

Book Reviews

Gauhar Raza, R Gopichandran, Gurdeep S Sappal and TV Venkateswaran (editors) : *Moments of Eureka- Life & Works of Selected Indian Scientists, CSIR-NISCAIR, Rajya Sabha TV and Vigyan Prasar, DST, Pages. XVIII+525*

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This volume has a lofty goal. The Rajya Sabha TV planned to enthuse and inspire youth of India to pursue science as a career by showcasing life and works of some selected Indian scientists. Fifty three scientists were interviewed. This volume contains an edited version of these 53 scientists along with a short biography of each of them and an inspiring message of Hon'ble Vice President of India, Mr. M. Hamid Ansari.

The Editors invited many iconic leaders (M S Swaminathan, CNR Rao and Yash Pal) and Directors/Heads of many Indian research institutes and organizations e.g. Director-General-CSIR, Secretary-DST, Secretary-DBT, Directors of CSIR labs, IISER and other organizations.

All the personal conversations started with a simple query like "Why did you do science". Gradually the discussion grew from personal life and early inspirations to the general policies and eventually, about future of Indian Science. These discussions enriched our knowledge about the green revolution (MS Swaminathan, Deepak Pental), curbing/cure of many diseases like leprosy (Indira Nath, GP Talwar) or epidemics (e.g. Plague by Girish Shani), drug research (Nitya Anand, Rajesh Gokhale) DNA finger printing used in criminal investigation (Lalji Singh, J Gowrishankar), atomic energy (Anil Kakodkar), Space/satellite Research (K Radhakrishnan)

and many branches of basic sciences (CNR Rao, Yash Pal, JV Narlikar) and even road research (S Gangyopadhyay). I am also pleased to find the interview of Director of one of the upcoming IISERs (Vinod Singh). I apologize for not being able to list the contributions or even name or specialization of all the 53 scientists, in such a short book review.

In my opinion, this is a historic document and will go a long way in enhancing the culture of scientific research and its application for improving the quality of human life, particularly in India.

I must mention that common people or young students do not really care about who is DST-Secretary or Director of an institute. Many young students of the present age consider Ashok Sen (who is not interviewed) as a role model-cum-hero, even though he was never Director of any institute. I am a bit disappointed not to find the interview of MGK Menon. Most Indian FRSS are also missing. Efforts should have been made to interview Venky Ramakrishnan, the only living Nobel Laureate of Indian origin. Some of these may not be deliberate omission because I know how media-shy our scientists are.

In spite of a few such shortcomings, I praise the editors and recommend this volume to every library, in India and abroad.

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