PRSENSE

Communicate the communication

India's First Corporate ezine

Issue No 36 – Feb 2009

Published by Prime Point Foundation

Shabana Sultana
Student
Anna University

Theme of this Issue

Science & Technology Communication

Guest Editor

Shabana Sultana

In this Issue:

Contact

www.corpezine.com

editor@corpezine.com

PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Content Editor

Empower youth to gain more advantage

It is a great honour for me to write the editorial of the 3rd anniversary issue of PReSENSE. We have published 35 issues so far. The positive response from all our members, the recognition from prestigious international and national bodies have kept us above others. I have seen the enthusiasm behind every issue, the motivation of our Editorial team has kept things alive and kicking. For a long time we were thinking of bringing in the student community and as a first step we thought we should go back to the basics.

As a communicator I have always found it difficult to describe or write about science & technology in a simple language. India is supposed to be the hub for R & D but we are not aware of various development activities happening around us mainly because of lack of ability to communicate developments to the society in the language they understand. Government of India has taken a step forward in this direction to create science communicators by way of funding educational institutions that run course on Science communication. At present, about 12 institutions have adopted this course in their full time and correspondence stream.

Many a times Media people have complained about CEO's talking technology terms which none would understand or even get a gist of what he wants to say. Communicators, on the other hand do not realize the difficulty involved when a journalist writes on complicated technology. He forgets that he is talking to the mass and not to his fellow researcher or technocrat. . We are sure the science communicators produced by these institutions will change the turf and play an important role in the development of the country. As responsible corporate citizens we should come forward and give them valuable lessons that we have learnt and offer them training in our organization so that they can hone their skills.

Naren

Shabana Sultana – Guest Editor

After graduation in Bio-Technology, she is pursuing an M.Sc. (Science and Technology Communication) programme at Anna University, Chennai. She wants to take the science to the common people through the media. She is a Gold Medalist in 'Rifle Shooting' as an NCC cadet. She is a powerful orator, winning several awards. She can be reached at raisa5188@gmail.com

PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Guest Editor

Science Communication is a fast emerging field

The entire student community is greatly honoured to get the privilege of Guest Editing this prestigious third anniversary issue. Science writing still tends to be dry and boring, making it unsurprising that only a few science articles interest newspapers and magazines. The number of capable science communicators and voluntary scientific organizations is alarmingly low and hardly sufficient to cater to the country's large and diverse population. As far as science writing and journalism are concerned, there is ample scope for furthering such efforts in developing countries. India could take the initiative in mobilizing like-minded people in South Asia to form Science Writers' and Journalists' Associations in each country, ideally with help from international organizations.

'It is suicidal to create a society dependent on science and technology in which hardly anybody knows about science and technology.' **- Carl Sagan**

Knowledge about science and technology (S&T) is inevitable in this modern hi-tech world. There is a great demand for communicating or popularizing science among the masses. Most of the S&T institutions or laboratories have a social mandate for science popularization and development of scientific temper among the masses. Today, science communication is a fast-emerging field of scientific enterprise both in the developed and developing countries. So, trained science journalists, writers, reporters and communicators are in great demand in different media outlets, and the S&T institutions or laboratories. Recognizing this scenario, the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, has taken the initiative, to train science graduates as skilled science communicators and equip them to present science intelligibly and effectively to the masses. I believe that science communication in India has a bright future.

Shabana Sultana

A BIG THANK YOU

Your ezine PR-e-Sense completes 3 years and enters 4th year. Every month, we have been publishing this ezine without break, focussing on one relevant corporate theme. Editorial Team thanks all the readers/sponsors for their sustained support and guidance.

PR-estige: Interview with Prof. Anuj Sinha

Science Communicators have great job opportunities

Prof. Anuj Sinha, one of the Senior most Scientists of India in Grade G, is presently heading the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. He is one of the pioneers in promoting Science and Technology Communication in India. He has won several awards. He can be reached at cpranuj@yahoo.com The following is a free transcript of his podcast interview. Please listen to his interview at

http://www.poduniversal.com/2009/03/relevance-of-science-and-technology.html

What is the importance of science and technology communication?

Science and technology communication is a key to having a rational society. Each of us has cultural burden and so it is important to have a rational attitude. People have to look out for real reasons as to why something is happening? And are we guided or misguided by the happening of the society? Science communication is the key to have a developed society and help take better decisions even within the family, society and the community.

What is the role of NCSTC in promoting Science and Technology?

