ECR Webinar on Emerging Areas of Research in Quaternary Science: A Report – Akash Srinivas, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (Mohali), India (E: akashs91@yahoo.co.in) and Aayush Srivastava, University of St Andrews, UK (E: aayushgeo@gmail.com)

The Association of Quaternary Researchers (AOQR) is a recently established association committed towards an overall ascent of Quaternary research in India. The association aims to bring together the different researchers, students, and enthusiasts of the Quaternary of the region. One of the key objectives of the association is to bring Indian Quaternary researchers at par with global research developments in terms of the latest techniques, methods and practices and enable to fill the gaps in the available dataset. In line with this objective, the association seeks to organize regular meetings, national and international conferences, field workshops, laboratory training sessions, brainstorming sessions, and open panel discussions. In times of increased virtual meetings and seminars, and decreased in-person events, the association sought the need to adapt and organise a virtual webinar series to provide Early Career Researchers (ECRs) a platform to share their work to a global network of interested individuals and students. This ECR Webinar series, titled '*Emerging Areas of Research in Quaternary Science*', was formulated and organised by the ECR team of the AOQR comprising research scholars from various disciplines and institutions from different parts of India.

This webinar series, hosted by the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow and Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda, went live on Monday afternoons between 7th September, 2020 and 29th October, 2020. It featured eight ECR speakers from India, and covered a broad range of topics and themes related to the South Asian Quaternary record and climate variability. Each session was moderated by a member of the AOQR ECR team, supported by other members of the ECR, under the support and supervision of the AOQR office bearers. The sessions were planned to include a presentation of about 40 minutes, followed by discussion. A detailed list of abstracts and speakers is published in the Quaternary Chronicles (Vol. 2, No. 3 - December 2020), the newsletter of the AOQR.

The series premiered with Dr. Amzad Hussain Laskar, from the Geoscience Division, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, who highlighted the role of stable isotopes in paleoclimate reconstruction with his talk entitled '*Paleoclimate reconstruction using stable isotopes in natural archives*'. The second lecture in the series was delivered by Dr. Waliur Rehaman, from the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Vasco da Gama, Goa, on '*Ocean acidification threats under high CO₂ world: A lesson from past records of ocean pH*'. The third lecture in the series was by Dr. Madhav Krishna Murari of the Geochronology Group of the Inter-University Accelerator Centre, New Delhi, and he spoke on '*Cosmogenic Radionuclides: Application to geomorphological processes*'. The fourth lecture by Dr. Parth R. Chauhan, from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Mohali, was on '*Climates and cultures: Quaternary environmental dynamics and human adaptations in India*' and highlighted human and cultural

responses to the changing climates of the Quaternary. The next lecture was by Dr. Gayatri Kathayat, from the Xi'an Jiaotong University, China, who critically examined the recently defined 'Meghalayan Age' in her lecture titled '*The '4.2 ka BP Event' in the Indian subcontinent?*'. Dr. Sushant S. Naik, from the CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (CSIR-NIO), Dona Paula, Goa, spoke on the '*Role of the oceans in glacial/interglacial variations in atmospheric carbon dioxide: An objective synthesis of proxy records*'. The penultimate lecture was presented by Dr. Midhun M., from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the Cochin University of Science and Technology, Cochin, on the topic entitled '*Coherent Variability in Sahel and Indian Summer Monsoon rainfall recorded in oxygen isotopes of rain/speleothem*'. The final lecture was delivered by Dr. Santosh K. Shah, from the Birbal Sahni Institute of Paleosciences, Lucknow, on the topic titled '*Introduction to dendrochronology and its application in climate research in the Himalayas*'.

On an average, over 250 viewers attended the lectures, ~80 % of which were students and ECRs. Participants represented various regions of India and the series drew in an international crowd, with participants from diverse countries such as Sweden, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the United States, Switzerland, Brazil, Pakistan, the Philippines, Israel, and Taiwan. Overall, the series received tremendous support and an overwhelmingly positive feedback. Since the presentations and ensuing discussions were recorded, and these are freely available to view and review on the YouTube channel of the Association of Quaternary Researchers (www.youtube.com/channel/UC0—5r6xYc5FFTgYV-Pmu-A) for further outreach and engagement with those who missed the sessions.

At the end of the lecture series, a special interaction was organised, along with the ECR team of the International Quaternary Union (INQUA), to brief the participants, especially the ECRs and students of Quaternary research, about the organisation and opportunities available at INQUA. This session included five short presentations from members of the INQUA ECR team (Dr. Francesca Ferrario, Università dell'Insubria, Italy; Dr. Nivedita Mehrotra, Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, India; Dr. Annie Lau, University of Queensland, Australia; Dr. Martin Seeliger, Goethe University, Germany, and Dr. Guido Stefano Mariani, Università degli Studi di Cagliari, Italy) which outlined various facets of INQUA - its structure and organisation, the various funding opportunities and commissions for all members of the Quaternary fraternity, as well as details on possible avenues for publication. With this, it was also agreed that there would be continued cooperation and coordination between the ECR teams of AOQR and INQUA in organising and managing future activities and training programs.

The success of AOQR's ECR Webinar series has resulted in more such planned webinar talks by the ECR team, especially aimed at, and by, students of Quaternary Sciences in India.

DOI: 10.1007/s12594-020-1615-9