

## School-based journals: a good idea for India

Regunathan and Kitto<sup>1</sup> make a timely call for improving the popular article component in scholarly journals. It is generally believed that if a country has to grow intellectually, its citizens must have a 'scientific temper', a phrase used by India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. When we talk of popular articles, very prominent targets for these are the school students; as such articles inculcate their interest in science. However, we want to talk about another idea, journals entirely dedicated to school students and teachers.

One of the journals published by the Indian Academy of Sciences for students and teachers of schools and colleges is *Resonance*. It is indeed an exciting journal, but such journals are rare in India. However, if we look at other countries such as the United Kingdom, there are a large number of such journals. For example, The Mathematical Association (UK) publishes about 5–6 journals, not only in the high school domain but also in the primary school domain. If a student submits his articles to one of these journals, the response is generally positive. These journals are not peer-reviewed but the editors of such journals, who are eminent mathematicians, make several suggestions and having incorporated all of these, the student finds out that the article certainly makes a good reading. We feel that it might be a good idea if each of the three science academies

of India could actually start such journals in which the articles are reviewed by the editor and he/she interacts with the student author on a personal basis. There are many retired academicians who like to interact with young minds and so we would not face any dearth of such editors. With only editorial review, acceptance of articles would become faster (about a week) and the scenario could become highly encouraging to school students. And given the fact that these would be monitored by able scientific bodies, the dread of submitting the articles to the bogus journals which charge enormous publication fees would also be eliminated.

One of us (J.B.) as the editor of the Mathematical Associations Journal, *Mathematics in School*, would like to give some insight into the aims of such journals.

These school-based journals are aimed mainly at teachers of school and college pupils of 10–18 years of age and for those working with students who are preparing to enter the teaching profession. They provide opportunities for teachers to share their experiences of developing mathematical and scientific concepts and skills with their students and share classroom activities that have worked for them. What goes on in many mathematics or science classrooms are exciting activities and it is a pity for these ideas to remain behind closed

doors. Such journals open these doors for others to peer inside! Submissions from authors are 'lightly refereed' to ensure that the mathematics is correct and meet the interest of the readers. An editor may suggest modifications.

Furthermore, young mathematicians should be given the opportunity to develop their skills of writing articles and seeing them published. There is often a feeling among editors that journals should only publish research-based articles and ask 'how can a school student carry out research at the boundaries of knowledge leading to an appropriate level of mathematics for publication?' But we would argue that if a student is doing project work on a topic that he is learning, then to the student this is 'research' and is worthy of sharing not only with his teacher, but with others in the academic community. A school-based journal can provide such opportunities.

1. Regunathan, C. and Kitto, M. R., *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**, 1130–1131.

UDAYAN SINGH<sup>1,\*</sup>  
JOHN BERRY<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Delhi Public School  
Dhanbad 826 004, India*

<sup>2</sup>*Mathematics Professor in Residence,  
Wells Cathedral School,  
Wells, Somerset BA5 2SX, England*

\*e-mail: udayansingh.1112@yahoo.com

## Ph D student–supervisor problems in India

Balaram<sup>1</sup> touches upon student–supervisor relationship in academia and how research ties students to their guides or supervisors. He notes that the relationship can be delicate; easily shattered when personal differences arise. Ph D training is a form of apprenticeship with students interacting closely with a mentor. But not all mentor–student relationships are alike. There are several incidences of bias and favouritism that one may come across in research laboratories in India. A cordial student–supervisor relation allows two-way communication. Sadly, in a significant number of institutes mentorship is often lacking and the overall ambience is not

conducive to academic research. Several initiatives and efforts are being made to produce more Ph Ds each year to catch up with the growth of China and the United States<sup>2</sup>. However, the problem of student–supervisor relationship may hinder the growth trajectory. To compete with global scientific human resource there is a need to focus on mentorship and training. Though the University Grants Commission has now introduced checkpoints to oversee conduct in higher education<sup>3</sup>, situation remains more or less the same and needs attention.

1. Balaram, P., *Curr. Sci.*, 2013, **104**, 807–808.

2. Anjali, N., *Nature*, 2011, **472**, 24–26.
3. University Grants Commission, New Delhi, Notice Vide no. F4-6/2011(CCM) dated 29/07/2011.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. I thank DST, New Delhi for financial assistance (No. SR/ITS/4223/2012–2013).

HMUNSHEL JASHA

*Department of Chemistry,  
North-Eastern Hill University,  
Shillong 793 022, India  
e-mail: hmunsjasha@gmail.com*