

# CORRESPONDENCE

## AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY FOR GEOSCIENCE POPULARISATION

I have the following suggestions to offer in the task of popularizing geosciences. We can have an association at the national level which can invite geoscientific institutions from every part of the country to come and join hands under a single umbrella. In order to kick-start such a networking process, informal/formal meet among those individuals, who are interested in geoscience popularization is proposed. It is highly desirable that at least one dedicated member, should represent each State/Union Territory. At the above meet, a detailed action plan may be chalked out on the following lines:

### Formation of Popularization Action Team (PACT)

The representative from each operational area should take the initiative for the formation of a PACT in his/her own area. The PACT's should be preferably constituted in a way, so as to involve at least one member from every geoscientific institution located within the particular operational area, including colleges and universities. If the head/departmental head of such institutions can be included as ex-officio members, it becomes more advantageous.

### Formation of Central Co-ordination Committee (CCC)

A CCC may be constituted to coordinate the activities of the PACT's. The CCC headquarters can be in any convenient location in India, or it can be alternated from place to place, on an annual basis.

### Task Prioritization

The CCC, with the active co-operation of the PACTs should take up the following tasks, on priority basis:

(a) *Publications* The foremost task will be to compile a "Directory of PACT's", listing therein, the email ID's, telephone numbers, fax numbers etc. of the members, which will facilitate faster channelisation and dissemination of ideas, for enhanced performance levels. Secondly, a comprehensive "Directory of Careers in Geosciences" will have to be compiled, listing therein the study and employment opportunities in every such geoscientific institution present in India, along with institutional profiles. Thirdly a monthly periodical will have to be brought out, which unlike other geoscientific literature currently available, will contain only geoscientific articles of popular

interest, news items, current achievements in geoscientific circles, geoscientific job vacancies, geoscience admission notifications of various educational institutions, notifications regarding training programmes, seminars, conferences etc. In both the above two cases, PACTs from every such operational area, will play the role of supplying all relevant data.

Fourthly, area specific books/pamphlets/brochures etc. can be prepared by the PACT's on popular geoscience topics. e.g. PACT from Assam can prepare literature on petroleum, coal etc., PACT from Karnataka can take up gold, PACT from Gujarat on dinosaurs and so on.

(b) *Geoscience popularization* This will be the core task of every PACT, each one of which will have to actively engage itself, in a wide array of activities like arranging popular talks, exhibitions, quizzes, film/documentary shows, excursions/traverses/trekkings, career counselling and guidance at school level, conducting training programmes for school teachers, producing T V documentaries and popular radio talks, etc.

(c) *Public Relations* The foremost initiative in this regard will be to approach the top brass of the country in the education sector, at the national as well as the state level, to drive home the point that if the government is really serious about science popularization in the country, it must go in for certain legislation, including the introduction of geoscience as a subject at the high school level.

The second initiative will be to convince the policy makers to make geoscience instruction employment-generating. In order to achieve this, industry and instructional institution co-ordination has to be established, following which appropriate course modules imparting required skills/training will have to be designed and implemented.

Through this write-up, I request each and everyone from the geoscientific fraternity to join their hands for a bigger cause, contribute, if possible, in the form of ideas and suggestions to the undersigned so as to evolve a working plan for achievement of our cherished objectives.

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