

Government and the politicians, to debate the issues and argue with the Government bodies. In this they will have the support of big commercial houses like Tatas, Birlas, etc. Money will not be a constraint for setting up 'brain-trusts' and 'think tanks'. And if it is necessary finally, the scientists should be prepared to educate

the public and even take to the streets, to bring about the change they are convinced is right. Medha Patkar did not spend her time in arguments only; when a gentle woman like her is prepared to take to streets and agitational methods, for a cause which she thinks right, what are the senior scientists, who have had

a pampered life all along, waiting for? Arm-chair criticism is refreshing, but time is for action.

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New technology policy

The thrust of new technology policy (NTP), 1993 is on globalization, international competitiveness and private funding for R&D in contrast to self-reliance and indigenous development of technology of the 1983 policy statement. The most dangerous omission in the NTP is the spirit of nationalism which found prominent place in the technology policy statement (1983), e.g. safeguarding our independence and our unity, and recognizing the importance of ancient wisdom of our nation. It is worth quoting the end paragraph: 'above all, the entire population must be imbued with *self-confidence* and *pride in national capacity*.

Indian Science and Technology must unlock the creative potential of our people and help in building the India of our dreams'.

The draft on the Uruguay round of GATT shows that the non-actionable subsidies vide Article 8.2 severely limit the funding and freedom in management of R&D laboratories. There is anti-dumping legislation for products, but there is none for obsolete technologies. Obviously, the NTP is based on Dunkel proposals, and the recent drive by CSIR for market-oriented policies and international competitiveness will make our R&D institutions satellite centres for MNCs. If

due to faulty implementation we have so far served the interests of advanced countries indirectly, with the new policy the trained scientific manpower will provide cheap work-force for the MNCs, and the urgent socio-economic problems of our country will be pushed into the background. Therefore, I strongly urge the scientific community to reject the NTP in the national interest.

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The astronomical code of the Rigveda

In the article 'The astronomical code of the Rigveda' (*Current Science*, 66, 323-326), I find that not only is the approach in the article highly unscientific and speculative but the supposed application of Probability Theory to bolster the claim is totally flawed. 'The twentythree numbers' whose 'correctness' the author talks of are arrived at in several stages, introducing many new elements along the way, and the rules of distribution are hardly applicable the way the author goes about them. The author is delightfully vague on specifics at that point. The only clean treatment from a probabilistic point

of view appears in respect of synodic periods, but contrary to the author's affirmation, there is nothing striking about the correlation there. Not only is the set of the 461 numbers arising as combinations large as the author admits, but also has a rather high density in the interval relevant to four of the synodic periods (other than that of Mercury); about two-thirds of the numbers between 237 and 780 belong to the set, so a randomly selected number in that region has quite a good probability of belonging to it. That this holds, that too after adjusting by 1, for the 4 synodic periods is nothing

surprising. If a tally were to occur in the case of Mercury it would have been something to take note of, but in this case the figure had to be adjusted by as much 4! That hardly leaves anything by way of meaningful correlation to talk about, even if one is to ignore other issues with regard to the argument.

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