

Kalinga Prize: China yet to figure in the list

The recent editorial on 'Science in India: new year reflections'¹ brings several important points on the fore, especially the China–India comparisons. For example, in terms of total published articles in 2010, China occupies the second position behind the United States, whereas India lies in the tenth place. However, India appears to edge out China in terms of citations per article.

In fact, there is one more parameter in which China has yet to register its mark, i.e. the UNESCO Kalinga Prize for the popularization of science. Both India and Brazil have the honour of making this international distinction five times since its inception in 1952 (refs 2–4). Ever since its inception till date, the Kalinga Prize has been conferred to 65 personalities (including seven Nobelists) from 24

countries. Just three countries, viz. UK (10 awardees), USA (8) and France (6) have won more number of times than India and Brazil. The list of five Indians in the coveted list includes Jagjit Singh (1963), Narender K. Sehgal (1991 with Radu Iftimovici of Romania), Jayant V. Narlikar (1996 with Jiri Grygar of Czech Republic), Dorairajan Balasubramanian (1997) and Yash Pal (2009 with Trinh Xuan Thuan of Vietnam).

Also, realizing the importance of public understanding of science, China, which does not figure in the coveted list of Kalinga awardees, has rightly proposed to double its number of science communicators to four million by 2020 (ref. 5).

1. Balaram, P., *Curr. Sci.*, 2012, **102**, 7–8.
2. Kalinga Foundation Trust; [http://www.kalingafoundationtrust.com/website/kalinga-](http://www.kalingafoundationtrust.com/website/kalinga-prize-for-the-popularization-of-science.htm)

[prize-for-the-popularization-of-science.htm](http://www.kalingafoundationtrust.com/website/kalinga-prize-for-the-popularization-of-science.htm), accessed on 25 January 2012.

3. UNESCO Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science; http://portal.unesco.org/geography/en/ev.php-URL_ID=11286&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, accessed on 25 January 2012.
4. Jain, N. C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2010, **99**, 1494–1496.
5. Jie, D., <http://www.scidev.net/en/news/china-to-double-science-communicators-by-2020-1.html>, accessed on 25 January 2012.

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Stressful research

Research in science entails a wide range of requirements. But many Indian universities lack even the basic amenities like tap water in laboratories. Chemicals as well as laboratory-ware are either insufficient or have to be ordered through the departments, which is a time-consuming process. As a result, researchers are bound to purchase them to avoid delay in their studies. Laboratory equipment, if out of order, requires a long time to be repaired or replaced. Further, some expensive instruments of immediate requirement are absent from many departments, as a result of which

research is severely affected. Researchers are also at times forced to approach other institutes to carry out certain analyses due to the lack of the necessary facilities in their universities, which is an inconvenient and expensive process. In addition, there is also a dearth of good books and journals and proper internet facility. Due to these lacunae, researchers often fail to show satisfactory research output, which is reflected in the quality of their publications. Also, they are unable to complete their research within the stipulated time. Besides, there is uncertainty about future employment

and financial security. All these factors together contribute to make research stressful and fruitless. Therefore, steps must be taken to fulfil the basic research requirements in Indian universities, so that the researchers do not experience too much stress and are able to produce good-quality publications.

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Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society

Rao *et al.*¹ mention that A. V. Nursing Row was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1870. They go on to claim that 'he was the first Indian to be elected Fellow and not Ragoonatha Chary as earlier mentioned by Rao *et al.*²'. This is some improvement, but not enough. It is a matter of public record that the first Indian to be elected Fellow of the Royal

Astronomical Society was Radhanath Sickdhar (his spellings), in 1853.

1. Rao, N. K., Vagiswari, A. and Birdie, C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2011, **100**, 1575–1581.
2. Rao, N. K., Vagiswari, A., Thakur, P. and Birdie, C. J., *Astron. Hist. Heritage*, 2009, **12**, 201–210.

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