

OBITUARY



R.K. Lal
(1936-2014)

Prof. R.K. Lal, former INSA Senior Scientist at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi passed away on 19th October, 2014. He is survived by his wife Smt. Sudha Lal, son Ashish and daughters Sujala and Subhra. Prof. R.K. Lal was born in 1936 and received his early education from BHU, Varanasi. After completing his B.Sc. in 1956 and M.Sc. in 1958 from BHU, Prof. Lal joined as lecturer in 1958 in the Department of Geology, BHU. He obtained his Ph.D in 1966 from University of Toronto, Canada under the former famous petrographer Prof. W.W. Moorhouse in metamorphic petrology. The entire doctoral work was carried out under the Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship. After returning to India he became Reader in 1972 and later as full professor in 1982. He served as Head of the Department from 1986 to 1990 and continued after his superannuation in 1996 in the same department as CSIR Emeritus Scientist (1997 to 2001) and as INSA Senior Scientist (2003 to 2005).

Prof. Lal taught metamorphic petrology, mineralogy, experimental petrology and thermodynamics, precambrian stratigraphy, etc. at graduate and postgraduate levels. The salient research contributions of Professor Lal and his coworkers are: (i) "Restite" origin of the high-grade K-deficient cordierite-gedrite rocks of Fishtail Lake, Ontario, Canada (ii) detailed petrological characteristics including geothermobarometry of the Barrovian type of prograde metamorphism of meta-pelites from Sini, Singhbhum, Jharkhand and Takdah, Darjeeling Himalaya, (iii) Petrology of low-pressure andalusite-sillimanite type of regional metamorphism of the Khetri Copper Belt, Rajasthan, (iv) Chemographic relationships of the high-grade silica-deficient sapphirine-bearing rocks of Sonapahar, Meghalaya, (v) Detailed geothermobarometry of granulites of the Southern Granulite Belt (SGB) and Dharwar Carton of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, (vi) Phase petrological study

and formulation of new chemical potential diagrams to explicitly demonstrate the observed sequence of reaction textures during the metamorphic evolution of Mg-Al quartz-absent sapphirine granulites of Kiranur and Ganguvarpatti areas of Tamil Nadu and sapphirine-spinel-quartz granulites of Paderu area in Andhra Pradesh, and calibration of several new internally consistent geothermobarometers.

Prof. Lal did his post-doctoral research at the Institute of Mineralogy, University of Kiel, Germany, under the Fellowship of Alexander von Humboldt and Volkswagenwerk Foundation. Prof. Lal was one of the finest researcher with remarkable passion and confidence, extraordinary teacher and above all an outstanding human being. He was well known for his simplicity and remarkable teaching skills and patience.

Prof. Lal's contributions were widely recognised nationally and internationally. Professor Lal received La Touche Medal of the Mining Metallurgical and Geological Institute, Kolkata (1958); and was the first recipient of Professor MR Srinivasa Rao Award by the Geological Society of India, Bangalore (1985); National Mineral Award of Ministry of Steel and Mines, Government of India (1995). He was a Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore (1986), National Academy of Sciences (India), Allahabad (2001) and Indian National Science Academy, Delhi. Professor Lal served on the research Advisory Committee of the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun and as Council Member of the Geological Society of India, Bangalore.

Prof. Lal's sad demise is a great loss to the entire metamorphic petrology community. He will be sorely missed by many friends, colleagues and his family.

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