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When exciting science is done in colleges, not in labs

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I visualise an empowered India as a nation that is materially and mentally in the 21st century. Thus, it's counted amongst the advanced nations so far as progress in science and technology is concerned and is able to make effective use of its natural resources. Its citizens will have the mindset to take rational decisions not influenced by pseudo-science or by notions of two-three centuries back in time.

I have always been impressed by science and technology achievements of an exceptional order in areas like space, atomic energy, information technology etc. coming from India. At a personal level, I felt a sense of achievement when the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics I was asked to set up in Pune attained an international reputation for excellence within seven years.

Unfortunately, we are not doing enough to attract the younger generation to science. Our school syllabi and examination system are geared to encourage and reward rote learning rather than comprehension and originality. Our productive scientists in research institutions do not come forward to teach university courses. We need an avenue where undergraduates and postgraduates in our colleges come in contact with teachers who are doing exciting science.

There is a need to encourage and attract bright young scientists in our research labs and universities. We have to shed the mindset that universities are simply glorified schools and that only research institutes can do research in complete isolation from students. When students see exciting research being done in their colleges some of them will be motivated to stay and do the same.