Over 27 years, National Council for Science and Technology (NCSTC) has been guiding the science communication efforts in the country. It focuses mainly on seven areas, research being the top priority, also finding out as what is the level of public understanding of science is and what is the impact of science programmes on radio or television.

NCSTC focuses mainly on seven areas, having research area as the top priority.

Another aspect is to train the science communicators, who are not adequate in number. Many short term and long term courses have been organized. About nine universities are offering Post Graduate programmes in science communication. Developing or preparing the communication materials is another facet which is gaining importance. Preparing pamphlets, posters, scripts for street plays, stage shows, devising the video format programmes and updating through website are taken care of.

As a token of encouraging and recognizing the work of outstanding science communicators, NCSTC has been giving National awards for those who excel in communicating science and popularizing science.

Field programme involves elements of research, training and software development. Children science congress is a typical example for field work, where students from 600 districts from all over India participated. Since 2009 being the year of astronomy, lots of young people will be encouraged to participate in the

relevant projects and in the viewing of the solar eclipse.

Now NSCTC is concentrating on environmental issues and in encouraging the creativity of the youth.

What are the job opportunities for Science Communicators?

Number of news channels are picking up Science Communicators either as full time or part time Journalists. Some Big pharmaceutical companies are recruiting the Science Communicators as public relation executives. Embassies need spokespersons dealing with Science too.

Science Communicators have great job opportunities in TV channels, Corporates and Print Media.

But there is a great demand for science communicators in print media, where they can create great impact.

What is the global trend of science communication and where does India stand?

India being a unique country with varied levels of literacy, it is difficult to compare India with others. But, as far as the public understanding of the science is concerned there has been increase in the index which is not true in the countries like US. With the availability and accessibility of the media, we are doing pretty well and pretty good. There are lessons for us everywhere, but we need to adopt and adapt them. There can be no clear cut example which can be transferable.

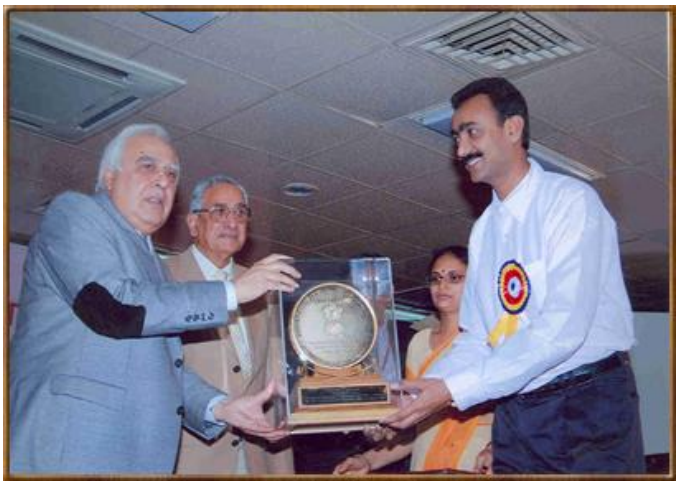
For example, Max Plank Society is a large European Society which encourages about 45 laboratories. It developed a Science tunnel format to spread science awareness. They keep the model for 6 months and then dismantle it. India adopted the model and altered it to suit Indian scenario. We set up a specially commissioned train containing 16 coaches where the exhibition has been redesigned.

Every year Feb 28th is celebrated as National Science Day. It is more appropriate that you are featuring Science Communication.

National Award for Outstanding Effort in Science & Technology Communication for 2008 was received by Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre, Ahamedabad- Gujarat during National Science Day Celebrations held on 28th February 2009 at Delhi.

www.vascsc.org info@vascsc.org

Dilip Sarkar is seen receiving the Award (Photo)



PR-estige: Interview with Dr I. Arul Aram

Communication is media centric

Dr. I. Arul Aram is Asst. Professor in the Department of Media Sciences, Anna University Chennai, India. He is the Coordinator of the Science & Technology Communication Division. In an interview with Ms. Shabana Sultana, Guest Editor, he shared his experience and expertise in the field of science & technology communication.

