

## Science popularization and the Indian Constitution

Excited by the on going discussion among politicians, lawyers, academicians, etc. about the review of the Indian Constitution, I browsed through the parts of the Constitution dealing with fundamental rights and duties to find out whether these have anything to do with my 'right to information' as a scientist (in the sense one who searches for new information). When it came to fundamental duties, I was surprised to see one item very specific to scientists or intelligentsia. This part [article 51A(h)] reads, (citizens have a duty) 'to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform'. All other items, totalling ten under duties, are perhaps ordinarily established by finer laws or regulations. Article 51A(h) alone is of a subtle nature and seems to need inputs from governments, NGOs and voluntary groups of educated or devoted citizens (especially scientists).

This item under basic duties is of great importance to those popularizing science, since they too are trying to develop scientific temper, humanism and spirit of inquiry and reform (or modernization). In India where biased regionalism, jingoism, superstitions, etc. are practised, popularizing science and its material benefits are good ways of reform and progress. Central government institutes like National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), National Information System for Science and Technology (NISSAT), Central Health Education Bureau, Centre for Environment Education, National Institute of Science Communication (NISCOM) and Science magazines like *Science Reporter*, *Down to Earth*, *Resonance*, *Vigyan Pragati* and many newspapers are trying to popularize science. National Science Day is observed on 28 February in memory of C.V. Raman.

National Children's Science Congress is regularly organized to encourage children (10–17 years) to relate the learning of science to their immediate social and physical environment. Schools, colleges and NGOs also contribute considerably to popularization of science. CSIR laboratories are expected to organize open days for the general public during the CSIR foundation day in September. (See *Vistas in S&T Communication*, 1992, Publications and Information Directorate, CSIR, New Delhi for elaborate details on science popularization in India.) Altogether, India seems to be on the right track in science popularization.

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