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Editorial

The famous science populariser and astrophysicist Carl Sagan made a very poignant comment when he said, “We live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology.” He went on to add, “This is a clear prescription for disaster.” Interestingly, he was making such an observation in relation to the poor level of science awareness in American societies, one that is highly facilitated by the products of science. But the point remains that his observation would perfectly apply to just any other society in the world. The present Indian mindset would equally qualify for the jab from Sagan. When a particular group of people decides to remain ignorant about science and its processes it loses the capacity to grow in a meaningful way. It might have the financial might to buy technological tools, gifts of science, from abroad and build up a seemingly affluent society but it would never taste real growth. There will be superstitions that divide the community along several unfounded lines like caste, race, religion, colour of skin etc. Subsequently there would be antagonism among the different sections, lopsided development depending on which section is in power, fighting and bloodbath. The whole process would engage the Homo sapiens into a futile exercise taking away from them the time and capacity to invest in science and make the world a better place. It is lamentable that such a possible scenario is actually what the world is passing through at present.

To understand why we, in our country, have largely refused to associate ourselves with science in a fruitful way we shall turn to Professor Yash Pal, a leading science populariser. In his address as the General President of the 1990 session of the Indian Science congress at Cochin he said, “...we consider Science as an extraneous activity – a sub-culture which has been borrowed from outside, which has been useful in generating technology, mostly in other countries, and that technology then comes upon us and we are required to adjust our society, accordingly, to be in tune with its character.” That probably explains our disinterest in science communication. We keep adjusting because we have to. The little bit of communication that remains is very official and lacks the thrust to sensitize each citizen to the potential of science. Scientists who labour within the walls of research institutions regard themselves as members of that ‘sub-culture’ and do not feel the urge to start a meaningful dialogue with the lay section of the society on the merits of science. Thus, in spite of our country investing money in establishing separate

bodies for science communication at government levels, not much achievement has been seen in this field. We have not come up with cutting edge research on appropriate languages for science communication or effective television formats for explaining science to different sections of the society. Our needs are little as far as science communication is concerned and we meet the same by borrowing from the west.

The present volume of the Global Media Journal, Indian edition takes a tiny step in exciting debates and discussions in the field of science communication. Monjib Monachari's article makes a brief review of the concerned scenario in India while Sabyasachi Chatterjee takes a look at the historical role of the science clubs and the change those are experiencing. T V Venkateswaran's article discusses the role of science communicators in bringing about gender equity in science and technology research. Mrinal Chatterjee asks some pertinent questions about presentation formats and Meenu Kumar makes a content analysis of science coverage in Hindi and English newspapers. Subarna Kumar Das presents a formal introduction of several aspects of a science journal and Shrinidhi Adiga and D. S. Poornananda focuses on the nature of a particular environmental movement in South India.

In the students' section Natasha Sharma and Sudipta Sinha explores the possibilities of the betterment of living standards of our marginalized section of population through conscious application of science and technology which has not been realized due to the lack of effective communication and sympathetic measures.

In the commentary section Somak Sen makes a case study of science coverage by a leading newspaper from North India. Shaswati Das discusses prospects of science communication in our country and Kapil Kumar Bhattacharya's article does a similar exercise, mentioning the roadblocks to success. Sourav Gupta draws our attention to a very important tool of the present era called the Internet Protocol Television or IPTV.

In the book review section B Sunil reviews *Media, Risk and Science* by Stuart Allen and Ankita Banerjee reviews *Science Communication In The World: Practices, Theories And Trends* edited by Bernard Schiele, Michel Claessens and Shunke Shi.

The documents section contains *India's Science, Technology And Innovation Policy 2013* and also *Scientific Temper Statement Revisited-2011* that relates to the epoch making Palampur declaration on scientific temper.

The editorial team thanks all the contributors for their interest in this issue and making valuable contributions. We hope that this volume will excite further research in this field and throw light on unexplored avenues.

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