

edge economy. However, while more funds are essential for these advances, a rejuvenation of existing undergraduate and postgraduate science education system together with an integration of teaching with high-quality research is also desperately wanting. The need for better training in science in India is urgent<sup>2</sup>.

All types of outputs like research papers, research reports, popular articles, opinion, radio and television presentations, etc. are to be properly credited for various assessments and promotions in

Indian science agencies. These items contribute at different intellectual levels to different target groups. If papers with high impact factors alone are taken seriously by working scientists and managers, it would accelerate the fall of Indian research. The norm should be 'a paper is worth its contents first'<sup>3</sup>.

1. Naylor, R. L. *et al.*, *Nature*, 2000, **405**, 1017–1029.
2. Lakhotia, S. C., Shasidhar, L. S. and Vale, R., *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**, 163–165.

3. Varkey, M. J., *Curr. Sci.*, 2004, **86**, 500.

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## Critical review of letters essential to enhance quality and readability

A recent letter published in this journal had a mistake in the identification of a commonly occurring fruit bat of India<sup>1</sup>. But the error has been spotted out quickly and repeatedly by readers<sup>2–4</sup>. The failure to avoid such a simple taxonomic identification mistake of a common fruit bat shows either the ignorance of subject knowledge by the authors or plain oversight to publish in a hurry without even a friendly review. Although the journal's editorial policy states that letters may be reviewed and edited, it has now become crucial that these may need to be critically reviewed by subject experts so that the best write-ups can be selected for publication to address the larger interest of the readership.

The correspondence section includes qualitative, descriptive and preliminary information on subject matters that are at times uninteresting for the readers who crave for scientific knowledge enhancement. As a matter of fact, one of India's

leading scientists bluntly commented on the letters and said, 'Some of them should not be published because they are poor and there is nothing cerebral about them'<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, it is about time for the editors of the journal to decide on accepting only quality letters that deserve the attention of scientists.

There is no doubt that *Current Science* is India's leading multidisciplinary science journal with a wide circulation across the nation therefore it should follow the model of other leading journals such as *Science* and *Nature* when it comes to publishing quality. If the letters submitted to *Current Science* are critically reviewed by subject experts within the editorial board and elsewhere, the quality can certainly be enhanced while avoiding the avoidable mistakes.

Only a few selected letters that address the multidisciplinary science matters quantitatively and logically can be included in the print version of the journal.

Other ordinary letters responding to straightforward issues such as the conservation of fruit bats and importance of sacred groves in villages and towns can be included in an on-line commenting facility that the journal can easily link to the website in the near future.

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2. Nathan, P. T., Mahandran, V. and Sripathi, K., *Curr. Sci.*, 2012, **103**, 1142–1143.
3. Mariappan, P. and Balasundaram, C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2012, **104**, 573.
4. Mariappan, P., Raj, S. V. and Balasundaram, C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2012, **104**, 689.
5. Malhotra, R., *Curr. Sci.*, 2011, **100**, 1466–1471.

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## Scientific English

In response to Raman's<sup>1</sup> comments on the poor linguistic competency of Indian learners, and my own<sup>2</sup> concerns in this regard in response to Balaram's<sup>3</sup> editorial about the dearth of technical writers, developing the skill of scientific English among the science graduates will be the best solution. Non-literary, scientific English has its own domain with special linguistic features of vocabulary, grammar and style. Scientific English which is not part of English curriculum in India

should either be trained by the enthusiastic and skilled teacher in the subject, running extra mile or it can be started by the quality conscious institutes under the English Specific Purpose (ESP), a branch of English study dealing with specific skills required in specific profession. In these days of publish or perish such a skill is essential.

1. Raman, A., *Curr. Sci.*, 2012, **102**, 1501.

2. Metri, D. M., *Curr. Sci.*, 2008, **95**, 1654.
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