrumentation presented by him at the International Symposium on Landslides 1984, held in Toronto. Following the cataclysmic landslide events in SriLanka, during 1990-1995, he piloted, from concept to completion, a comprehensive landslide hazard mapping project in the Central Highlands of SriLanka. It was also during this period that under his direction a century old, frequently recurring and the most notorious Watawala earthslide was brought under complete control.

The other area of his contribution relates to Institution building, the most prominent being the establishment of Landslide Studies and Services Division at the National Building Research Organization in SriLanka and Centres of Disaster Mitigation and Management at the Anna University and Vellore Institute of

Technology University both in the Tamil Nadu state of India of which he was the Director and founder Chairman, respectively. He was also the first to establish a landslide research laboratory at the Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee.

Positions Held:

(2003-2005) Programme Director, UN-HABITAT Iraq Programme (L6/8)
(2001-2003) Director, Centre for Disaster Mitigation and Management, Chennai, India
(1995-2001) Head, International Science and Technology Affairs Directorate, CSIR, India
(1990-1995) UN Chief Technical Advisor, Natural Disaster Mitigation UNDP, Colombo, Srilanka.
(1986-1990) Director, Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee, India
(1975-1986) Head, Geotechnical Engineering at CBRI, Roorkee

Professional Recognition

Dr R.K.Bhandari, a noted geohazard expert, is the first and the only Indian recipient of the prestigious Varnes Medal for the year 2012, the highest international award for professional excellence in landslide research. The medal was conferred on Dr Bhandari **on 22 November 2012** at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The International Consortium on Landslides represents 51 member institutions from 32 countries; and its International Programme on Landslides (IPL) was jointly established by UNESCO, WMO, FAO, UNISDR, UNU ICSU, IUGS and WFEO.

Among some of the notable honors bestowed on Dr Bhandari include, the Distinguished Alumnus Award of the Indian Institute of Technology (2001), Mumbai; Bhasin Foundation Award for Science and Technology (1988), Jaikrishna Prize (1992); Distinguished Engineer Award of the Institute of Engineers (India); Disaster Mitigation Award of the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee (2005); Distinguished Rotarian Award of the Rotary International, IGS - Kuekalmann Award (2000) of the Indian Geotechnical Society; Plaque of Honor from the Japanese Society of Soil Mechanics (1987); Plaque of Honor from South East Asian Geotechnical Society, December 1987; and AIMIL - Gold Medal, December 1979.

He was elected as Fellow of Indian National Academy of Engineering, Fellow of Institution of Civil Engineers (U.K.), Fellow of Institution of Engineers (India) and Honorary Fellow of the Indian Geotechnical Society of which he was twice elected as the President. He was also the recipient of the Science Research Scholarship of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 for higher studies at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London.

Dr Bhandari also served nationally as the coordinator of natural disaster related activities of the National Disaster Management Authority (Core Committees on Earthquakes and Landslides), Indian National Academy of Engineering (2001-3); Member: High Powered Committee on Natural Disasters (2001-2003); Member, Working Group of the National Committee; Member, Gujarat Government Task Force on long range strategy for Mitigation of Disasters; Member, Committee of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of the Government of India on setting up Institute of Seismic Research and Application, Gujarat; Member, DST Committee on Seismic Microzonation of Delhi; National Coordinator: Disaster Knowledge Network on behalf of the High Powered Committee on Natural Disaster Mitigation Plans; National Coordinator: Indo-China Joint Workshop on Natural Disasters at the request of DST, Government of India; Member: Research Council of Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun; Member: Research Council of Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi; Coordinator: Landslide Atlas of India for the Building Materials Technology Promotion Council of the Government of India; Chair Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering Committee of Bureau of Indian Standards for over two decades.

Among notable keynote addresses in the present context are (1) An Overview on Natural & Manmade Disasters and Their Reduction - delivered at the World Engineering Congress on the sustainable development, Jan 20 - 23, 2000, Science City, Calcutta (2) A Mega View of Natural Disasters & Agenda for Safer Habitat - Invited lecture at the World Habitat Day, 4 October 1999, UNCHS (Habitat), Fukuoka Office, Japan (3) An overview on Natural Disasters in India and Strategy for Natural Disaster Mitigation - A keynote address delivered at Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi April 2000 (4) A National Natural Disaster Knowledge Network and the Great Learning Exercise - A Keynote address delivered at Disaster Management Institute, Bhopal, 14-15 July 2000 (5) Natural Disaster Reduction in Urban Habitat. Proceedings of the International Conference on Habitat & Sustainable Development, Volume II, pp 1-169 (6) Role of a Government Funded R&D Institution in Natural Disaster Management - Proceedings of the Sri Lanka National Workshop on Role of R & D institutions in Natural Disaster Management, Colombo, September 10-12 (7) The Malpa Tragedy of 18th August 1998 in the Kumaon Himalaya - A Plenary Lecture delivered at the Third National Conference on Science & Technology, organized by Royal Nepal Academy of Science & Technology, Kathmandu, Nepal

Dr Bhandari has published more than 180 papers and 4 monographs, guided many Ph.D. theses, and obtained 5 joint patents. He was Academic Visitor to the University of Wollongong in Australia and travelled widely on invitation to deliver lectures received from many countries including USA, UK, Japan, Canada, France, Russia, Australia, Austria, Germany, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Trinidad and Brazil.