

but also in administration, administration of justice and politics, as well as other human activities. 'Merit' is being replaced by 'mediocrity', and 'rule of law' by the 'law of the jungle'. Why did it happen?

Being dazzled by the morbid materialism, short-sighted utilitarianism and hyper-individualism, the intellectuals of the post-independence period have aped the western culture with adulation, have preferred to be in that soil by any

means, and in the process acquired the virtues of a slave, which have contributed to the creation of low self-image. Because of the 'captive mind' imagination has been blunted, visions have been constricted, creativity has been eroded. This has resulted in the breeding of intellectually barren, dishonest operators and manipulators as intellectuals who have exhibited politeness as 'a dressing gown for dishonesty'. In order to save India from such a looming disas-

ter, conditions must be created to breed excellence and fearlessness. Only when men of excellence without fear stand up to the authorities to speak the truth, will our country have a bright future.

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## Are seminars/symposia simply 'academic melas' or are they worth something?

India has entered the 21st century, but the vision of the basic structure of education is still not clear. Academicians and well wishers of this country have pointed out several gaps in education and research through this journal from time to time. The level and condition of primary education is far from satisfactory. The Government proposes that each village should have a school, since it is as essential as drinking water. The location of a school is never taken as a parameter before registration. Drinking water, classrooms and toilet facilities are never monitored. Almost a similar situation exists in private and government colleges. Leaving aside exceptions, almost all colleges suffer from poor grants, despite pressure of increasing number of students due to population explosion. Misappropriation is common in the absence of proper monitoring.

It is a known fact that education is the first step in modelling a society for the future. Research should be on top priority, looking to the future needs and to keep pace with contemporary developments and growth of science and technology. But we see just the opposite trend. We are nurturing our present generation of student scholars out of this, tempering the mass through a hot and cold system devised by our administrator-educationists, politicians/bureaucrats. An example of such a penchant is given below:

A recent issue of *Employment News* (26 January–1 February 2002) invited appli-

cations from Indian nationals in the prescribed form of the CSIR for Senior Research Fellowships (SRFs) and Research Associateships (RAs) to provide opportunities to bright young men and women for training in methods of research under expert guidance of faculty members/scientists working in universities, laboratories and institutes of the government in various fields of S&T. In this advertisement, in the item relating to 'research papers published and patents', it has been mentioned that 'non-refereed journals, in-house bulletins, university journals, papers presented in conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia are not to be included'.

Here, I would like to submit that out of two in-house bulletins published recently from this laboratory, one is cited in *Dictionary of Fungi* (CAB, 1996, 8th edn) and the other as a CD-ROM document. There may be several other examples in other disciplines also. I have mentioned these examples from our discipline to state that in-house bulletins are not 'really in-house' as treated in the advertisement, leading to disqualification for the fellowship.

Further, I would like to mention that almost all funding agencies (ICAR, CSIR, DBT, UGC) are pouring money for organizing seminars, symposia, workshops, group meetings, etc. A lot of preparation is done for these meetings; research and teaching remain almost paralysed during conference days in the host institution. The young researchers present their work in a short span of time to let people know about

their work without waiting for regular publication and they also want some benefit out of this presentation. They receive criticism from the audience if the work is not worth presenting. If these presentations/papers are not worth considering, then why are agencies wasting hard-earned money of this poor country's people for organizing these 'academic melas'?

Moreover, for good publications in many branches it takes 1–2 years of hard work. By the time a researcher publishes 4–5 papers, he/she is not selected on the ground that he/she is over-age (a candidate is overage at the age of 35). If not supported by a fellowship the researcher leaves the research project. He/she becomes unemployed with all his/her qualifications, research, training and publications, as most state governments have imposed a ban on new appointments.

It is high time that academicians evolved a uniform national policy looking to the young teacher and the researcher. Such a policy should be beyond the jurisdiction of the state government. We cannot leave the future of this nation with the fragile state leaders.

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