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**CORRESPONDENCE**


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**SAC-PM**

When I read in the newspaper that a write-up on the Science Advisory Council had appeared<sup>1</sup> in your esteemed journal, I borrowed a copy and read the article. I must congratulate you for publishing this article, written by no less a person than the Secretary of the Council. It was informative and written in a simple style, so that even a layman like me could understand how SAC functions and what it attempts to do.

There is one omission in the article, i.e. the names of the members of SAC. I assumed that most scientists of India would know. I met many from all over India at Ottappalam where a large national science exhibition was held recently. Very few scientists there knew the names of the members or even what SAC was and what it does. So *Current Science*, I feel, has done a service in educating scientists also! Incidentally you may be happy to know that many scientists *had* heard of *Current Science*; although, alas, a good many confessed that they do not read it! After some 'research' I was able to get the names, the affiliations and the scientific disciplines of the SAC members.

I have a serious fear. Please allow me to express it through your columns (if you accept letters from non-scientists). The members of SAC are, I am told, distinguished scientists. There can be no doubt that they will uphold science—the type of science they do and are familiar with, which may bring prestige to the country. The question that is uppermost in the minds of many (like me) is: *Can such sophisticated science be equated to the science that may be immediately necessary to improve the lot of the majority of our population who are in rural India and who are much below the poverty line?*

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1. Lavakare, P. J., *Curr. Sci.*, 1989, 58, 777.

K. K. MENON

Palghat

*SAC-PM consists of:*

*Prof. C. N. R. Rao, Director, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore—Chairman; Prof. V. L. Chopra,*

*Head, Biotechnology Centre, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi; Prof. Madhav Gadgil, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Dr A. S. Ganguly, Chairman, Hindustan Lever Ltd, Bombay; Dr R. A. Mashelkar, Director, National Chemical Laboratory, Pune; Prof. R. Narasimha, Director, National Aeronautical Laboratory, Bangalore; Prof. J. V. Narlikar, Director, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Poona University, Pune; Mr Sam Pitroda, Adviser to PM on Technology Missions, New Delhi; Dr Sekhar Raha, Chief Executive, ICI India Ltd, Fertilizer Division, New Delhi; Dr P. Rama Rao, Director, Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory, Hyderabad; Dr P. N. Tandon, Dept of Neurosurgery, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi; Dr P. J. Lavakare, Adviser, Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi—Secretary.*

—Editor

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Please accept heartiest congratulations on behalf of all working scientists and those who keenly watch and are interested in the growth of Indian S&T for (a) the sensitivity expressed in your note prefacing the welcome article of Dr P. J. Lavakare, and (b) introducing the section 'News from Delhi' which, if taken in the right spirit, will hopefully provide a creative/constructive forum for feedback, dialogue and exchange of ideas and issues between policy makers, policy handlers and 'grass-roots' workers.

This may indeed fill a long-felt gap in communication on matters of S&T. Following such an approach, I am enclosing a response to Dr Lavakare's article in the hope that you may find it of sufficient interest and significance for readers of your esteemed journal.

U. RAVAL

V-4 NGRI Colony  
Uppal Road  
Hyderabad 500 007

*The points raised by Dr Raval have been included in the editorial in this issue.*

—Editor

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