

Obituary



I.B. Chhibber
(1933-2025)

Shri Indu Bhushan Chhibber, a legend of the Engineering Geology (EG) stream, was associated with this domain for six decades, and was one among the doyens connected with the formative years of Engineering Geology Division in the Geological Survey of India (GSI). His impactful career spanned six decades and reads like an illustrious testament.

Hailing from Jammu, he did post-graduation in Geology at University of J & K, Srinagar in 1955. He joined GSI in 1956 at Kolkata and was assigned assessment of ground water regime at the Neyveli Lignite mines, Tamil Nadu. Subsequently, he was posted to EG Division at Madras and was associated with Idukki and Lower Periyar Hydroelectric Projects. An engineering geologist is required to study the foundation rock characteristics in details and certify the proposed civil structure as safe. Only thereafter the civil works follow. Transferred to Lucknow, Shri Chhibber worked as an engineering geologist for the Kanpur City Water Supply Scheme, Chilla Left Bank Canal, Rajghat Irrigation Project, Thein Dam, Beas Dam at Tong, Check dam at Bhakra, Baira-Suil-Bheldade Hydroelectric Project, Chamba Hydroelectric Project, Gola water storage scheme, Kanhar Irrigation Scheme, Mauda Irrigation Scheme, Rajghat Irrigation Scheme, Kol Dam Project, Dagmara project across Sutlej River in Himachal Pradesh and other projects. Next transferred to EG Division, Nagpur in 1979, he attended to Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh EG Projects till 1991. These included 54 river valley projects including the Bargi Project, Upper Wainganga Irrigation Project, Bansagar Project, Korba Project, Barna Project, Haste Barrage, Sindh Multipurpose Project and Bargi Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project across Narmada River to name some. He was also associated with detailed foundation assessment of BHEL factory at Bhopal, Hasdeo Barrage, Korba Thermal Power Complex, Mouda Thermal Power Station near Nagpur, Tiroda Thermal Station near Bhandara and Siskasar hydroelectric project now in Chhattisgarh, among the many. Shri Chhibber was promoted in May, 1991 and superannuated from service at Nagpur on 31st December, 1991 as Director, M.P. Projects at E.G. Division, GSI, Nagpur. He settled down at Nagpur.

Never to give up and hang his boots post superannuation, he worked for Atkins (London), serving at Dubai and Muscat from 1993 to 1995, for the Recharge Dams and Water Supply Dam at Muscat. He worked in Cambodia for 5 MW hydel cum

irrigation project across Mekong River, then in Eastern Africa at Burundi Storage Dam and for the Water Supply Scheme at Oman. Thereafter, he served with WAPCOS between 1999 and 2013 (age 80), from where he was associated with many of their irrigation and hydel projects like 126 MW Kosi Project at Sopal, Bihar, across Son River and Sindh hydroelectric project at Gwalior, under aegis of Asian Development Bank. He also worked with Southern Engineering Works for the Tawa Dam Project from 1995-99 in Chhattisgarh.

He almost never missed a lecture, meeting, seminar and workshop organized by the GGS. His noteworthy career saw him contribute his expertise to about 120 EG projects, many of which were foundational to infrastructure development and safety. Dedicating his intellect to understanding the complexities of EG, he applied it to critical engineering challenges for civil structures. He had authored an impressive 57 research papers, including 5 in international publications. Shri Chhibber leaves behind a powerful example of a life well-lived, dedicated to both scientific pursuit and to the nurturing of great personal connections.

He was Member of many technical committees, several scientific societies and a life member of the Gondwana Geological Society (GGS), Nagpur. His infectious enthusiasm and calming presence at get-togethers were always soothing. Predeceased by his better half recently, he is survived by his two daughters; both settled abroad and one son, who is at Nagpur. His mental abilities remained strong enough even lately. Spending some time with him was like having a brief orientation course to reorient and refresh oneself from a routine. Shri Chhibber was a nonagenarian by age, but maintained a young man's inquisitiveness and enthusiasm towards knowledge till his last days. He appreciated the younger geoscientists liberally for their achievements. Shri Chhibber passed away peacefully at the age of 92 on 13.07.2025 in Nagpur, bequeathing a legacy of incomparable professional achievements. His passing away leaves a significant void in the field of engineering geology and in the hearts of all his family members and a vast circle of friends and admirers.

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