

clearly experienced. Such little 'movements' can make the *raagas* infinite in number.

The creators of 'Genoma music' would have had a much wider field had they decided to produce 'Proteoma music' using three-letter codons that specify the twenty two amino acids, the same number of pitches the Indian Ancients were able to distinguish. What would

'Lysozyme' sound like? Being a component of 'eye water', with an ability to 'lyse' bacterial coats, would it merely produce tears? Yes, the 'music' produced may not be 'easy-listening'. Sounding like Indian classical melodic music and 'avoiding being drowned in a sea of harmony' (as Yehudi Menuhin, the great violinist put it), the composers would have gone back to square one, just where

the Indian Ancients had no choice but to start at!

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NEWS

Training popular science writers in regional languages

The communication of scientific knowledge is integral to science research and essential for its continued survival. The public needs to know more about science and technology. Many researchers have difficulty in talking about their work in a way that people who are not scientists can understand. To solve this problem, society needs people with special bridging skills who can provide a link between S&T and the public. Understanding this need and realizing the role of potential popular science writers, the Gujarat Council of Science City conducted a four-day state level workshop on popular science writing, illustrations and journalism at Gujarat Science City from 28 April to 1 May 2003. The workshop was supported by National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, New Delhi. About 45 participants from all over the State of Gujarat attended the workshop.

The basic objective of the above four-day workshop was to train science teachers and science communicators about different science, technology and societal issues and how science and technology could be harnessed to solve the different complex problems in the society. The participants were trained in the basic skills in writing scientific stories, features, articles and scripts for different media like the print as well as the sophisticated electronic media.

Inaugurating the workshop on 28 April 2003, Rajesh Kishore (Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Government of Gujarat) spoke on the importance of science and technology in daily lives. He advised the participants to be ready for a knowledge-based society, which can

only be possible through effective S&T communication to a larger audience.

Science communication has two main objectives; imparting scientific information among masses and inculcating scientific temper among them, said Manoj Patariya (NCSTC, New Delhi). According to him, scientific awareness will not only strengthen and empower the entire societal fabric, but save resources and lives too.

B. R. Sheroy (Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad) spoke on the significance of the important inventions and discoveries by eminent scientists and technocrats of the country. He also spoke on the importance of the communication scientists to spread the message of the success stories to the public so that the common man can understand the process and implications of the scientific inventions.

R. K. Sahay (formerly at Council of Scientific & Industrial Research) addressed the audience about various methods of communication of S&T to the different target groups.

The participants were trained in various arts and techniques in science writing and reporting. They visited the All India Radio Station at Ahmedabad and were exposed to various facilities of the radio station and interacted with the staff members.

The participants were assigned to write an article/report/radio script/TV script, etc. as a learning exercise during the workshop and to submit the same at the end of the workshop. Whatever may be the future professions of the participants, the skills that they learnt in the training programme – accuracy, illustrations, organization, clarity, brevity and sophistication of expression – will prove valuable in the

field of enhancing the science literacy programme.

Commenting on the response of the workshop, Sanjay Agarwal (GCSC) said the participants were very keen to learn to use writing techniques developed in journalism to communicate scientific and technical information, as was done by professional science writers. These individuals, once trained in both science and journalism, can translate the complex into the comprehensible for readers of daily newspapers, general magazines and specialized science magazines.

Though we have a good number of popular science writers, the number of science illustrators is very few, said Abhay Kothari who has been developing many visual compilations on science and technology with NCSTC at the national level. Illustrations have a special place in science and technology communication. The challenge of communication is perhaps the most existing aspect of illustration. It is integrally linked to words, said Kothari.

The challenge is to create science writing and reporting that matures beyond merely capitalizing on public's enthusiasm for science. It will help in generating a true public appreciation and understanding of science. We think we can do it... was the feedback of most of the participants.

As an immediate follow up to the above workshop, many of the participants are now working in science programmes of All India Radio and Doordarshan Kendra of Ahmedabad and some have begun contributing to local newspapers.

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