

DR. FAQIR CHAND KOHLI



Born in Peshawar (Pakistan), Dr. Kohli completed his schooling and matriculation in Peshawar. He obtained B.A. and B.Sc. (Hons.) degrees from Punjab University - Government College, Lahore. Thereafter, he went to Queen's University, Canada and received his B.Sc. (Hons.) degree in Electrical Engineering in 1948. He worked with the Canadian General Electric Company for a year, and proceeded to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA, where he received his MS degree in Electrical Engineering. In the latter part of 1950 and early 1951, he worked with Ebasco

International Corporation, New York Connecticut Valley Power Exchange, Hartford; and with New England Power System, Boston for training in Power System Operation Planning.

He returned to India in early August 1951, and joined Tata Electric Companies and helped to set up the Load Despatching System to manage the system operations. He then became the General Superintendent in 1963, and Deputy General Manager in 1967. Simultaneously, he worked as consultant to Tata Consulting Engineers. He became Director of Tata Electric Companies in 1970. During his years with Tata Electric Companies, he introduced advanced engineering and management techniques for the operation of power systems. He was also responsible for significant use of digital computers for power system design and control, using the CDC 3600 mainframe computer at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

In 1968, Tata Electric Companies installed the Westinghouse digital computer to control the operations of the entire grid of Tata Electric Companies, which comprised three hydro stations, thermal units and energy supply from Tarapore Atomic Energy and Koyna Hydroelectric of Maharashtra State Electricity Board. This was a significant achievement for India as there were only four other utilities in the U.S. that had opted for digital controls. UK, Germany, France and Japan at that point in time were using Analogue controls.

In September 1969, he moved to Tata Consultancy Services as General Manager. In 1974, he was made the Director-in-Charge and in 1994 Deputy Chairman. TCS was set up to take part in IT development. TCS carried out complex assignments for banks, telephone companies and the government in early 70s. TCS pioneered India's IT Revolution and helped the country to build the IT Industry.

Be it the propagation of computerisation in India at a time when no one realized its potential, or bringing the benefits of IT to India's rural masses through computer based Adult Literacy programme, he saw IT as an instrument of national development. He has been working on advancing engineering education at undergraduate level to world standards to create a large pool of students for undertaking graduate studies and research. With IIT Bombay and Ministry of Information Technology, he initiated the project to graduate 3000 Microelectronic engineers at Masters level. He indicated the need for IT use within the country in all spheres of activity some years back and this has taken shape in terms of affordable computers and Open-source software in Indian Languages.

A visionary and pioneer by nature, he is acknowledged as the 'Father of the Indian Software Industry'. Dr. Kohli is a fellow of IEEE USA, IEE UK, Institution of Engineers

India, Computer Society of India and many others. He has received his Doctorate in Engineering (Honoris Causa) from the University of Waterloo, Canada in 1990, from Robert Gordon University in 2000, Aberdeen, U.K., University of Roorkee, UP in 2000, from IIT Bombay in 2004, Jadavpur University, Kolkata in 2004 and IIT Kanpur 2006.

He has received many awards including the prestigious Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Award in 2001 and was conferred the Padma Bhusan in the year 2002.

He is a Director in Triveni Engineering & Industries Ltd, Triveni Engineering Ltd and Media Lab Asia and a Chairman in WTI Advanced Technology Ltd and ASL Advanced Systems Pvt. Ltd.

He has also received the following awards:

1. Jan 2006: IT-People Awards for Excellence in Information Technology.
2. Feb 2006: IIT Kanpur-Honorary Fellow Award.
3. April 2006: Sand Hill Group Award – Santa Clara.
4. October 2006: IT/BT convention in Pune on 27th October received “Life Time Achievement” award.
5. Jan 2007: Ramakrishna Bajaj Award for Good Governance - Rotary Club of Bombay.
6. May 25th 2007: Queen’s University at Kingston to receive the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science.
7. Jan 2008: CSI (National Seminar Technovision in collaboration with Indira Group of Institutes at Indira Universe Hinjwadi Pune : Lifetime Achievement Award for valuable contribution to the Indian IT Industry.