



THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, INDIA (NASI)

(The Oldest Science Academy of India)



National Conference on

'Technological Empowerment of Women'

:Commemorating the International Women's Day

Dates: 8 & 9 March, 2018

Venue

Vigyan Bhavan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi-110003

NASI: A Brief Profile - The idea of establishing a forum for Indian scientists, which would help them in publishing their researches and bringing them on one platform to discuss and find scientific solutions to the problems of the country, was mooted by **Prof. Meghnad Saha**, a great scientist, visionary and the then Professor of Physics at the University of Allahabad. His views were published in an article titled 'A Plea for an Academy of Sciences' in



December 1929 issue of the University of Allahabad magazine; in the very next year, The National Academy of Sciences, India was established as the first Science Academy of this country. Speaking in the inaugural session, Prof. Saha said: ***"An Academy of Science can do a great deal by educating public opinion, undertaking particular problems, and bringing out scientific workers in various fields for discussion and cooperative research. But the main function of the Academy should be towards cultural improvement by contributions to human knowledge."***

The mandate given to the Academy was 'Science and Society'. The Past Presidents of the academy, namely Prof M S Swaminathan, Prof (Mrs.) Manju Sharma, Prof S K Joshi, Prof Ashok Misra, Prof Asis Datta, Dr V P Kamboj, Dr K Kasturirangan and Prof. Akhilesh K. Tyagi have been taking keen interest in the development of Science in general and the Academy, in particular. The Academy was nurtured by Late Prof M G K Menon, Prof A K Sharma and Dr V P Sharma- Past Presidents, NASI The academy has a Council and presently, Prof Anil Kakodkar, is the President of the Academy, and Former Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission. The programmes are steered under his guidance and that of all Council Members.

NASI envisions the cultivation and promotion of Science & Technology in all its branches. The Academy is striving hard to promote Science & Technology by regularly organizing several activities, as given below:

- publishing two quarterly journals (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, India- Section A (Physical Sciences) and Section B (Biological Sciences) and one bi-monthly journal (National Academy Science Letters);
- holding an Annual Session in a scientific and academic institution every year;
- organizing symposia, seminars and workshops on subjects of current national and scientific interest;
- planning and executing science communication programmes like Science Extension Lectures, State level Science Contests (Quiz, Debate, Oration, Exhibition, Essay, etc), Talent Search, Teachers' Workshops, Summer/Winter Schools, Vocational Training Programmes, National level Scientific Creative Writing Contest, Celebration of National Technology Day, National Science Day and World Environment Day, etc.;
- recognizing the significant contributions of scientists at every level by honoring them with Fellowship/Membership/Awards such as Lecture Awards, NASI-Reliance Awards, NASI-SCOPUS Awards, NASI-Young Scientist Awards etc.;
- instituting prestigious Research Fellowships/Chairs/Senior-Scientist Fellowships

- etc. to honor distinguished scientists;
- organizing sensitization programmes for women researchers/scientists all across the country;
- conducting the 'Safe water' project;
- organizing/conducting other projects and schemes, such as Nutrition Programme for eradicating malnutrition, Science Awareness Programme for Army Personnel, Entrepreneurship Development Programmes and a joint programme of NASI & ICAR on Farm Mechanization/ Implementation, etc.; and
- establishing river galleries.
- Science Awareness Programme for Army Personnel; Entrepreneurship Development Programme; a joint programme of NASI & ICAR on the development of farm implements etc.

Besides the fore-mentioned activities, the Academy also organizes several other activities jointly with other two National Science Academies- INSA and IASc- all through the year. Since the year 2000, the annual sessions have been held at places such as Allahabad, Pune, Shillong, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Pondicherry, Mumbai, Mysore, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Jaipur, Trivandrum, Varanasi, Goa, Jodhpur, Bhubaneswar and Dehradun. These annual sessions provide a platform for the scientists across the country to interact, present their papers and exchange expertise with each other.

The Academy holds a well-organized library. The Academy is also maintaining 18 Chapters all across the country to organize scientific activities in and around their respective regions.

National Conference on 'Technological Empowerment of Women'

Women constitute almost 50% of the valuable human resource. Their involvement in all developmental activities, especially in Science and Technology would speed up the socio-economic progress of the country and bring a new dimension. Women scientists with their perseverance, dedication and motivation can be a major force in the implementation of S&T programmes. Application of Science & Technology for reducing the drudgery of women in rural areas is equally important. Technological Empowerment of women therefore becomes a very important aspect of science and technology pursuit for national progress.

Prof. M S Swaminathan, a renowned scientist and the Member (Science) in the Planning Commission of India in 80s during the 6th five-year plan period, introduced for the first time, a chapter in the plan document on Women and Development; it had one section devoted to Women in Science and application of Science and Technology for the welfare of women. Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, was entrusted with the implementation of this scheme. Since then, there has been significant progress in the country in focusing the relevant programmes for Women with S&T interventions. Not only DST but even the Department of Biotechnology has special programmes for the benefit of women. The Ministry of Women and Child Development and many other agencies are also having programmes involving women scientists.

As, the National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI), Allahabad, has organized 24 Workshops all across the country in last 4-5 years on subject of Scientific/Technological Empowerment of Women; the Publications have also been brought out on different aspects related to women empowerment, and these are widely circulated. Therefore, to give further impetus to this programme an Inter academy panel has been constituted with representation from all the three academies - Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, Indian Academy of Sciences, Bengaluru and NASI, Allahabad, on Women in Science. A Vision Document has also been prepared by this panel.

As the number of women in the educational institutions (both in urban and rural) is increasing across all streams, the central question remains that what more needs to be done in terms of adopting multidisciplinary, innovative and flexible approach to address the issues related to their technological empowerment and inclusiveness in all the programmes and policies. The time is ripe to list what more we need when the National Ecosystem is more supportive than ever before, as the programmes like 'Skill India' and 'Start up India' are helping to provide wide opportunities to women.

The present national conference being organized with a view to focusing on the importance of S&T interventions and inclusiveness of women in S&T endeavours across the country is to focus on the emerging opportunities (listed in the areas of agriculture, food and nutrition, health care, IT and Biotechnology blend etc. to name a few); what more to be done and the tools. Several eminent speakers from India and Abroad have been invited to share the common platform for discussing their views and contribute as per their expertise on the related issues. We are aware that gender parity and equality in all spheres is now a global issue.

In a nutshell, the following pertinent issues would be discussed in the present conference:-

Frontiers in S&T; Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security; Health Care and Sanitation (Swastha and Swachh Bharat); Skill enhancement and development; Entrepreneurship development; Employment Generation - Avenues, Opportunities and Challenges; and finally concluding into the Plenary Sessions and Panel Discussion. There will be an opportunity to have an open house discussion where the participants can also give their views. Focus will remain on mentoring, encouraging and guiding women for advancement of their career in S&T.

In addition, the salient recommendations will be made to accelerate the pace of development with full involvement of women scientists. It will be an earnest effort to ensure that women in rural areas also benefit from S&T interventions, training, demonstration and to further mobilize work forces in rural areas to adopt new technological tools for economic progress and better living standards.

The Convener of the Conference is **Prof. (Mrs.) Manju Sharma, Past President, NASI, and former Secretary to the Govt. of India, Department of Biotechnology, New Delhi.**

All interested are cordially invited to attend the aforementioned conference.



