

WORKSHOP/SEMINAR REPORT

HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA: A SYNTHESIS*

A one-day workshop on “History of Technology and Technical Education in India : A synthesis” was organized on 27th August, 2010 by Prof. Samir Kumar Saha at the K P Basu Memorial Hall, Jadavpur University. Prof Saha presently is working on INSA History of Science Project “History of Technical Education in India : 1900-2005”. The session was jointly coordinated with the IEEE Power & Energy Chapter, Kolkata and the INSA Project.

The workshop was inaugurated by Shri G S Rautela, Director General, National Council of Science Museum, GOI and Professor Pradip Narayan Ghosh, Vice-Chancellor, Jadavpur University delivered the Keynote address. The discussion concluded in two sessions followed by a valedictory session. Professor P N Chakraborty, Dean, FET, Jadavpur University and Professor Gautam Biswas, Director, CKERI, Durgapur delivered the valedictory address and Chairman’s address respectively. The Programme attracted about ninety scholars from different institutes and universities from in and around Kolkata. The main thrust of the discussion was to evaluate and understand the status of technology, knowledge and need of the technical education in India during modern period.

Shri G S Rautela highlighted the process of growth of the science and technology in relation to interaction with different cultures and civilization across the world with special reference to India. He emphasized that science and technology in India originated and developed independently and achieved substantially with its counter parts in other advanced cultures. The progress in S&T, he observed, was uniform in time and space. And it also advanced, stagnated and decayed alternately with the time and gap as in other Western countries. He also pointed out strong influences of foreign invariant on the S&T in the past, hampering the indigenous know-how. Shri Rautela traced the culture and creativity

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since Indus valley civilization which flourished during (c. 2750-1900 BC) He also mentioned the town and cities like Mohunjo-daro, Harappa, Chanhudaro, Kalibangan, Dholavira, Lothal etc, which flourished during the period and had agriculture based economy with granaries and other strong techniques and focussed upon the gradual scientific and cultural progress till the colonial period. He also narrated the contribution and motive of Britishers in the S&T in India in detail.

Professor Samir Kumar Saha, Department of Mechanical Engineering , Jadavpur University welcomed the learned scholars and participants and Professor Sivaji Chakraborty, Department of Electrical Engineering JU & Joint Convener concluded the programme with a vote of thank.

The following papers were presented during the sessions which discussed different aspects of science & technology and scientific education in India since remote past till post independent period :

Session I

Chair: Prof. Siddhartha Datta, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Jadavpur University.

“Evolution of Engineering Education & the Trends for the future” by *Professor Amitabha Ghosh, Sr. Scientist, Hon. Distinguished Professor, Bengal Engineering & Science University, Shibpur & Former Director, IIT, Kharagpur.*

“Past Present and Future of our Technical Education System” by *Professor R Natarajan, Former Director, IIT Madras & Former Chairman, AICTE.*

Session II

Chair: Professor Manoj Kumar Mitra, Ex Dean, FET, Jadavpur University.

“A Brief History of Science and Technology in India” by *Professor Ajoy Kumar Ray, Vice Chancellor, Bengal Engineering and Science University*

“Different Models of Development of Technical Education in India – A Brief History” by *Prof. Samir Kumar Saha, Mechanical Engineering Department, Jadavpur University & Ex –Director, UGC – Academic Staff College, Jadavpur University*

Valedictory Session

Chairman’s Address: Professor Gautam Biswas, GD and VM Mehta Chair of ME, IIT, Kanpur and Director, CMERI, Durgapur.

Valedictory Address: Professor PN Chakraborty, Dean, FET, Jadavpur University

Vote of Thanks: Professor Sivaji Chakraborty, Electrical Engineering Department, Jadavpur University & Jt. Convenor of the programme.

Professor Biswas spoke on a glimpses of technical education in India and narrated achievements after the Industrial Revolution (1750-1850) with regard to Western Countries. The phase of Intellectual Revolution (Renaissance) and the Industrial Revolution in India, the British Colony and the period of 19th century till end was analysed. He also highlighted the Indian scientists, their contributions and recognition which ultimately laid the foundation of S&T till today. The session was summarized by Professor Chakraborty who found the discussion very informative.