

## **Kerala State Science Conference organized by Breakthrough Science Society**

Responding to the call of the historic first All India Science Conference organized by Breakthrough Science Society recently in Bangalore, the Kerala chapter of Breakthrough Science Society organized a state level science conference from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2015, at Kerala State Science and Technology Museum, Thiruvananthapuram, with an objective of giving a thrust to the science movement in Kerala. The conference was attended by around 250 delegates comprising of scientists, research scholars, students, teachers and science activists from 14 districts of Kerala. Prior to the conference various types of public programmes centering round the theme 'Science for Society, Science for Man, Science in Thinking' were organized in all the districts in order to spread the message of the conference among the people.



Dr Babu Joseph delivering the inaugural address

Dr Babu Joseph, former Vice-chancellor, Cochin University of Science and Technology inaugurated the conference in a function presided over by Sri. P Radhakrishnan, Former Deputy Director, LPSC, ISRO and Chairperson, Reception Committee. Citing the preposterous claims made in the papers on 'Ancient Aviation Technology' presented in the recently held 102<sup>nd</sup> Indian Science Congress, Dr Babu Joseph in his inaugural address pointed out that certain forces were deliberately trying to distort the scientific methodology by presenting mythological stories as scientific truths. Dr. Balachandra Rao, Honorary Director, Gandhi Centre for Science and Human values, Bangalore, who spoke at the inaugural function as a distinguished guest, opined that false claims on scientific achievements made by ancient India will only undermine the credibility of our genuine contribution in the field of science. Prof Dhrubajyoti Mukherjee, All India President, Breakthrough Science Society, while delivering his speech at the inaugural function, emphasized the urgent need to build a new science movement in India in order to check the growth in blind beliefs, superstitions and obscurantist thoughts being witnessed in our society. Felicitations were offered by Sri. Arul Jerald Prakash, Director, Kerala State Science and Technology Museum, and Sri. D Krishna Warriar, former Additional Director, C-DAC at the inaugural

function. Prof. P. N.Thankachan, Secretary, Breakthrough Science Society, Kerala chapter delivered the welcome address and Dr. P. P. Rajeevan, Convener, Reception Committee proposed a vote of thanks.



A view of the delegate session

Dr. Babu Joseph delivered his keynote lecture on 'Light and Gravitation' in the subsequent session chaired by Prof. P.N.Thankachan.

Sri.P.Radhakrishnan, Former Deputy Director, LPSC, ISRO gave a talk on 'Cosmic Quest' in the next session. This was followed by a session on 'Learning Science through Experiments' conducted by Prof.C.P.Aravindakshan and a talk on 'Science and Culture' by Sri.G.S.Padmakumar, President, Breakthrough Science Society, Kerala Chapter.

A public programme was organized in the evening attended by large number of science loving people in addition to the delegates. In this session Prof. Pappootty, a renowned science activist, delivered a popular lecture on the topic: 'Astrology vs Astronomy' which was very well received by the audience. A sky watch programme was also organized after the public lecture.

The second day of the conference had a series of lectures on different topics by eminent scientists. Dr. Balachandra Rao, Honorary Director, Gandhi Centre for Science and Human values, Bangalore, and a renowned researcher in the field of science in ancient India made a presentation on the topic : 'India's Contributions to Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient & Medieval Periods'. In the subsequent session Dr. S. Mahadevan, Professor, Molecular Reproduction, Development and Genetics (MRDG), Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore delivered a lecture on 'Studying Evolution using Micro-organisms'. This was followed by a presentation on 'International Year of Light' by Dr.Godfrey Louis, Professor and Dean, Cochin University of Science and Technology. In the afternoon, a session titled '100 Years of General Theory of Relativity' was organized in which Prof. K.P. Satheesh (Former Principal, Govt. Brannan College, Tellicherry) and Prof. Soumitro Banerjee (Dean, IISER, Kolkata and General Secretary,

Breakthrough Science Society) were the main speakers. This session was chaired by Prof. Dhruvajyoti Mukherjee, All India President, Breakthrough science Society. In the subsequent session Dr. Umesh R Kadhane, Faculty, Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram made a presentation on the topic: 'Science Education and Being a Scientific Personality'.

A panel discussion on the topic 'Science in Ancient India – Myth and Reality' was organized in the evening as a public programme. Dr. S. Mahadevan, Dr. Balachandra Rao, and Dr. Soumitro Banerjee were the speakers at this panel discussion moderated by Dr. V. Venugopal, Director, Netaji Centre for Socio-cultural studies.

The third day of the conference was devoted to organizational matters. A presidium comprising of Sri. G.S.Padmakumar, Prof.P.N.Thankachan, Prof. Francis Kalathungal and Dr.P.P.Rajeevan conducted the organizational session. A condolence resolution in memory of the departed leaders of the science movement was moved by Dr.Hariprasad (member, executive committee, Breakthrough Science Society, Kerala Chapter) and adopted by the conference. Dr. Soumitro Banerjee delivered the inaugural speech. Prof .P.N. Thankachan placed the organizational report. Large number of delegates actively participated in the discussion on organizational report as well as on issues concerning the science movement in Kerala. The conference also adopted resolutions on 'Drug policy', 'Science Education', 'Gadgil committee report', 'Energy and Environment policy' and 'Bill to prevent practice of black magic and other superstitions'. The delegates then unanimously elected a new executive committee and a general council with Sri. G.S. Padmakumar as President and Prof.P.N.Thankachan as Secretary. Prof. Dhruvajyoti Mukherjee, All India President, Breakthrough Science Society delivered the concluding speech. The conference ended with a resolve to take the science movement in Kerala to a higher level. A meeting of the newly elected general council was held in presence of Prof. Dhruvajyoti Mukherjee after the conference and a plan of action was chalked out for the next six months.



Prof Dhruvajyoti Mukherjee addressing the organizational session



Dr Soumitro Banerjee addressing the organizational session



Dr S Mahadevan delivering his lecture on 'Studying Evolution using Micro-organisms'



Dr S Balachandra Rao speaking at the Panel discussion on 'Science in Ancient India – Myth and Reality'



A view of the public programme: Panel Discussion on 'Science in Ancient India – Myth and Reality'