Indian science slows down: China–India comparison

The recently released 2008 report of Science and Engineering Indicators\(^1\) shows again how the dragon has soared while the elephant stumbles along unhurriedly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All S&amp;E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2556</td>
<td>1198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2114</td>
<td>1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>4364</td>
<td>3417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>6793</td>
<td>5308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>10,160</td>
<td>6778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>11,383</td>
<td>7766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>12,465</td>
<td>8153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>14,638</td>
<td>9523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>18,806</td>
<td>12,238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 and Figure 1 a–c show the total number of Ph Ds, Ph Ds in science and engineering (S&E) disciplines and Ph Ds in engineering from China and India for the period 1985–2003. These are self-explanatory.

GAGAN PRATHAP

Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi 682 022, India
e-mail: gp@cusat.ac.in

Indian Science Congress – Time for reflection

In the olden days, various scientific disciplines did not have their own associations and hence met under the banner of the Science Congress to discuss and outline their vision for Indian science. Today, every discipline has its own association – some more than one – which holds annual or biannual, national and regional conferences, where the concerned scientists meet and discuss their work and draw out future plans for their discipline. Hence the role of the Science Congress under these circumstances has become redundant.

It is now time that the Indian Science Congress Association changes the way the Congress is conducted. It was our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who decided to attend the Congress every year and state his scientific vision for India. It was an exercise worth the effort, but some of the Prime Ministers who came after him have lacked his scientific temper. As a result, it has become an unwanted, routine affair for the Prime Minister. It is better that the Science Congress Association now makes this as an association meeting and reduce the cost and duration. They may invite the PM – if capable of stating his views on Indian science – to present his vision of Indian science, followed by a few lectures on selected themes by reputed scientists. This should be combined with the annual association activities, presentation of awards, felicitations, etc. All this can be done within two days at a reduced cost. The money saved can be used to encourage the Student Science Congress, which perhaps achieves more than what this bigger Science Congress does.

P. TAURAO\(^1\)*
A. S. RAO\(^2\)

\(^1\)Mangalore Biotech Lab, Embassy Plaza, Mangalore 575 002, India
\(^2\)Department of Biotechnology, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli 620 024, India
*e-mail: taurop@dataone.in