



## 100TH SESSION OF THE INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS

The Indian Science Congress held its centennial celebrations this year in Kolkata from where it started in 1914. Held during 3-7 January 2013, the 100th session was held on the theme, 'Science for Shaping the Future of India'.

ISCA, which started out with hundred and five members a hundred years back, has had luminary personalities as its president. It was in view of the special significance of the centenary year of ISC, therefore, that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh assumed the helm of the 100th ISC as its General President.

The 100th session of the Indian Science Congress was special also because a new science policy was unveiled here. Called the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy, 2013 it aspires to pitch India among the top five global scientific powers by 2020 by laying greater thrust on innovation, establishing research institutes, stimulating research in universities, raising gross expenditure in R&D to two per cent of GDP from the current one per cent in this decade by creating a policy environment for greater private sector participation in research and innovation, making careers in science, research and innovation attractive, and encouraging women scientists.

India's first Scientific Policy Resolution was unveiled in 1958 which resolved to "foster, promote and sustain" the cultivation of science and scientific research in all its aspects. The Technology Policy Statement of 1983 focused on the need to attain technological competence and self reliance. Subsequently, the Science and Technology Policy, 2003 envisaged an implementation strategy for revitalization of the science & technology institutions in the country.

One of the key features of the recent Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy, 2013 is promoting the spread of scientific temper amongst all sections of society. The concept of Scientific Temper was articulated first by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946 in his book *Discovery of India* referring to "a way of life, a process of thinking, a method of acting, and associating with our fellowmen".

Later in 1976, India became the first country to include 'Scientific Temper with humanism' as a fundamental duty of all citizens of the country. In July 1981, a group of academicians and intellectuals even released 'A Statement on Scientific Temper' after four days of deliberations in October 1980 at Coonoor, near Ooty. The document articulated the need to inculcate the values of Scientific Temper in the Indian society to rid the country of its socio-economic ills at that time.

Subsequently, during the past one year, which also happens to be its Diamond Jubilee year, the National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) belonging to the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has taken up the cause of giving a renewed thrust to the concept of Scientific Temper. The scientific community can ill afford to close its eyes towards the fact that during the past few years there has been a marked increase in public display of religious identities; privatisation of the electronic media has also led to unabashed promotion of superstitions and non-scientific dogmas and notions through TV serials and the highly competitive news channels.

During the past one year, therefore, through a series of conferences, workshops and publications CSIR-NISCAIR has sought to bring the concept of Scientific Temper on a debatable platform. It needs to be realized that as scientific progress outstrips scientific understanding, citizens increasingly reliant on science and technology and yet largely ignorant of their workings, would be at a great disadvantage. Their participation in the democratic process would be increasingly marginalised. It is imperative, therefore, that collaborative and combined efforts are made to promote the growth of Scientific Temper among the country's citizens.



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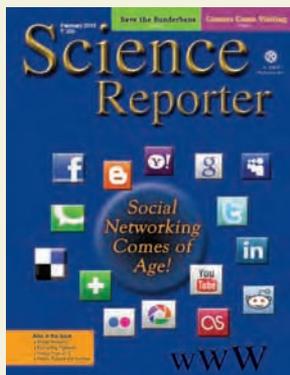
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