

of our security environment and the self-seeking totally discriminatory nuclear weapons regime that the P5 nations seek to impose on the world. If deterrence is good enough reason for the five to expand and improve their already elaborate nuclear arsenal, it is an

equally good reason for India to test and weaponize.

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## Strategy for promoting science

This is with reference to the editorial 'Strategic follies' (*Curr. Sci.*, 1999, 76, 712), referring to the Government of India's decision to give higher pay to DRDO scientists and institute a set of handsome annual awards for development of defence-related technologies. The editor discussed the 'wilful neglect' of other sectors and also the decline (and fall) of science departments in Universities and concluded, 'while there appears to be some limited appreciation of what constitutes "strategic science" there is in fact no clear strategy for promoting science'.

Unfortunately, no one seems to know the strategy to promote science. Perhaps, one can deduce something from the demand of the society. The demand for engineering college admissions nowadays is due to the belief that one can earn a decent living if he/she becomes an engineer. Also, the interest in degree courses in biotechnology, organic chemistry, etc. indicates that the public is more interested in

job-oriented courses. Hence, the science administrators and educationists should devise strategies so that the degree courses in traditional science subjects (physics, chemistry, and biology) are oriented more towards application and technology development.

The scientists working in the DRDO, DAE and ISRO demonstrated that they could do good work to benefit the country and the government instituted handsome reward schemes for them. However, research in basic sciences is somewhat individualistic in nature and hence more diffused. Therefore, the achievements of basic scientists are not that spectacular, especially in India where the support for basic research is meagre. However, it is always refreshing to hear statements from the basic scientists to the effect 'scientific research is at its best when it is useful' and 'it is a great satisfaction to a scientist when the society finds his work useful'. So, instead of having a pessi-

mistic outlook that their research efforts do not have social relevance, senior basic scientists in India should come forward to orient their research work more towards solving problems faced by the industries/society. This is not a very difficult proposition. For instance, in the 1980s, a retired basic scientist was running from pillar to post to set up a silicon manufacturing unit based on his research work. Surely, having such scientists in our midst should boost the morale of young scientists. Perhaps, the strategy to promote science in India should be to institute handsome reward schemes to appreciate the efforts of such scientists so that all basic scientists will come forward to orient their research towards problems of interest to industries/society.

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## Current Science – The vital link

Information, education and communication (IEC) are the key elements for human resource development and its optimal utilization. In this very context, *Current Science* is rendering yeoman's service to the scientific fraternity. This very periodical has come a long way in its metamorphosis to its present form. Yet education is a continuing process and there is further scope for its development to cater to the need of younger

generations at the turn of the century. I have been personally subscribing for this journal for over a decade and have immensely benefitted being located in a tribal pocket of Assam. I take pride to congratulate the editorial board for their painstaking job in keeping pace with the flow of manuscripts and maintaining its periodicity intact. In response to the editorial by P. Balaram (*Curr. Sci.*, 1999, 76, 615–616), I suggest that in

keeping with the truly multidisciplinary nature of the journal, efforts should be made to solicit articles from disciplines other than Biological Sciences (most contributions being from this field), viz. Chemical Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Physical Sciences, etc.

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