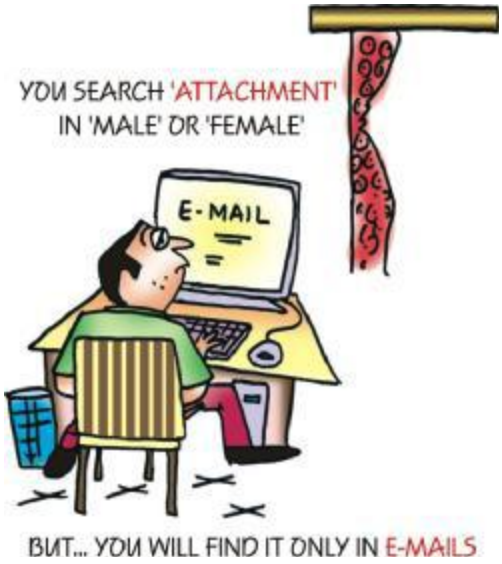
In today's world, communication does not have social relevance. It is media centric and not society centric. I now work for a premium University whose mandate is to promote Science & Technology for the larger benefit of society. Keeping in mind the mandate of the University, I proposed to the National Council of Science & Technology Communication to offer an M.Sc. (Science and Technology Communication) programme and sought the funding. The NCSTC and the University officials have much appreciated the initiative and made this programme a reality.

The products of this degree programme shall be placed at top managing levels in corporate companies, science museums, R&D Laboratories and the like. They can take up jobs as project officers in international agencies such as WHO, UNESCO, UNDP, even as Government PROs, and in other civil society organizations.

Like an MBA programme, M.Sc. (Science & Technology Communication) aims at creating managers for science & technology institutes. The focus is on communication skills with a tilt towards science and technology. Some of the activities of science communicators are media relations, bringing out a newsletters, corporate social accountability, event management, writing project reports, and encouraging industrial visits for outside publics.

Dr I. Arul Aram can be reached at arulram@yahoo.com

Cartoon by Triambak Sharma, Cartoon Editor



LAWS OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION:

Any phenomenon, whether natural or manmade follows some laws similarly science communication is also governed by some laws. These laws help science communicators and media persons to bring science to the masses more effectively

- **To popularize science is to humanize science**
- **The quality of science communication in a country is directly proportionate to the quality of science produced in it**
- **A science communicators give his/her limited ideas of science, scientists and scientific research to the common people.**
- **Science elements which has goals or inspire awe only have attention in society.**

Views from Students

Mr S Sampath Kumar, M. Sc Science and Technology Communication Student, Anna University, Chennai
sampathkumar86@gmail.com

In today's world, communicating science is a real challenge, especially to the youngsters in an interesting way. But while communicating, there are bottlenecks as well. Science communication is not only confined towards the field of science.

It can very well be used as a powerful weapon to check social issues such as poverty, superstitions. This emerging field has much opportunity that is very demanding. One such thing is the corporate communication, which is seen as a hard nut to crack but it is not hard as it is perceived by and large. Another emerging department in each and every organization is public relation department. It is really difficult to find a person who has both technical and communication skills. It is very much important to publish the research findings that are happening in our own country. These research findings only motivate young minds to plan their career towards science. Publishing the research findings of laboratories is yet another department needed to be explored. Apart from these one can even publish science articles in the journals and the newspapers.

Ms. K. Usha Rani, M. Sc. Science and Technology Communication Student, Anna University, Chennai
usha.sciencereporter@gmail.com

The way that scientific information is presented in the media needs to undergo a metamorphosis, with a new generation of the science writers and journalists presenting useful science in an interesting and innovative manner.

For example, a science and technology news and features pool could be formed to allow writers and journalists to exchange information on scientific research and developments. Following the industrial revolution in western countries, the level of science communication activities increased dramatically. In some ways, India is presently passing through a similar stage. As technology advances, the need for scientific information will also increase. Accordingly, an industrial India should soon witness a similar increase in science communication and popularization. Indeed, the success of the information technology industry is proof of a growing scientific awareness in India.

How a communication CEO feels

Mr Chandramouli, CEO, Blue Lotus PR, Mumbai
mouli@bluelotuspr.com

In our PR Agency, we have 5 engineers who are all involved in public relations. Three Chemical Engineers, one instrumentation Engineer and one Electrical Engineer. I myself am a Chemical Engineer and that's not the reason that there are so many Engineers with us. In fact, there are also several science graduates who are a part of our 115 member team.

I personally do not think that any one career training is better adapted towards PR. Public Relations is a knowledge function where the more you know, the better you are. However, any scientific stream, including Engineering, just gives you some more perspective and, as we all know, perspective is equal to an IQ of 100, and consequently it helps in PR.

Also, a scientific approach to any profession helps. Therefore if you approach PR scientifically, rather than through just a gut feel, you will be able to give more value to the clients.

