

NEWS

Project Investigator's Meet cum Workshop

25-27 March 2007 – A Report*

The Indian National Science Academy (New Delhi) organized a two and half day Project Investigator's Meet cum Workshop on 25-27 March 2007 along with the Annual Meetings of Research Council and the Indian National Commission for History of Science. Prof. R A Mashelkar, President of the Academy as well Chairman of the National Commission for History of Science, in his opening remarks, appreciated the efforts of the Research Council for History of Science of the Academy for transforming this academic activity into an interesting and eventful programme in a short period of two years. According to him the organization of special lectures by eminent scientists/historians in between the programme is also innovative which will not only add values and wide vision in reframing the project activities but also create interest among younger generation. He expressed his happiness over the presence of a large number of participants including experts of history of science and philosophy, social scientists, knowledge and experience by interacting with each other. He emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary research activities of this nature and suggested that our cultural and scientific heritage should be protected and studied as it is being done in outside India.

A book entitled, *Grahalāghavam of Gaṇeśa Daivajña with English exposition and notes* by S Balachandra Rao, recently completed under the History of Science programme, was also released by the President of the Academy on the occasion.

Professor Narasimha, the Chairman of the Research Council, gave an outline of the entire programme and conducted the proceedings of the project

*Prepared by Shabnam Shukla, History of Science Programme, INSA, New Delhi.

presentation. The special invited lectures by eminent speakers: Professor P N Tandon on 'Evolution of Neuroscience', Professor R. Balasubramaniam on 'Saga of Cannons', Professor Aloka P Sen on 'Digital Historical Atlas' and Professor P P Divakaran on 'Calculus in Kerala School' evoked a lot of interest and enthusiasm among the participants.

The presentation of Project reports and new proposals were divided in three sessions. The details of the proceedings are as follows:

Session I

"Historical appraisal of ICC—evolving spectrum of epidemiology and clinical pathology" by Dr. S Sriamachari

"Indigenous knowledge on the medicinal plant resources of Coromandel Coast forests of peninsular India in the modern period" by Dr. N. Parthasarathy, Pondicherry.

"History of development and progress in cancer- research and control in post-Independent India: focus on pioneering institutes" by Dr. Sukta Das, Kolkata.

"Colonialism and its impact on the Tamils' indigenous medicine" by Dr. K Rathupati, Arrumanai, Tamil Nadu.

"Minerals, mining and metal working crafts in medieval India. c 1600-1750 AD: A study based on Dutch sources" by Dr. Ishrat Alam, Aligarh.

"Catalogue and technical analysis of forge welded iron cannons in Deccan Forts" by Prof. R. Balasubramanian and Dr. Jai Kishan, Kanpur.

"Science and Nationalism in Bengal 1876-1947: Phase VI: Austosh Mukherjee and Mathematics (1964-1924)" by Prof. Chittabrata Palit, Kolkata.

Session II

"Documentation of cannons of eastern India" by Dr. P K Chattopadhyay, Kolkata.

"A comprehensive study of *Kuṭṭakāraśiromaṇi* by Devarāja" by Prof. Saroj V Singh, Mumbai.

“A comparative study of planetary models in respect of epicycles in classical Indian astronomy vis-à-vis Ptolemaic and Copernician models” by Dr. Padmaja Venugopal, Bangalore.

“A critical study of Indian astronomical tables-*sāriṇis*, *koṣṭakas*, *padakas* and *vākyas*” by Prof. Balachandra Rao, Bangalore.

“Towards an understanding of indigenous knowledge system of the fishermen of Sundarbans in West Bengal and their approach to health, sanitation and climate” Prof. Mahua Sarkar, Jadavpur.

“Musical Pillar – an unique feature of Vijayanagar Architecture” by Dr. (Mrs.) P. Arundhati, New Delhi.

“A military revolution in India? War, Technology and Colonialism in south Asia: 1740-1849” Dr. Kaushik Roy, Kolkata.

Session III

“A historical study of epilepsy from 1900 AD to 2005 AD” by Dr. Arun Kumar Sethi, Delhi.

“A physical survey of irrigational works in the Thar desert of medieval times” by Prof. B. L Bhadani, Aligarh

“1960-1999: Four decades of biochemistry in India” by Dr.(Mrs.) Srabani Sen, Kolkata.

“Anatomical knowledge and the anatomy of medical knowledge in India: some preliminary inquiries” by Dr. Jayanta Bhattacharya, Kolkata.

“Indigenous techniques of weaving in silk industry: A study in the context of eastern Uttar Pradesh by Dr. Adya Prasad Pandey, Varanasi.

The presentation of the project reports/ new proposals was open for discussion and suggestions. The experts' opinions were well received by the project investigators. It was also discussed to have an annual conference of history of science to encourage young researchers to enter in the field of history of science as some of the IIT's/Universities have recently started history of science or social science departments. Dr. Mashelkar appreciated the idea for organizing such conferences in the country and assured full

support. Dr. R Narasimha was requested to pursue this further with agencies like DST, CSIR, ICHR, ICSSR and ICER. Professor R Balasubramaniam invited the Committee to hold the next Project Investigator's meet (in 2008) at IIT, Kanpur.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications for INSA Projects in History of Science for the Year : 2007-08

Applications are invited from expert investigators seeking financial assistance for History of Science Research. The Academy approves research projects annually on History of Science programme under the guidance of the Indian National Commission for History of Science. Through this programme an expert can take up source and theme oriented studies by compiling important sources for study, translation of important scientific and technical works and making critical assessment in the areas like mathematics, astronomy, medicine, architecture, products, life and works of eminent scientists, institutions, science and societies etc. relating to Indian science and technology in proper historical perspective.

Facilities

The investigators are offered facilities of Research Assistants, JRF/SRF, Research Associates, with matching contingency grant. In special cases Superannuated Investigators are also granted honorarium with other facilities for whole time research work.

Interested Experts/Investigators may write for an application form with tentative title(s) of project to the Section Officer, History of Science Programme, Indian National Science Academy, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi – 110002. The completed application may be submitted to the Academy latest by 15 December, 2007.