

## Appointment and academic leadership of Vice-Chancellors

Following the letters of D. K. Basa<sup>1</sup> and H. S. Virk<sup>2</sup> on the appointment and academic leadership of Vice-Chancellors (VCs) in recent issues of *Current Science*, I have been persuaded by a number of well-meaning friends to offer my comments in view of my experience as a VC for about a decade in three (2 State and 1 Central) universities and frequent membership of the usual search committees for VCs as well as my well-known views (e.g. in a 20-page article entitled 'When Conviction was Tested' in the book *Ecstasy of Enlightenment*<sup>3</sup>). The word 'conviction' in the above article denotes 'my conviction about autonomy of the universities in general'.

The scholarly reputation of a VC coupled (to the extent possible) with the continuance of his academic (research as well as teaching) pursuits, enable

him to establish a rapport with the students as well as teachers of the university and to resist more convincingly any undue political pressures.

The procedure of selection of VCs through a nominal Search Committee has really become a farce; I may illustrate this point from among many others of a similar nature, by the non-appointment (in spite of the Report of a Search Committee under the Chairmanship of ex-Chief Justice of India) of an eminent scholar such as C. Y. Subramanian, whose reputation both in the field of higher education (as Head of Department at Jaipur and Director of Advanced Centre at Chennai) coupled with his expertise in the field of agriculture in ICAR made him an ideal choice for the office of VC of the University of Udaipur, which was planning to develop at that time in both the above directions.

Following this development, I as usual, withdrew from the Search Committee and lost any further interest in the matter. The suggestions of Virk in this regard also are, therefore, worthy of serious consideration.

1. Basa, D. K., *Curr. Sci.*, 2001, **80**, 1364.
2. Virk, H. S., *Curr. Sci.*, 2001, **81**, 628–629.
3. Mehrotra, R. C., *Ecstasy of Enlightenment*, Har Anand Publishers, 2001.

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## Importance of science policy and planning in India

Nirupa Sen, has (*Curr. Sci.*, 2001, **80**, 1479–1480) brought out the significance of science policy studies in India and the academic programme launched by the Centre for Studies in Science Policy at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Sen has discussed the broad objectives of the JNU Centre and the view-points of its faculty members about the nature of academic programmes. However, there is no mention of the role played by A. Rahman, who was responsible for creation of the National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS) under the aegis of CSIR, New Delhi. Rahman was in charge of Science Policy and Planning Division of CSIR during the sixties and promoted science policy as an academic discipline

in the universities. He was also author of a number of books in this area. Panjab University, Patiala started a certificate course in science policy and planning during the early seventies along with JNU, but it failed to take off and was dropped after two sessions.

The Scientific Policy Resolution of 1958 gave a boost to development of CSIR laboratories in India, but it failed to have any impact on science education in the country. What we need now is a new Science Policy Resolution in India with stress on science education, thrust area programmes in research and a Bharatiya S&T policy for holistic development of our society as suggested by Mehrotra (*Curr. Sci.*, 2001, **80**, 1374–1375).

There is a mad rush for information technology courses and the basic sciences are being swept off the university campuses. All our engineering and science graduates wish to migrate to USA and Europe, creating a serious drain on our human resources. It augurs well that the JNU Centre will conduct teaching, research, training and consultancy programmes in S&T policy, planning and management, leading to enhancement of the understanding of the interactions among science, society, technology, economy and nature.

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