

WHO SHOULD HEAD THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

After one hundred and fifty years of service to the nation as the premier geological organization of India, charting all the geological work in the country, it is rather strange that a doubt has arisen in the minds of administrators as to who should head the Geological Survey of India – a geologist or any one from non-geological branch. From the year 1851 right up to 1994, the head of the organisation was always a geologist who adorned the seat and guided with distinction the destiny of this great geological organisation, one of the largest and the oldest surveys in the world. Successively the chief of the GSI, who was for long designated as Director that was later changed to Director General, could hold his ground in any scientific forum on any aspect of earth science. However, in the year 1994, it was an aberration that a geophysicist of instrumentation branch, may be eminent in his own field, was hoisted on GSI as Director General. This appointment was legally tenable on grounds of the prevailing modified rules of promotion which accepted cadre equation, though it was based on the most unscientific method. However, at that time every geologist in the organisation and even some geophysicists themselves, questioned the wisdom of such an appointment. Now the concern of earth scientists is all the more since this is likely to become a precedence for similar appointments in future.

In GSI, the work is mainly related to various aspects of geology which forms the core of all geoscientific activities. Geophysics, chemistry, drilling, mechanical engineering and administration provide only a supporting role in the investigations executed by geologists. In all such investigations, no geophysicist, chemist, drilling engineer, mechanical engineer or administrator carries out any primary investigation on their own and their work is dovetailed to

the need and guidance of the geologist in the field. These supporting disciplines normally do not have any major independent programme and they have only a supportive role. GSI is primarily a geological organisation where geologists have always been at the helm. The post of Director General (D.G) of the GSI is not merely one of technical administration, but basically one of leadership in geology, as the D.G. is expected to deal with all aspects of geological science. Without sound geological knowledge, the person holding this post would not be able to provide the required leadership and has to rely on the superficial briefing provided by his assistants even for the routine functions of the Department. Such a situation is damaging to the Department's reputation assiduously built over one and a half century. Therefore, any deviation from the position of primacy of the role of geologist would tantamount to tampering with the rhythm of working of the organisation, leading to unhealthy competition among senior officers from various supportive streams to aspire for the post of Director General. The prospect of a chemist or an engineer heading the organisation is therefore disquieting and will ultimately have destabilising effect on GSI. In the interest of proper functioning of the GSI, the Ministry of Steel and Mines, Government of India should revoke the rule of cadre equation and restore the previous position that the Director General of the GSI should invariably be from the cadre of geologists. This will do natural justice to the main scientific stream of the geological organisation. This is ultimately in the interest of the organisation and geological work in the country.

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NOTES

SHALLOW PERCHED WATER CONDITIONS IN JAISALMER AREA, RAJASTHAN

Water occurring under perched aquifer conditions is an important natural source available to meet the needs of the people dwelling in desert areas that are deficient in rainfall. In most cases, lithological and structural features play an important role in the development of such perched

aquifer conditions, as seen in Jaisalmer area that forms part of Thar desert in western Rajasthan. Water occurring at shallow depth under perched water conditions is exploited by 2-4 m deep shallow wells locally known as Berris. Exploitation of water from the same perched aquifer zone