

Rotational field quantum magnetic resonance

Apropos the editorial comments¹ concerning newspaper reports about scientific discoveries, and in particular, regarding the Rotational Field Quantum Magnetic Resonance (RFQMR) technique, P. Balaram has, perhaps unwittingly, committed the same mistake of which he accuses the newspapers – that of airing his ‘views’ not based on facts but based on newspaper reports. While the daily newspapers can be excused for a certain amount of sensationalism (on which they prosper), this is not expected from the editor of a reputed scientific journal like *Current Science*. It is all the more unjustified since the data

could have been obtained by one local telephone call to any of the scientists involved.

I am making an issue of this because I have myself undergone the RFQMR treatment for osteoarthritis and can therefore attest that it works. I was unable to walk even a few steps in June this year and I took the RFQMR therapy from 5 to 25 July. Today I am able to walk 2–3 km at a stretch without any discomfort. Recently I read from newspapers that some more patients have been successfully treated for osteoarthritis and cancer since July 2004. A critical analysis of the data from

Centre for Advanced Research and Development or Institute of Aerospace Medicine, Bangalore is needed to offer a scientific view.

1. Balaram, P., *Curr. Sci.*, 2004, **87**, 5–6.

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Need for National Commission on Hazard Management

Despite the will and the resources, India has not been able to cope well with natural hazards, which occur repeatedly. This is because our machinery to manage natural hazards suffers from inadequacy.

The formation of a Natural Hazards Management Commission (NHMC) will go a long way in streamlining efforts made for coping with various natural hazards in all parts of the country in any time of the year. The NHMC may be invested with full autonomy in the line of Election Commission. Among other things, the NHMC will provide the community all information relating to vulnerability of the areas to hazards, extent and magnitude of risks and likely impacts, and the mitigation measures *to be taken up in time*. This can be conveyed through periodic bulletins on hazards or other media containing all the required information, including the hazard zoning maps.

The Commission would plan and coordinate the efforts of different government agencies and voluntary organizations mobilized to cope with hazard, relief and rehabilitation. It may be emphasized that each government agency through its normal activities is expected to provide leadership and take action to reduce the risk and minimize impacts.

The chief of the NHMC will act in the manner of the Chief Election Commis-

sioner during elections and help mobilize governmental personnel and civil defence organization, and provide financial assistance for all measures, including relief, medicare, food, sanitation, shelter, unemployment allowances, loans for economic recovery, etc.

The NHMC would develop and promote an integrated programme of hazard-zone mapping and landuse classification. This programme can be pursued through academic and research institutions, if need be on a contractual basis. The various maps and comprehensive reports may be published and distributed among all agencies, organizations and the interested public.

Effective network of satellite-based telecommunication must be developed in the disaster-prone areas. Instead of investing in laying cables and meeting recurrent cost of periodic repairs and maintenance, it will be prudent to invest heavily for an efficient and reliable mode of communication – the satellite telephones – with at least one satellite telephone in every major settlement.

It is imperative that the ecosystems that are sensitive to nature’s cycles and processes be protected and, restored to health where needed. The vision for safe communities calls for fundamental change in approach to hazard management.

Instead of a *reactive policy*, India must have a comprehensive programme of *anticipatory measures* so that the functioning and processes of ecosystems are not adversely affected. It would be necessary to keep the hills under protective cover of vegetation in order to prevent slope-failures, allow the floodplains to have wetlands to accommodate flood-waters, permit beach nourishment through formation of sand dunes, and so on. These natural features not only absorb but also reduce the impact of natural hazards.

In place of *resistance* to nature’s forces and processes, it would be far better to develop *resilience*. The communities vulnerable to hazards must be trained to become resilient enough to withstand the stresses of hazardous events, and keep on functioning. This implies that while the life-support systems are located or relocated in places out of harm’s way, the essential facilities are designed to continue functioning during landslides, floods, storms, earthquakes, etc.

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