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S&T in India

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The various constraints experienced and foreseen while publishing 'S&T in India' series are understandable but despite these limitations the significance of the subject remains valid. It is necessary to adopt a multipronged strategy to bring out reports on various S&T institutions in the country.

1. The articles by Directors, of course, are the ones most suited but they may lack credibility and critical scrutiny. To remove these lacunae, a small team comprising Director of the organization, one expert from outside the organization, and a 'Science & Technology Manager' from the administering University/Headquarter may take care of the apprehensions about credibility and non-cooperation. This strategy may suit some of the institutions only, say organizations floated by Central and State Ministries and Departments, which are manned by competent science managers.

2. Individual scientists may be commissioned to write articles on their specialized subject rather than S&T institutions itself, but in the process they may be requested to write on the S&T institutions, university departments and individuals who have contributed significantly to the subject. The article must not be a review of the subject alone but encompass facilities, organizations created on the processes, excitement and frustrations, if possible. They may be encouraged to write not necessarily depending on the primary source of information alone.

To eke out information about work being carried out at private and industrial enterprises, the chief of the R&D section of industry may be approached to write articles regarding their activities, facilities, etc. to begin with. Since R&D in this sector is nascent in origin, a secondary source of information may

not be available at all.

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We feel that the idea of commissioning knowledgeable scientists may evoke more apprehensions than hopes, especially if we take into consideration the psychological setup of our scientific community. Our community is still a closed one and it needs to be very open and responsive to such an idea as you have mooted. Thus the idea of having a critical judgement by someone may not be welcome! People would rather welcome critical appreciations!

In addition to this, certain laboratories may really be concerned about the secrecy of their work and may not like to divulge their findings before 'patentization or publication'. Thus we are afraid that the doors will remain closed for commissioned writers in most of the cases.

We would, however, take this opportunity to put forward the following suggestions:

Current Science may provide a fast communicating forum in the form of a 'News Letter' encouraging scientists of all stature to publish their recent research in an abstract form highlighting the findings and their implications on S&T. Discussions/opinions may be invited on these news items from readers. Alternatively, *Current Science* Association may think of publishing a 'news letter' on the line of news letters like *Agricell Reports* where research publications are reported as news with a critical commentary. Such an arrangement is likely to provide more information flow in a more uninhibited manner than by any other means.

Current Science may consider to provide some space to expose those research ideas which a scientist or a teacher (sitting in a remote place!) has nurtured over a considerable period of

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time but could not test on account of practical constraints. This dimension of research is possibly more relevant to Indian conditions where facilities and opportunities are restricted. This sort of communication can be a potential tool for surfacing very important notions lying submerged in the depths of mind.

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I share your feelings that the purpose of the invited articles on the S&T activities of research institutions in India could not be fully accomplished as some of the authors of the articles instead of highlighting the research work which has made some impact in India and abroad, have provided a report of the work being done in the institution. The suggestion to request some scientists to visit laboratories and render critical account of the work sounds interesting but is not likely to serve the purpose. Even if an outsider is welcomed by a laboratory, he will have to be dependent on the material which will be made available to him by that laboratory. This will just end up only in a few visits.

In my opinion, a group of scientists may be commissioned to write articles on R&D institutions in India who have clear cut aims and objectives and have made some contributions already. The articles can be prepared on the basis of the laboratory's past 10 years annual report. The laboratories could be requested to provide such material to *Current Science* or one of the commissioned scientists identified by the *Current Science* for this purpose.

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