

‘Modifesto’ in science and technology

This bears reference to the guest editorial ‘Science and the missing manifestos’¹. The recently concluded elections gave numerical strength to the new ruling party to devise means to eradicate the woes of Indian society in all spheres. The ‘Gujarat model’ has been vigorously used in campaigns to woo the electorate. We hardly heard about Korean, Chinese or Japanese models in development using science and technology (S&T). Since we are proud of ancient records supporting progress and prosperity of our nation before the advent of the Europeans in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, physics and chemistry along with biological sciences (as projected in the manifesto), we conveniently blame previous governments for our ills. New promises emerged and a wave of change took our country to an innovative euphoria. Thanks to the use of technology for advertising leadership and ‘model-mania’. No doubt, scientists pass through seven (st)ages of man² and Indian scientists too at different stages have been curiously waiting for the outcome of impact on science policy. They need not be politically correct to follow their means to achieve their goals. Symbiosis is a rule for coalitions³ and India needs ‘participatory science’⁴, not representative science dictated by the wisdom of policy-makers.

Science in our country is perpetuated through lobbying at the doors of policy-makers. Hopefully, ‘ache din’ may also hold true for Indian science. The GDP on S&T in our country is less than 1% and should be enhanced to 2% as announced in 101st Indian Science Congress, at Jammu. Only when elections are fought on the basis of development using S&T as a tool, can we dream of ‘Amritmay Bharat’ by 2022. Building a science society⁵ needs the spirit of bushido⁶ and scientific temper. Moon and Mars missions are testimony to our resilience, but the ground truth is visible in functioning of S&T laboratories. Management of science needs extra vision and recent awards of Bharat Ratna, Padma awards, etc. are acknowledgement to the contributions made by the scientific community. A scientist as a Union Minister of Science and Technology may augur well to realize future models of development based on S&T. Revolutions in agriculture, biotechnology, information science, space science, etc. were made possible through thinking scientists with vision. It is high time that manifestation of ‘Modifesto’ in S&T be given a serious thought by the concerned policy-makers to make a ‘shreshtha Bharat’. Ethics and values have become a far cry in any sphere of society³ and even humans are

treated as products and rated through e-value. The ‘change’ expected should also be extended to scientific institutions and we hope ‘sciencefesto’ may be an alternative advertising campaign at the end of five years. Let us deem that planning of Indian science sector in the form of research and innovation to make a strong and viable science⁷ becomes a reality in the years to come.

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