

Vigyanika

International Science Literature Festival 2019



From Left to Right: Dr Partha Ghose; Dr Bimal Roy, Chairman of the National Statistical Commission; Dr Manoj Kumar Patariya; Mr Jayant Sahasrabudde, Organising Secretary, Vijnana Bharti; Dr Vijay Bhatkar, President, Vijnana Bharti; Dr Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Former Chairman, National Book Trust; Dr Pallab Banerji, Professor, IIT Kharagpur; Prof. Hak-Soo-Kim, Former Chair of AASSA Special Committee on SHARE communication from South Korea; and Mr B. Anand, Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser, DST, during the release of Vigyanika's *Theme Book*

CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) and Vigyan Prasar organised *Vigyanika*-International Science Literature Festival during 5-7 November 2019 at Kolkata. The literature festival was held as a part of the fifth India International Science Festival mega-event and was attended by more than 200 invitees, researchers, scientists and students.

Presiding over the inaugural function at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, Mr Jayant Sahasrabudde, Organising Secretary, Vijnana Bharti said that the confluence of science and literature will go a long way in taking science to the masses.

Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology in his keynote address said that science communication is as important for scientists as it is important to the different sections of the society. Prof. Sharma added that communication of science is a major scientific social responsibility and we need to encourage scientists and researchers to take to popular science writing as well.

Eminent computer scientist Dr Vijay Bhatkar, President, Vijnana Bharti, who was the chief guest at the inaugural function said that the dimension of science literature is important for science communication. He added that the IISF's science literature fair is a welcome step that connects the masses to science.



Dr Ashutosh Sharma



Dr Vijay Bhatkar



Mr Jayant Sahasrabudde

Emphasising the need for science communication in Indian languages, Dr Baldeo Bhai Sharma, Former Chairman, National Book Trust, said that there should be country-wide programmes that encourage science communication in Indian languages.

Dr Partha Ghose, noted physicist and author said that without science literature, science cannot grow roots. He remarked that science fiction is an important part of science literature and we need many more science fiction writers in India.

Dr Krishna Bihari Mishra, Padma Shri awardee in his address said that there is no difference between literature and science. These are two ways of presenting the same truth, he remarked.



Other dignitaries of the inaugural function included Mr B. Anand, Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser, DST, Prof. Hak-Soo-Kim, Former Chair of AASSA Special Committee on SHARE Communication from South Korea and Dr Bimal Roy, Chairman of the National Statistical Commission.

Science of Happiness

What is happiness? More specifically, what is the science behind happiness? What can happiness lead to? These were some of the questions addressed during an engaging panel discussion on the theme, *Science of Happiness*.

Swami Atmapriyananda, Vice-Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational & Research Institute, Kolkata said that happiness and peace go hand in hand. In today's time, we are losing the much essential human qualities of contentment and forbearance, he said. Unhealthy competitiveness and undue ambitions are taking a toll on happiness, Swami Atmapriyananda added.

Speaking on the famous Gross National Happiness index of Bhutan, Dr Saamdu Chetri, Visiting Professor, IIT Kharagpur said that we have to be content with what we have to remain happy.

Dr Manas Kumar Mandal, Former Director, Defence Institute of Psychological Research spoke about happiness as a driver of innovation and as social equity for community growth. Dr Mandal said that the lack of a reward system for scientists to engage with the public is an impediment to science communication.

Ms Nguyen TuongLan, Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology spoke about the link between motivation and happiness in science.

UNESCO-Kalinga Prize Winner for Science Popularisation, Dr Narender K. Sehgal chaired the panel discussion that was co-chaired by Prof. Finarya Legoh, Vice-Chair, AASSA Special Committee on SHARE Communication.

Contemporary Science Literature: A Perspective

The panel discussion on the theme Contemporary Science Literature: A Perspective was chaired by Dr Avanish Kumar Srivastava, Director of CSIR-Advanced Materials and Process Research Institute (AMPRI), Bhopal who said, "Science that remains in the books and the labs should be taken to the masses."

Dr Kanan Purkayastha, Scientific and Environment Advisor from the UK said that while translating scientific concepts into different languages, the semantic, conceptual and normative equivalence should be maintained.

Contemporary science literature has to reach the masses and more importantly without distortion, said Dr C.M. Nautiyal, Science Communication Consultant, Indian National Science Academy. While Mr Pathik Guha, Science Journalist, Ananda Bazar Patrika said that science literature should inspire as well as instruct.

Science Communication in Indian Languages

A session on science communication in Indian languages was chaired by Dr Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz, Vice-Chancellor, Maulana Azad Urdu University, Hyderabad. In his introductory remarks, Dr Aslam stressed on the importance of communicating science through regional languages. Scientific attitude can be propagated only if it is delivered in one's local language, he remarked.

