

time are the result of epigenetics alone<sup>14</sup>. Since flowering time is one of the most important characteristics in breeding programmes, epigenetic studies could be incorporated while selection of early flowering germplasm for breeding short duration cultivars. Recent reports on inducible transgenerational epigenetic changes in plant DNA to bring desired changes in the expression pattern of some genes provide us an opportunity to play with and bring out desired heritable changes in target crops for both production and protection. However, additional studies are required for thorough understanding of the epigenetic transgenerational regulation in plants. Better understanding of the phenomenon will help in developing strategies to regulate plant genes through epigenetics in order to suit agricultural necessities. Further, identifying and characterizing suitable priming agents (biotic or abiotic) and the host receptor sites for them will lead to successful implementation of this powerful biological tool in future. Seeds from primed plants when used for cultivation

have the potentiality to put up a strong defence against the potential biotic and abiotic threats. Thus, strengthening the innate immunity of a plant through transgenerationally regulated phenomenon will help in significantly reducing synthetic pesticidal loads against the biotic challenges. Current understanding and future opportunities of induced transgenerational epigenetic changes in plants have led scientists to dream for a relatively pesticide-free environment which is also the need of the hour.

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## Bhatnagar Laureates and Fellows of the Royal Society

I enjoyed the letter ‘Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize: an inspiration for international recognitions’ by Singh and Luthra<sup>1</sup>. It is hardly surprising that there is such a strong correlation between winners of the Bhatnagar Award and Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS), as the Bhatnagar Award is one of the most prestigious awards in Indian science.

Table 1 in the letter lists only the Indian FRS who were elected after the institution of the Bhatnagar Prize. It would be useful to have a list of all Indian FRS. I believe that Srinivasa Ramanujan was the very first Indian FRS.

There is at least one error in the table. Chandrashekhar B. Khare (UCLA) was elected as an FRS in 2012, along with K. VijayRaghavan and myself, but his name is missing from the list.

Finally, I would be curious to know whether there is any other instance of

someone like me, who is an Indian citizen and an FRS, but received all of his university education abroad.

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*Response:*

We thank Vidyasagar for his appreciation of our letter. The table lists 39 scientists of Indian origin, who obtained their tertiary-level education from India and have been elected FRS since the institu-

tion of the Bhatnagar Award, and out of these 23 are Bhatnagar Awardees. The names of Vidyasagar and Khare, elected FRS in 2012, were not included as they have not obtained their tertiary-level education from India.

Ardaseer Cursetjee (Wadia) was the first Indian to be elected FRS in 1841 followed by Srinivasa Ramanujan in 1918 (ref. 1).

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