

Science and technology awareness programme in Uttarakhand*

A three-day workshop on 'Science and technology sensitization for Uttarakhand' was held last year, in which 15 Fellows of National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI), 20 scientists and teachers and more than 200 students (M Sc, Ph D and Postdoctoral fellows) participated. A combination of presentations and interactions with participants was used to increase awareness in promoting science and technology. Deliberations were made by distinguished NASI scientists on two main themes, viz. sensitization for the technological empowerment of women and writing scientific papers. Some important topics covered were gender sensitization: changing the mindset; women reproductive health: issues, advances and challenges; technological empowerment of women for social development, scientific paper writing, etc.

The mandate of NASI and efforts being made by it to popularize science and technology in India were highlighted by Manju Sharma. In the scientific sessions on 'Sensitization for the technological empowerment of women', various issues

related to women's health, problems faced by women at home and workplace, and the present scenario of the health conditions of women in Uttarakhand region were discussed. It was emphasized that science education is necessary for women for developing a scientific approach of thinking; it will also help women, groom their family in a better way. It was pointed out that gender sensitization is the need of the hour, and provides equal opportunities to women in achieving success.

The Guest of Honour K. S. Valdiya (Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru) stressed upon the urgent need of focusing on science and technology sensitization/outreach programmes for students residing in remote regions of Uttarakhand. He further reiterated the need of sensitization of science among young children, as it will have a much greater impact at this stage.

In the 'Science paper writing' theme through innovative lectures, research scholars were guided about presenting their research work. The speakers also explained about the art of scientific writing and ethics in science and technology, with a focus on scientific publication. Lectures on research and communication-related topics were helpful to all students.

The respective chairpersons and co-chairpersons of the different sessions

summarized the deliberations of the distinguished speakers in the concluding session and motivated young researchers to maintain their scientific temperament for a better future ahead. Manju Sharma proposed to initiate a 'Women Empowerment and Science Centre' in Uttarakhand with the help of Uttarakhand State Council for Science and Technology (UCOST), Dehradun and NASI Allahabad. D. K. Nauriyal (Vice Chancellor, Kumaun University) displayed keen interest in initiating such a centre in Kumaun University, Nainital, as it will immensely benefit the women of the region. The workshop provided an opportunity to students to actively interact with eminent NASI scientists. All the sessions not only provided an interactive atmosphere for young students, but also helped answer some of their queries through imparting knowledge by distinguished scientists.

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