

## Vigyan Prasar initiates Vigyan Samachar—India’s first S&T news agency

Vigyan Prasar (VP) organized the inaugural workshop of the first science and technology news agency-- Vigyan Samachar that took shape to help media increase the number of science stories by providing science news and related articles and making them more accessible to the news media.

While addressing the workshop, Professor Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, said that this type of initiative is the need of the hour to sensitize the science communication among all stakeholders.



Referring to Scientific Social Responsibility, Prof. Sharma mentioned that it is the responsibility of scientists to communicate their work to people and to society at large. “Lots of good things are happening in India around science & technology, which needs to be disseminated properly among the common people and Vigyan Samachar would be a good platform for bringing about such dissemination,” he added.

India is excelling in science and technology, and Indian scientists have made their mark internationally. Some of our scientific institutions have ranked as one of the best in the world.

As per a recent National Science Foundation (USA) Report, India has already climbed to the third spot in the number of science and engineering publications and

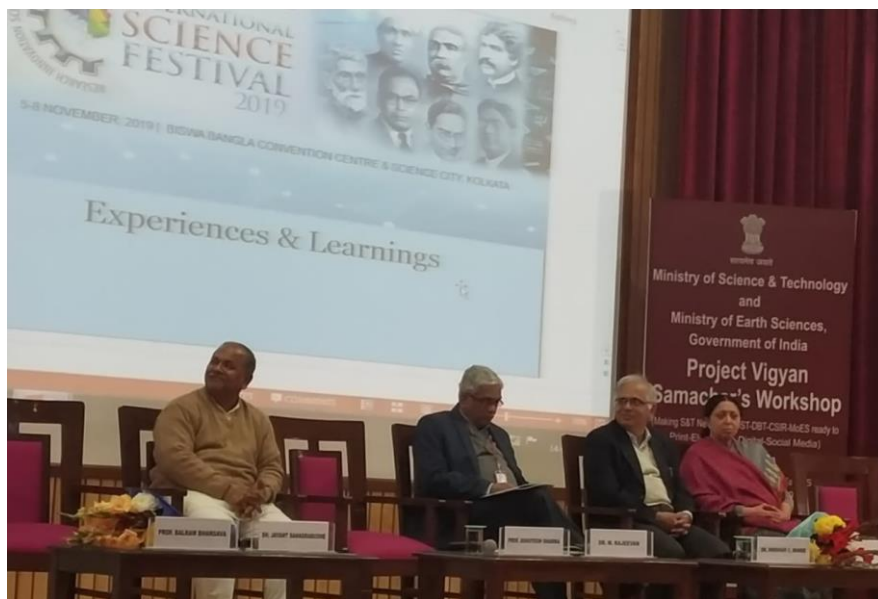
Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advance Scientific Research (JNCASR) in Bangalore has scored the 7th position in the quality of research by Nature Index.

Despite these successes, the representation of science in the news media remains limited. Recent studies indicate that science gets very little space both in English as well as vernacular media.

Every day, newsworthy achievements of science & technology are generated by various organizations of the Ministry of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences. Most of them go unpublished in various media. This means that various media do not get adequate news from these achievements.

VP an autonomous organization of DST has been entrusted to coordinate news stories received from Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) for all four media sources – print, electronic, digital, and social.

As the first news agency in a scenario where science and knowledge of its achievements and activities are mostly confined to a limited number of people, VP is converting these to science news. Each day, the news developed is reaching the desk of several English and Vernacular online, print and electronic media in a format that can either to used directly or can be customized to their needs.



Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, said that along with autonomous scientific institutes and autonomous bodies, the universities should be

added in this initiative as they have a lot of publishable achievements from the extramural grants that they receive. She said that a network should be set up for highlighting some of these achievements.

Dr. Shekhar Mande, Secretary DSIR and Director General, CSIR, pointed out the difference in the language of the scientists and social scientists and said that science communication could help bridge the gap between the two. Dr. M Rajeevan, Secretary MoES congratulated Vigyan Prasar for initiating Vigyan Samachar and said that MoES would be happy to participate in the initiative.



Science Communication nodal officers from all autonomous institutions of the different departments of the MoST and of MoES as well as several science journalists and scientists, participated in the workshop.