Kalinga Awards for Science Communicators

The Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science is an award given by UNESCO for exceptional skill in presenting scientific ideas to lay people. It was created in 1952, following a donation from Biju Patnaik, Founder President of the Kalinga Foundation Trust in India.

The recipient of this annual award must have demonstrated — during a brilliant career as writer, editor, lecturer, film producer, radio/television programme director or presenter — talent in interpreting science and technology for the public. The recipient should have striven to emphasize the international importance of science and technology and the contribution they make to improving public welfare, enriching the cultural heritage of nations, and solving problems facing humanity. Many past prize winners have been scientists, while others have been trained in journalism or have been educators or writers.

The Kalinga Prize is awarded during the Celebration of the World Science Day (2003, 2005, etc.) and in New Delhi, India, in even years. Under the terms of the Prize, the recipient receives ten thousands pounds sterling and a UNESCO Albert Einstein Silver Medal. The recipient is also awarded the Ruchi Ram Sahni Chair, introduced by the Government of India in 2001 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Kalinga Prize. As holder of the Ruchi Ram Sahni Chair, the winner travels to India for a period of two to four weeks as the guest of the Government of India. The Chair also comprises a token honorarium of USD 2,000. In the years when the award ceremony takes place during the celebration of the World Science Day, the recipient travels to the city where the science day celebrate (2003 in Budapest) as the guest of UNESCO, in the years when it is awarded in New Delhi, the recipient is invited, as the guest of the Kalinga Foundation Trust, to undertake a brief lecture tour in India. For this reason, it is preferable that the recipient be proficient in English.

For more details
http://www.unesco.org/science/psd/prizes/kalinga/kalinga_regulations.shtml

Science and Technology communication courses in India and in the world.

You may download the list of Institutions from the following link

http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense/presense0209a.pdf

Compiled by Shabhana Sultana, Guest Editor

Global Round-up

By Ms. Maninder Paul, International Editor, London

While PR industry has seen many challenges recently with the Global economic crisis, it sure promises to be at the heart of creating news. The UK PR industry is currently going through a lot of changes as a result of the global economic crisis. There are speculations that a lot of independent agencies are facing looming closures. Almost three quarters of agencies are having concerns on not getting paid by clients and not being able to get any financial support from the banks.

With the recent economic meltdown, the agencies are observing a huge shortage for good account managers. With more and more junior level jobs being made redundant, the account managers do not have enough support to cope up the pressures. Also, a lot of professionals at the account manager level choose to move on to in-house roles. Agencies need to have a better strategy to evaluate their internal process and motivate and retain their senior staff.

After the phenomenal success of 'Slumdog Millionaire' at the British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) and the Oscars, Music Composer AR Rahman has hired Hudson PR to raise his profile in the UK.

<u>Top PR Campaign</u>

The UK's best known publicist Max Clifford has taken on the PR for Jade Goody of the celebrity big brother fame, who is suffering from Cervical Cancer. Goody, after knowing that her cervical cancer had spread to other organs, has vowed to raise money from selling media rights to her story to provide for her sons. Max Clifford's PR campaign and media deals would bring in around £1m. The coverage has been splashed across the national press – dailies, tabloids, television.

Interestingly, the publicity has raised a huge impact, famously known as the *'Jade Goody effect'* as there is a significant rise in smear tests, for the cervical cancer diagnosis. It is estimated that 40% of women do not have a regular smear tests, although it is the second biggest cancer killer of women in their early 30s in the UK.

Health and Physical fitness Tips

What is macular hole?

A macular hole is a small break in the macula, located in the center of the eye's light-sensitive tissue called the retina. The macula provides the sharp, central vision we need for reading, driving, and seeing fine detail.

Why does it occur, at what age and in how many percent of patients is it noted?

Most of the eye's interior is filled with vitreous, a gel-like substance that fills about 80 percent of the eye and helps it maintain a round shape. The vitreous contains millions of fine fibers that are attached to the surface of the retina. As we age, the vitreous slowly shrinks and pulls away from the retinal surface. Natural fluids fill the area where the vitreous has contracted. This is normal. In most cases, there are no adverse effects.

However, if the vitreous is firmly attached to the retina when it pulls away, it can tear the retina and create a macular hole. Also, once the vitreous has pulled away from the surface of the retina, some of the fibers can remain on the retinal surface and can contract. This increases tension on the retina and can lead to a macular hole. It is generally seen in older age group above 60 years of age. But uncommonly it may occur in younger people also. Some people with high myopia (minus powered spectacles) may develop it at younger age. Sometimes it occurs due to some blunt injury to the eye.

