

PRESS RELEASE

Poetry, drama and book releases draw masses at the science literature festival

November 6, KOLKATA – The second-day of Vigyanika-the International Science Literature Festival buzzed with numerous events that drew a large gathering including school students.

The day began with a panel discussion on the theme Contemporary Science Literature: A Perspective. Chairing the panel discussion, Dr Avanish Kumar Srivastava, Director of CSIR-Advanced Materials and Process Research Institute (AMPRI), Bhopal said, "Science that remains in the books and the labs should be taken to the masses." S&T communication should also involve industries, particularly when research projects are industry-based, he added.

Dr Kanan Purkayastha, science communicator, author, scientific and environment advisor from the UK said that while translating scientific concepts into different languages, The semantic, conceptual and normative equivalence should be maintained.

Contemporary science literature has to reach the masses and more importantly without distortion, said Dr C M Nautiyal, Science Communication Consultant, Indian National Science Academy. He added that the country should bring out more popular science books including science fiction books for children.

Shri Pathik Guha, Science Journalist, Ananda Bazar Patrika said that science literature should delight, inspire as well as instruct.

In another session on science literature for children, Dr Madhu Pant, science writer and former Director, National Bal Bhawan, New Delhi said that the state of children's science books in India is dismal. She highlighted the need for colourful science books laced with humour that have catchy titles. Dr. Pant added that the books should grab the attention of the children and kindle their curiosity and creativity.

Scientific phenomenon can be misconstrued as miracles if children are not knowledgeable about scientific concepts, said Dr Arvind Dubey, Science writer & Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Hind Institute of Medical Sciences, Sitapur. Science books should educate and bust myths, he remarked.

The engaging session was attended by a large number of excited school students.

A session on science communication in Indian languages was chaired by Dr Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz, Vice-Chancellor, Maulana Azad Urdu University, Hyderabad. In his introductory remarks, Dr. Aslam stressed on the importance of communicating science

through regional languages. The thinking and behaviour of a society depend on what they read, he said. Scientific attitude can be propagated only if it is delivered in one's local language, he remarked.

Dr. Manas Pratim Das from All India Radio, Siliguri shared about the initiatives being followed in Bangla language for communicating science. He highlighted the role of missionaries who, he said, were the pioneers in promoting science education in Bengal.

Shri Hemant Lagvankar, Science Communicator & Education Consultant, Marathi Vigyan Parishad, Maharashtra in his lecture highlighted the various science communication activities being carried out in Marathi language. He said that in recent years, science communication in Marathi was plagued with several problems that included dwindling number of skilled science writers and the digital content taking edging out the print.

Dr. N. Murugan, Former Director of All India Radio Chennai highlighted the efforts being undertaken in Tamil for science popularization. He highlighted the growing problem of not being able to find technical professionals who can explain scientific concepts in Tamil.

Shri A.S.K.V.S Sharma, Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysuru said that from one of his studies, it was observed that many students dropped out from science stream after their tenth standard owing to the English language in which science is being taught. He added that in today's digital world everyone can act a communicator from within the four walls of a room. He cited the example of podcasts produced by CFTRI that is being broadcasted through community FM radio stations and also through smartphones.

The session came to an end with the closing remarks by the Co-chair, Mr. Akhilesh Jha from the Department of Science and Technology. He said that we need to study our classical texts like the Vedas for understanding how science was communicated in those times.

Six science books published by Vigyan Prasar were released during the day. The books are *Bijnana Sadhok Sir Kariamanikkam Srinivasa Krishnan (1898-1961)* by Shri Purabi Mukherjee, *Piper Paye Paye* by Mr. Suman Majumder, *Banglai Bigyan Gyaponer Itihas o bhobishyot* by Shri Rintu Nath, *Proshno Rojkar*, *Uttor Bijnaner* by Dr Bhupati Chakraborty, *Mathematical Wizard Srinibasa Ramanujan and his Legacy* by Shri Satyabachi Sar and *Green Sketches* by Shri Dipanjan Ghosh

Speaking at the book release function, Prof. D.C. Chamola, Dean, Faculty of Adhunik Gyan Vigyan, Professor & Head, Department of Hindi and Linguistics, Uttarakhand Sanskrit University, Haridwar said that a good writer acts like a weaver and captures

the fullness of human emotion and captivates the readers' mind. He added that to connect with the young minds of the country, the authors should follow jargon-free writing. The authors of the books shared their thoughts and answered questions posed by the audience about the books.

In the post-lunch session, a Vigyan Kavi Sammelan and Science Drama were organized. Ten poets enthralled the audience with beautifully worded poetry about science and the environment. The day ended with science plays.

Science and literature are two sides of the same coin. Most experts were of the view that to create scientific awareness, scientific temper, scientific attitude and science dissemination both science and literature should march together.

The International Science Literature Festival is being organized as a part of the India International Science Festival at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre during 5-7 November 2019.




