

IIT professor gets Young Scientist Award

■ Aditi Sharma Powai

For a 30-year-old, who is the only recipient of the Young Scientist Award for his research contribution in engineering science this year, Deepankar Choudhary, professor in the civil engineering department of IIT, Bombay is way too modest. A shy smile appears every time the award presented by The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA), Kolkata, is mentioned.

The science congress was held in Ahmedabad from January 3-6. After a rigorous screening process, Choudhary was selected among six other scientists in the engineering science category. During the conference, the scientists had to present a detailed paper on their subject as well as take part in an interactive session. Choudhary's subject was 'Characterisation of problematic swelling soil for foundation design'.

Swelling soil, commonly known as black cotton soil, swells up during monsoons and consequently cracks up when it loses moisture. This seasonal swelling causes cracks in buildings and roads. Explaining the subject, Choudhary said, "I have proposed a formula to calculate the swelling pressure so it can be accounted for while designing the foundation."

His primary subject is geotechnical engineering. Based on the subject,

Choudhary is basically into designing earthquake resistant structures paying more attention to the foundation of the structure. He holds a PhD in this subject. His other research interests include soil-structure interaction

This is not the first award that Choudhary has to his credit. He has also been given the Young Scientist Research Award for research in technology by a talented young scientist by BRNS-DAE, department of atomic

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Deepankar Choudhary

problems, centrifuge modelling of geotechnical structures, numerical and analytical modelling of retaining wall, anchor, fundamentals of soil behaviour for fine grained soils and so on.

Choudhary has been teaching at IIT Bombay since the past one year. He has also taught at IIT Kanpur. He believes his teaching experience at the institution helped him in a major way to get the award. "When I was interviewed for the post of a professor at IIT I was grilled quite a bit by the faculty here. Even the problems that the students bring to us are quite tricky. So when I was addressing the audience at the Congress during the interaction session I found it much easier," he said.

energy, government of India in 2004 among others. Choudhary had also topped his Btech, Masters and PhD programmes, holding gold medals for his efforts.

The professor is, however, not about only research and science. He listens to music inspired by his wife who is a singer in AIR, Kolkata. He is also interested in dramatics. Interestingly, while pursuing his PhD at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, he even translated about 100 episodes of a Bengali story into English for ETV Kannada. His students probably do not know this but he even played a bit part in the Kannada serial. Kudos to the young scientist and all the best to him for his future ventures.