

nation's ability to provide enough vaccine to its population, make the concept of boosting immunity attractive. Not a sudden magic potion against SARS-CoV-2, tea could be an essential add-on to immunity-boosting strategies during this pandemic, which should be adequately studied.

Conflict of interest. The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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MEETING REPORT

Science Academies' science leadership workshop

A week-long science leadership workshop supported by all three science academies in the country (Indian Academy of Sciences, Bengaluru, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, and The National Academy of Sciences, India, Prayagraj) was conducted through the virtual mode from 22 June to 28 June 2020. Touted as India's first science leadership programme, the workshop had arguably been one of the largest science events in the world in recent times in terms of participants, with 20,205 registered delegates alone that included both national and international participants.

The seven-day workshop featured fifteen inspiring talks by several well-known science leaders in the country and abroad. Besides, the workshop also included immersive sessions of eleven Young Science Leaders.

The workshop covered many important topics of science leadership that are often missed in traditional curricula, including critical thinking, group communication, problem solving, creativity and innovation, time management, risk-taking, mentoring, team work, coping up with mental stress as a scientist, flexibility, helping PhD students for emotional well-being, decision making, active listening and empathy, women in science, cross-cultural communication, lab culture, etc. All talks had the same title, 'on becoming a science leader', and the speakers shared their life journey, childhood inspi-

rations, role models, and so on in a non-technical fashion, intending to inspire better leaders of tomorrow.

The workshop was unique in many dimensions. Out of 26 speakers, 15 were female, to ensure gender equality and uphold the spirit of 'women in science' – the theme of this year's science day by the union government. Gender ratio among speakers relayed a subtle yet profound message that women can be as good science leaders as men. Organizers also ensured that each session had one male and one female moderator. As the workshop was held through the online mode and live-streamed through YouTube, tens of thousands of people worldwide participated in the sessions. All sessions were two-way, with the audience having the option to pose their questions and get it answered by the speakers. All talks of this workshop were archived and curated at YouTube for the benefit of posterity and the people with internet connectivity issues (<https://bit.ly/Science-Leadership>). The organizers also released an Android app to facilitate offline access to the generated content. Several sessions of the workshop highlighted the importance of ethics in science, and a final exam was conducted in such a manner to underline this vital topic. The so-called 'exit exam' was based on academic honour code, and the certificates required self-declaration that the candidates passed the workshop – first of its kind in the country. The orga-

nizers also ensured that certificates were fool-proof with digital validation feature.

Despite massive outreach, the organizing team consisted of just two persons and nine student volunteers, indicating how we could leverage the power of information technology. In terms of finances, the workshop had been a zero-budget programme with no grants sought from the academies or elsewhere, including honorariums (for both speakers and coordinators). Also, as there were no travels – especially air travels – associated with this workshop (the workshop had four international speakers and thousands of international participants), the overall carbon footprint remained almost zero. COVID-19 lockdown period has forced us to move the workshop to a virtual mode, which unexpectedly came with many additional advantages, especially environmental consciousness and transition towards carbon neutrality. We believe workshops like this might become the 'new normal' in the post-COVID-19 era, to continue the momentum of environmental sustainability that we learned during the lockdown period, way forward in years to come.

The workshop also paved the way for two important extension programmes. The first is a country-wide 'Virtual Internship with Science Leaders' (VISL) programme wherein students from school grade seven to PhD can find their mentors among established Young Science

Leaders of the world (from national laboratories, central and state universities, and so on). The internship is also open for the general public, musicians, artists, journalists, and so on and is completely free. The interns will work across the discipline (trans-disciplinary projects are especially encouraged) with their mentors on a chosen research topic for two months and discover the sheer-joy of knowledge discovery. The second exten-

sion of the Science Leadership Workshop is the Young Science Leader series of talks live-streamed on YouTube on every weekend. The sessions follow the same pattern as the workshop and feature an extensive question and answer session inviting queries from the audience on topics such as opportunities in higher education, career, research grants, etc. With these two extensions – the first of its kind in the country, organizers hope

to bring the true essence of the workshop to the grassroots level, thereby creating a lasting legacy in science education across the country.

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