

Disproportionate assets of scientific knowledge

A lot has been written in the previous volumes of this journal as well as at many other fora about growing scientific and financial corruption, abuse of power, grabbing of others' work by science bosses in scientific research institutions, universities and departments^{1,2}. People just read these articles and forget. Some serious men do acknowledge them by referring to such articles and notes. Does it really help stopping such persons from misusing government money or power for their own benefits³⁻⁶? There is no doubt that the percentage of such persons is extremely small but at the same time one cannot deny their presence.

'Science corruption' is beyond the imagination of common man. It is high time that top-most science policy makers formulate schemes where there is no scope of any manipulation keeping in mind the facts that there have been occasions, when:

- selection and promotion committees have been guided by just one or two people
- the awards and membership of societies are managed by influence

- the bosses of organizations have enforced their names into patents and researches done by bench level workers and scientists
- there have been scientists who have misused the power for personal benefits.

It is not possible to uproot such a malignancy from science unless we first accept it boldly 'Yes it does happen' and then treat it with a heavy hand. By not accepting these facts it would be like a person in-charge of a police station not writing FIRs and declaring that his area as a crime-free-zone.

Any scientist cannot publish more than 2-3 quality research papers in a year if he has genuinely done some work in that area along with 3-4 colleagues. To me this is the optimum and acceptable figure. But these days one can easily find heads of organizations having more than 10 publications, a large number of symposia presentations, several patents and a large number of meeting attendances in a year besides other routine administrative activities. How is it possible? These are simple cases of 'Disproportionate assets of scientific knowledge'. Such a ten-

dency needs to be condemned by the entire scientific community. The Society for Scientific Values, New Delhi is trying to make some breakthrough in this direction⁷.

Current Science's publishing of a few letters and notes is not helping much. It is providing some impetus but at slow speed. Individual cases need to be highlighted with documents and references.

1. Balaram, P., *Curr. Sci.*, 2005, **88**, 529-530.
2. Kar, R. K. and Ratan Kar, *Curr. Sci.*, 2005, **88**, 531.
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4. Rajamani, V., *Curr. Sci.*, 2005, **88**, 545.
5. Sharma, J. R., *Natl. Acad. Sci. Lett.*, 2005, **28**, 187.
6. Chandra, S. K. C., *Curr. Sci.*, 2005, **88**, 1713.
7. www.scientificvalues.org

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Natural calamities and pseudoscientific menace

The article by Ravinder Bansal and A. J. Saigeetha¹ is in itself a concrete example of a pseudoscientific menace to science in India. It is neither scientific nor an example of application of contemporary philosophy of science. The classification of persons into categories with miscellaneous labels such as astrologers, numerologists, *vaastu* experts, psychics, vedic scholars and sometimes even researchers is too simplistic.

Incidentally, the philosopher Karl Popper coined the term, 'pseudo-science'. The examples he gave were (Western) astrology and homeopathy, the medical system developed in Germany. It is important to note that western astrology is even rejected by the Christian church as hearsay as it has no religious sanction and does not fit into their dogma. On the other hand, vedic astrology's basis is the theory of *karma*; the fundamental axiom of Indian philosophy (including Jaina and Buddhist traditions) and its case is to be separately examined as an ancient Indian

sastra (a *vedanga*) and whether it fits into the definitions and practice of modern science. Also note that the philosophy of science is a branch of philosophy and by itself does not satisfy the definition of a modern science. From a scientist's viewpoint, Popper's observation is at the most a justified or rationalized belief.

The authors may study the basics of ancient Indian literature consisting of *vedas*, *vedangas* and *darsanas*. They may try to understand the philosophical approaches of the ancient Indian *sastra* literature on one side and the practices of modern science on the other. They may also go through the issues of *Indian Journal of History of Science* published by the Indian National Science Academy from a long time. They should note that one session of the Annual meeting of 2004 at Varanasi of the Indian Academy of Sciences was devoted to ayurveda. Last but not the least they should go through the recent book² by Sundar Sarukkai. Sarukkai talks about the relevance of Indian traditions in *nyaya*

and *vyakarana darsanas* (Indian logic and the grammar and linguistics in Sanskrit) by Gautama, Panini and Bhartrhari 2000 years ago. Recent computer science literature is concerned with Panini and Aryabhata's work on language and mathematics³ respectively done in the context of *vyakarana* and *vyotisha* (astronomy and Vedic astrology, together).

1. Bansal, R. and Saigeetha, A. J., *Curr. Sci.*, 2005, **89**, 1781.
2. Sarukkai, S., *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization* (ed. Chattopadhyaya, D. P.), Motilal Banarsi Dass, Delhi, 2005.
3. Narasimha, R., *Nature*, 2001, **414**, 851.

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