

EDITORIAL

In post independence days a lot of emphasis has been given for the development of research facilities in our National Research Institutes and Universities. At present we are having nearly six dozens of Central Research Institutes and nearly 150 Universities and similar bodies; these house probably the largest scientific manpower in the world next to China and they have got these vast and varied natural resources and 60 millions of manpower at their disposal. Even with these resources still more than 70% of our population is living below poverty line.

To the commoner the question of research had hardly created any impact. Perhaps to him research in this country with all these gigantic buildings, sophisticated equipments and accessories is a luxurious game which the fortunate ones play for their own satisfaction, enjoyment and personal gains.

To the scientific community "research" has different interpretations. There is a group more privileged with various resources at their disposal with comparatively lesser effort. To them "research" means more publications, higher degrees, more scope of promotion and career opportunities. This group, apparently in prominent positions in public life, dominates our academic and scientific arena. Others with honest and scientific spirit to research or pursue academic work are mostly frustrated under heavy bossism, groupism and nepotism; very often they are bullied and become victims of slander and propaganda. This leads to heavy exodus of Indian Scientists to foreign countries. Frustrations in scientific communities have already reached a serious stage—

many have committed suicide even being unable to bear the humiliation and frustration; many have left this profession seeking places in totally different disciplines like Banking and Insurance Companies only for better pay. In a recently published article "Our Scientists" in The Statesman (4th June '77) this sad state of affairs has found vivid expression.

Publication :

In the last two decades the volume of research has grown considerably and papers are being published in large numbers, but in most cases the main aims to advance one's career and not the frontier of knowledge and have very little relevance to the pressing social needs. Strange enough that a number of these papers had been accepted by National bodies for prestigious awards! This acts as a stimulant in young and they cannot take a chance to go outside this vicious circle.

Paper psychosis is now playing havoc in our scientific community. Individual publication to the tune of 30 to 40 per year is a common feature to day. Many of these authors are "great men" in the field and have to attend many other routine and outside routine and professional jobs other than research. Really this is a puzzling problem! Will the professional bodies take cognizance of the facts?

Research Evaluation :

Anonymous reviewing and refereeing of scientific papers have been the cause of great concern in recent times. A referee's task, in a sense, sometimes is equally or more difficult than that of the author—for anything found wrong in a reviewed paper the reviewer is also to shoulder the blame, at least morally. Obviously, this demands professional competence, integrity and dedication of highest

standard on the part of the reviewer—unfortunately very often not complied with. As yet refereeing is an unacknowledged and unappreciated job. A referee very often does not have the necessary time to devote to a manuscript and often he transmits the papers to his juniors or research scholars who may or may not be able to follow the manuscript. Editors very often prefer the reputed names in profession to raise (!) the standard of the journal than less known names who in most cases would do the jobs as efficiently as the profession demands.

Problems in our country are still deep-rooted and complex. If one takes the pain to go through the proceedings of any national conference or journals of the professional bodies it will appear that talents (!) are confined to a particular group or groups. "At the root of it is the greed for bureaucratic power and love of a comfortable life that afflicts this class".

In general, our scientific community does not like the idea of their research works being criticised and evaluated. Number of publications, not the material contribution, has been taken usually as the yardstick for professional worth. All these contribute to the formation of vicious circle, where everything else than science can propagate and generate.

Conclusion :

Indian scientists seem to have forgotten that "research with failing sincerity is a mockery and the expense on this account is being provided for by our poor half-fed and unfed countrymen on good reliance. The research is not meant for attending so-called conferences, is not meant to be used as one's career making tool, is not meant for creating

highly paid covenanted research posts to accommodate man of so called choice (judgement being based not on what one knows, but whom one knows), but is meant to do something positive towards our country's benefit. The people of our country are becoming conscious, they have started questioning about research. May be that we avoid answering for the present, but time would soon come when we have to provide them with answers and remember that we are accountable to them by all means. Old concept of things is eroding fast, new generations are on the march." It is time that research be made need-based, result-oriented and time-bound and be directed for giving some relief to our suffering millions who are still watching the research workers with patience. Let the advantage of this patience be not exploited by the scientific community.

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