

Science Communication Need in India

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INTRODUCTION

Ever needed Science communication in India, the idea is to help science and a scientific culture penetrate India's socio-culturally diverse society, and to transform it into a nation of scientifically thinking and scientifically aware people. However, the trends in our country are not encouraging and the little coverage and poor presentation of science and technology in media are well recognized. Coverage of science in the media is dismal and has been declining over the years, said Dr. Narendra K Sehgal, the noted science communicator and UNESCO Kalinga Prize Winner who chaired the inaugural session of the 17th Indian Science Communication Congress in New Delhi. Prof. K. G. Suresh, Director-General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication in his keynote address also said that to reach the masses, scientists have to be communicators as well. Poor science communication can be a potential impediment in the journey of India becoming a developed country and a knowledge economy.

The knowledge gap has a direct relationship with societal and developmental issues. This was recognized by the late Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed way back in 1991 when he said, "It can be no accident that there is today no wealthy developed nation that is information-

poor, and no information-rich country that is poor and underdeveloped."^{1,2} It was also recognized by the International Development Research Council in a report that the most vital difference between developed and developing, rich and poor countries is the knowledge gap – the capacity to generate, acquire, disseminate, and use scientific and technological knowledge³.

During the 100th session of Indian Science Congress in 2013, renowned Agricultural Scientist Prof. M. S. Swaminathan (Father of Green Revolution in India) also suggested in his address- "our Universities should help in developing science communicators who can explain to the general people in local languages the significance of important scientific discoveries. Similarly issues of biodiversity, biotechnology, nuclear technology and nano-technology need priority attention in efforts designed to bridge the scientist-society perception gap"⁴.

And the Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said knowledge is the future.

A number of organizations/ institutions/ universities/ laboratories have been making immense progress in generation of scientific and technological information/knowledge (I&K) in our country. But how much that I&K is being disseminated and made available to

the society for any use is a big question. If the I&K so created is not being properly disseminated and not being used by the end-users, then it is a national loss – a loss due to the gap so created between I&K generation and its proper utilization. Information about science and technology must reach the grassroots level for India to become a developed nation and a information rich country.

Conclusion

But it is frightening to note that science popularization initiatives and efforts in India are not in harmony with the aspirations of the diverse Indian society. Therefore, collective efforts on a larger scale are needed for communicating and popularizing scientific knowledge and practices to the general public

through science communicators.

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