Dr Manas Pratim Das from All India Radio, Siliguri shared about the initiatives being followed in Bangla language for communicating science. Mr Hemant Lagvankar, Science Communicator & Education Consultant, Marathi Vigyan Parishad, Maharashtra in his lecture highlighted the various science communication activities being carried out in Marathi language. Dr N. Murugan, Former Director



Vigyan Kavi Sammelan



Technical Sessions in Progress

of All India Radio, Chennai highlighted the efforts being undertaken in Tamil for science popularization. And Mr A.S.K.V.S Sharma, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysuru said that from one of his studies, it was observed that many students dropped out from science stream after their tenth standard owing to the English language in which science is being taught.

Science Communication – Innovative Approaches

The session Science communication – Innovative Approaches was chaired by Professor Gabriel Gomez, Chicago University and co-chaired by Dr G. Mahesh, CSIR-NISCAIR, New Delhi.

Researchers, scientists and students presented papers. Mr Manoj Varghese, PhD Scholar, CSIR-NISCAIR spoke on the impact of information, education and communication related to Malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS. Ms Snigdha Panda, Assistant Teacher, Government High School from Odisha discussed posters as an important tool for science communication for students. Mr Abhay Rajput, Scientist of Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology spoke about India's science policies and the component of science communication in these policies.

Dr Amalendu Shekhar, Program Executive, All India Radio, New Delhi discussed about the role of electronic media in science communication, especially broadcasting media. Mr Biju Dharampalan, PhD Scholar, CSIR-NISCAIR, New Delhi talked about the use of QR codes for popularisation of science magazines. Mr Anjan Banik, Assistant Teacher and Freelance Science Writer from Tripura discussed the various steps taken by Tripura government to popularise science through newspapers.

Taking Science to the People – Challenges & solutions

A panel discussion on “Talking Science to the people – Challenges and Solutions” was moderated by Dr T.V. Venkateswaran, Scientist F, Vigyan Prasar. Noted science communicators Mr Pallava Bagla, science communicator and photojournalist, Mr Dinesh C. Sharma, Managing Editor, India Science Wire, Ms Subhra Priyadarshini, Chief Editor, Nature India and Dr Manas Pratim Das, Programme Executive, All India Radio, Siliguri were the panelists.

The panel discussed major challenges in science communication in India, such as combating superstitions and the menace of fake news and disinformation. The experts were also of the view that science communicators should play an important role in spreading awareness about climate change in the society.

Innovative Science Communication

A Vigyan Kavi Sammelan and Science Drama were organized. Ten poets enthralled the audience with beautifully worded poetry about science and the environment. The science drama, *Acharya Prafulla Chandra* was presented by Sukchar Pancham Repertory Theatre, Kolkata.

Science Book Fair

In the session on science literature for children, Dr Madhu Pant, Science writer and Former Director, National Bal Bhawan, New Delhi said that the state of children's science books in India is dismal. She highlighted the need for colourful science books laced with humour that have catchy titles.



Panel Discussion on 'Taking Science to the People'



Session on science communication in Indian languages



Science drama on PC Ray



Valedictory session



Inauguration of the Science Book Fair by Dr Vijay Bhatkar

Many scientific phenomena can be misconstrued as miracles if children are not knowledgeable about scientific concepts, said Dr Arvind Dubey, Science writer & Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Hind Institute of Medical Sciences. Science books should educate and bust myths, he remarked.

The engaging session was attended by a large number of excited school students.

Six science books published by Vigyan Prasar were released during the Science Book Fair. Speaking at the book release function, Prof. D.C. Chamola, Dean, Faculty of Adhunik Gyan Vigyan, Professor & Head, Department of Hindi and Linguistics, Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar said that a good writer acts like a weaver and captures the fullness of human emotion and captivates the readers' mind.

A science debate competition on the theme "Is social media changing the science communication landscape?", a science cartoon competition and a science magic show were organised during the book fair.

Round Table Meet and Summing up

The three-day Vigyanika: International Science Literature Festival concluded with the Round Table Meet on 7th November 2019. The session was chaired by Prof. Hak-Soo-Kim, Former Chair, AASSA Special Committee on SHARE Communication, South Korea.

The lead speaker Dr Pallab Banerji, Professor & Head, Materials Science Centre, IIT Kharagpur mentioned that in spite of the science communication efforts, superstitions and myths still persists in our society. Invited speakers shared their views on challenges faced by science communicators across the globe.

Some of the major recommendations included bringing out more popular science books; involving industries in S&T communication; making communication of science a major scientific social responsibility; and delivering S&T concepts in local languages.

Mr Kapil Tripathi, Scientist F, Vigyan Prasar proposed the vote of thanks.

Compiled by Ankita Rathore, Anu, Biju Dharmapalan, Harshada H, Hemanth, Kartikay Shukla, Moumita Mazumdar, Nikita, Mansi Gupta, Raghu M R, Prerna Singh