

# Conference Report

## Third Nabanita-Satish Chandra Biswas Memorial Lecture 2016 on “Science as a Culture in Our Society”

The **3rd Nabanita-Satish Chandra Biswas Memorial Lecture** on “**Science as a Culture in our Society**” was held on July 16, 2016 at the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum (BITM), 19A Gurusaday Dutta Road, Kolkata 700019. The event was organized by the Institute of Science, Education and Culture (ISEC) in collaboration with BITM, Kolkata. This year the speaker was E Islam, the Director, Birla Industrial and Technological Museum.

D P Duari, the then President of ISEC, introduced the speaker, E Islam, the Director, Birla Industrial and Technological Museum. He mentioned sad demise of Prof. Murali M Biswas, the Founder Secretary of the ISEC to the audience. He pointed out the immense contribution of BITM whenever ISEC organizes programmes, and invited E Islam to deliver the **3rd Nabanita- Satish Chandra Biswas Memorial Lecture**.

E Islam started the lecture mentioning the meaning of ‘culture’ and ‘science’. He spelt out etymology of these two terms. He opined that the main difference between superstition / religion and science is the issue of putting question. While superstition or religion, in general, does not allow questioning, science is based on questioning and looking for the reasoning behind a fact, etc. Science has the Hallmark of being a knowledge process with truth is the objective that is independent of an observer. It is not only verifiable, but also falsifiable or acceptable. Often a new theory replaces the old one. He next discussed the relation between the science and technology.

During the last 100 years, science has undergone large-scale progress, however, 2001 census data showed that in India, there were about 2.4 million places of workshop against only the presence

of 1.42 million of schools. There is also a rising tendency of anti-rationalism, fanaticism, acts of superstition and intolerance. This clearly shows a shameful picture this country. Hence, there is the need of spreading scientific temper among the citizens of our country. Scientific temper involves adoption of the method of science to provide a viable method of acquiring knowledge, and to solve human problems among others. In January 1964, The Society for Scientific Temper was established as called for by the famous scientist, Satish Dhawan. They tried to collect signature among the scientists in favour of a document that opposes any super-natural influence on human being, but failed to do so mostly. Then they approached Prof. Nurul Hassan, then Education Minister. Subsequently, to promote scientific temper among the mass, the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament of India in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, included promotion of ‘Scientific Temper’ in it. However, there is a long way to go to factually spreading the true scientific temper among the people of all sections, Dr. Islam stated. He further mentioned that in the places of ancient civilization throughout the world, existence of religious dogma, casteism, ‘*bhikhu*’ concept of Buddhism, dominance of authoritarianism by the rulers, etc. caused diminishing temperament of scientific pursuit.

After the lecture, there was a lively question-answer session. The audience interacted and shared their respective opinion on the topic of the lecture which encompasses the basic motto of the Institute of Science, Education and Culture.

Prepared by **Santanu Das**,  
Secretary, ISEC