Macular hole can occur in approximately 0.17 to 3.3 % of people among the general population.

What are the symptoms of a macular hole?

Initially it causes distortion of central vision. Straight lines may appear crooked. Later on central vision reduces making reading and writing difficult.

How is surgery done?

Macular hole requires surgery. In this surgical procedure--called a vitrectomy--the vitreous gel is removed. A fine membrane on the surface of the retina surrounding the hole, called internal limiting membrane, is peeled off to prevent it from pulling on the retina . The eye is filled with a bubble containing a mixture of air and gas. The bubble acts as an internal, temporary bandage that holds the edge of the macular hole in place as it heals. It is gradually reabsorbed and the eye is filled with natural fluids. Surgery is performed under local anaesthesia.

Following surgery, patients must remain in a face-down position, normally for two weeks. This position allows the bubble to press against the macula. Maintaining a face-down position is crucial to the success of the surgery. Because this position can be difficult for many people, it is important to discuss this with your doctor before surgery.

What is the risk of developing a macular hole in the other eye?

There is a 10-15 % risk of developing a macular hole in the other eye. However there are no preventive measures available as yet.

Dr Dhanashree Ratra, MS, DNB, FRCSEd, Senior Consultant, Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai
dhanashreeratra@hotmail.com

PReTTY:

Interesting Science facts!

- Turtles can live for more than 100 years.
- An elephant trunk has no bone but 40,000 muscles.
- The cicada, a fly found in Africa, spends 17 years of its life sleeping; and only two weeks is awake during which mates and then dies.
- The ant can lift things 10 times its own weight.
- If your skin is laid flat it will cover an area of 18 square feet.
- A Giraffe has the same number of bones in its neck as a man.
- Ocean waves can travel as fast as a JET Plane.
- The first drawings of a helicopter are nearly 500 years old.
- A butterfly warms up its body up to 81 degrees Fahrenheit before flying.
- A whale can swim for 3 months without eating.
- A human being drinks 16,000 tons of water in a lifetime.
- We blink 25 times a minute.
- To melt away 1 pound of fat you will need to walk 34 miles.
- The star fish is actually not a fish, it's an animal. (phylum : Echinodermate)
- Male mosquitoes do not bite, so blame the females next time.
- A person will die from total lack of sleep sooner than from starvation.
- Oysters can change from one gender to another and back again.
- The small intestine is 7-8 meters long, making it the largest organ inside the human body. The large intestine is only 1-1.5 meters long!
- The largest lizard in the world is the Komodo dragon which reaches up to 3 meters and sometimes longer was named because of its fiery tongue. It is often longer than a car.
- Sun makes up 99.86% of the Solar System's mass! That means that all the planets put together (including Jupiter) as well as all the asteroids only make up about 0.14% of the Solar System's mass
- The comet with the longest ever recorded tail is the Great Comet of 1843. Its tail stretched over 800 million kilometres! This is about the same distance the Earth is from Jupiter!
- The energy in the sunlight we see today started out in the core of the Sun 30,000 years ago - it spent most of this time passing through the dense atoms that make the sun and just 8 minutes to reach us once it had left the Sun!
- Saturn has such a low density that it would float if put in water!
- Jupiter's magnetic field is so massive that it pours billions of Watts into Earth's magnetic field every day!

Compiled by Ms. K. Usha Rani , Science and Technology Communication, first year, Anna University , Chennai

PResenters of *PReSENSE*

Shabhana Sultana
Guest Editor

K. Srinivasan
Editor in Chief

V. Rajendran
Strategic Editor

Narrendiran
Content Editor

Triambak Sharma
Cartoon Editor

Veena Vinod
Podcast Editor & PodJockey

V Poornima
Coordinating Editor

K. Bhavani
International Editor (South Asia) Singapore

Archana Verma
International Editor (USA)

Deon Binneman
International Editor (South Africa)

Maninder Paul
International Editor (Europe)

Awards

Published by
Prime Point Foundation

Feedback and sponsorship
editor@corpezine.com

Past issues may be downloaded from
www.prpoint.com
www.primepointfoundation.org
www.corpezine.com

Listen to India's first pod-magazine
www.poduniversal.com
one stop shop for podcasts on all subjects

To subscribe to this ezine.
http://tinyurl.com/229pyo