



DREAM 2047

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VP News

Inside

Recognition for Dream 2047

DREAM 2047, the monthly newsletter brought out by Vigyan Prasar has been awarded second prize for excellent production, instituted by the Federation of Indian Publishers, a body that represents all major Indian book publishers, recently. The award was received by Dr. V B Kamble, Acting Director, Vigyan Prasar, at the venue of the 15th World Book Fair at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, on February 3, 2002. The eight-day World Book Fair commenced on January 28, 2002, and ended on February 4.

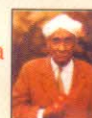
DREAM 2047 wants to share this accolade with all its readers, whose encouragement has been a constant source of inspiration for this young, 3-year-old publication. A number of letters that we receive every month indicate that the readers have found the magazine useful and informative. The continued support and regular feedback from readers, we hope, will go a long way in setting and achieving higher standards in terms of content and quality of production.

Vigyan Prasar also participated in the World Book Fair. Its popular science titles were well received with a large number of people visiting the Vigyan Prasar stall to buy the books.

EDITORIAL

Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman

A Legend of Modern Indian Science



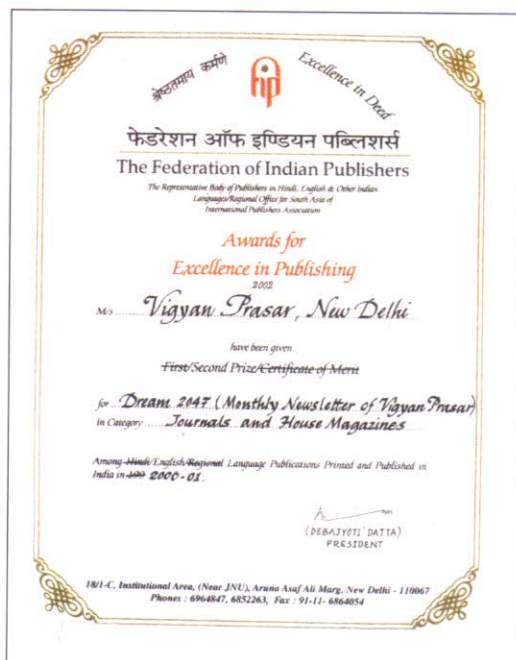
The Raman Effect



Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science



Raman Research Institute, Bangalore



Dr. V.B. Kamble, Acting Director, with Memento and Certificate

... think scientifically, act scientifically ... think scientifically, act scientifically ... think scientifically, act...

Attaining Criticality

The Science Policy Resolution of 1958 recognised the importance of "encouraging individual initiative for the acquisition and demonstration of knowledge, and for the discovery of new knowledge, in an atmosphere of academic freedom". Much later, a clause in the Article 51A of the Constitution of India was included that read, "it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to develop scientific temper, humanism and spirit of inquiry and reform". However, "the growing need to enhance public awareness of the importance of science and technology in the everyday life", and the special support of the Government "for programmes that seek to popularize and promote science and technology in all parts of the country" has been clearly spelt out only in the draft science and technology policy document 2001 (version 3). Indeed, this is highly encouraging!

During the pre-independence days, popularization of science was largely limited to a few motivated individuals with a missionary zeal - be it Ruchiram Sahni, Jagadis Chandra Bose or Sir C. V. Raman. They could electrify the audience with their remarkable gift of simplifying the complex phenomena interspersed with simple demonstrations, and attract the young to the world of science.

Not that the Government did not realize the need for scientific awareness soon after the independence. The Department of Education had set up in late fifties a few Vigyan Kendras especially in rural areas. In Gujarat there were two, and one was very close to Junagadh, which I used to frequent as a child. It used to be more a museum than an activity centre manned by a young science post-graduate. However, within a decade or so, the Vigyan Kendras mysteriously vanished! One wonders how and why!

In the sixties, the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishat took upon itself the mantle of science popularization as a social responsibility. It was around this time that a few voluntary organizations like Community Science Centre (later renamed Vikram A. Sarabhai Community Science Centre), Ahmedabad, came into being with the sole aim of popularizing science. Seventies marked the establishment of the National Council of Science Museums with its chain

of science museums, and was probably the first conscious effort at popularization of science in the country. A concerted, co-ordinated effort for science and technology popularization started when the National Council for Science and Technology Communication was established in 1984. Soon after, the level of S & T popularization activities in the country grew rapidly, and so did the number of voluntary organizations engaged in the field, a welcome sign indeed.

One is however, disappointed to find that, though the level of science popularization activities has significantly grown over the last one and a half decades, it still has continued to be at a sub-critical level. One reason is that most voluntary agencies engaged in S & T popularization find it difficult to make both ends meet. The new Science & Technology policy could come to their rescue in this regard. Further, there is no gainsaying the fact that the young graduates do not find the job lucrative. Next, after a few years of existence, an organization invariably falls into the trap of routine, stereo-typed activities and hence monotony, having exhausted ideas and initiatives. No longer does one find the job exciting and challenging. It is then that such organizations need a fresh breath of air. Who could provide it? Surely, the mantle falls on the established scientists and science communicators to offer them a fresh lease of life in terms of new ideas, new challenges, and new directions rather than keeping quiet or lamenting non-achievement of such organizations in fulfilling their stated goals. Encouragement and inspiration to old as well as up-coming organizations devoted to S & T popularization, and science activists would go a long way leading to national regeneration. It is then that our 'national reactor' will attain criticality.

This issue of Dream-2047 is dedicated to Sir C. V. Raman, a great scientist and a great teacher, who loved to talk to the young, discuss new ideas, inspire them to learn about nature, and explore hitherto unknown terrains.

□ V.B. Kamble

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Vigyan Prasar

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