

Making science accessible:

We need to rethink how we organise scientific knowledge:

The ability to self-correct is considered a hallmark of science. Journals publish material that advances a field in new ways. Studies that yield negative or non-confirmatory results of previous findings do not get priority, leading to insufficient replication of results. The peer-review process for ensuring quality can also be marred by the personal interests of the reviewers. The dissemination of scientific findings has retained this basic form even after moving online.

We need to rethink how we organise scientific knowledge and whether it should continue to be structured in journal form. Research has become almost inaccessible to ordinary citizens due to subscription fees. Academic publishing must embrace a more democratic, dynamic and collaborative process. While the different variants of the newer open access model aim to distribute published research online and free of cost to the reader, the fees for publication is often met by the author, the employer, or through a research grant. To increase profits, publishers sometimes compromise on quality and accept undeserving articles.

Under the Open Wet Ware project of MIT, 20 labs in different institutions around the world use a wiki-based site to share data, materials and equipment. The ground-breaking work on the twin primes conjecture was done primarily in a comment thread via the Polymath Project.

The procedure of citations in a traditional journal paper accords them the same status irrespective of whether their results are presumed, strengthened or challenged. A new model would let us know with a click whether ideas are likely to become redundant or are truly load-bearing. Rapid, collaborative and iterative processes can improve veracity of scientific knowledge through large-scale participation.

Max Planck once observed that revolutions in science must sometimes wait for funerals. Though democratic initiatives such as Hackathons are gaining ground, our research institutions are still wedded to the antiquated journal system. Even the few digital institutional repositories that exist are centred on journal papers; other assets potentially generated in-house such as lessons learned from projects could also be included. At the institutional level, researchers continue to be recognised primarily for the number of papers they publish and the citations these papers can garner.

Individualism and secrecy get rewarded; there is no incentive for knowledge sharing. The need for wider collaboration between different constituencies of knowledge production and dissemination has policy implications at the macro level as well. Instead of chasing the mirage of high global

rankings of a few isolated institutes of excellence, should a democratic society's priorities not be to figure out ways to encourage knowledge creation and sharing across different levels of society?

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Yield		produce, bear, bring in, pay out
Replication		copy, reproduction, duplicacy, clone
Mar		spoil, impair, disfigure, detract from, blemish
Dissemination		spread, circulation, promulgation, propogation
Embrace		hug, hold, cuddle, embosom
Collaborative		co-operative, working together
Variants		variation, alternation, adaptive, modification
Conjecture		speculation, guesswork, sunrise, presumption.
Citation		quotation, extraction, excerpt, allusion, reference
Accord		give, grant, present, award, confer on, bestow on
Presume		assume, suppose, dare say, imagine
Redundant		un-necessary, not required, superfluoco
Iterate		repeat, re-iterate, re capitulate
Veracity		verity, truth, accuracy
Funeral		burial, interment, entombment, iremation
Wedded		dedicated, devoted, fixated on
Antiquated		outdated, obsolete, antediluvian, pass
Repositories		store house, depository, reservoir

A parting note:

The BSP's resolve to go it alone in the U.P. by-polls does not come as a surprise

The Opposition appears to be in meltdown mode following the BJP's sweeping victory in the Lok Sabha election. Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati announced on Tuesday that her party's alliance with the Samajwadi Party stands terminated for now, and that it would contest the coming by-polls in 11 Assembly constituencies in Uttar Pradesh on its own. The SP and the BSP were rival poles in U.P. politics until the 2017 Assembly elections, when the BJP wrested power with an impressive majority. Ms. Mayawati and the Yadav family at the helm of the SP had a long history of mutual animosity, which also mirrored the tense relations between Dalits and Other Backward Classes, their respective social bases. With their very existence under threat from the BJP's ability to aggregate a host of populist issues around the Hindutva theme and woo Dalit and OBC caste groups, the BSP and the SP buried the hatchet to form an alliance, which included the Rashtriya Lok Dal, ahead of the Lok Sabha election. The alliance appeared to be doing well with victories in three key by-elections, but the general election results came as a rude surprise for them. They won only 15 of U.P.'s 80 seats, while the BJP took 62. The vote share of the alliance was significantly lower than the combined strength of the individual parties in 2014.

It should not have come as such a surprise. The collapse of backward caste politics has been in the making in U.P. Voters had begun to view the BSP, the SP and the RLD as cabals for good reason. Numerous members of the two families had captured power using the SP and the RLD as vehicles of personal profiteering. Slogans of social justice could no longer hide the emptiness of their politics.

Transfer of power from generation to generation and laterally to a host of relatives did not merely mock the ideal of social justice but also questioned the public's common sense. With voters waiting for an opportunity to shake them up, the SP, the BSP and the RLD were no match to the BJP's ideological, organisational and monetary might. Ms. Mayawati rightly pointed out that Yadavs, the core base of the SP, did not rally behind it this time. Similar was the case with Jats, the RLD's core base. The appeal of the BJP's Hindutva and the welfarism agenda cut across castes, but the degeneration of backward caste politics enhanced it. Ms. Mayawati has not ruled out the possibility of an alliance with the SP in future. The dominance of upper castes in the BJP is too glaring to be missed, and caste fissures could return. But in their present form the SP and the RLD do not inspire trust among erstwhile supporters, though the BSP cadre is relatively more committed. The rising tide of Hindutva has challenged long-held assumptions in politics and the churn could last a while.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Sweeping victory		overwhelming victory, complete victory
Announce		pronounce, declare, assert, proclaim, herald
Alliance		Association, union, confederation, consortium
Terminate		Bring to an end, conclude, wind up, cease, axe.
Rival		opponent, challenger, competitor, contender
Wrest		snatch, wrench, cease, grab, pull, jerk, dislodge.
At the helm		in control, in charge, responsible
Animosity		enmity, hostility, animus, at daggers head, at daggers drawn.
Woo		attract, entice, pay court to
Bury the hatchet		make peace
Cabals		clique, faction, coterie, ginger group.
Profiteer		over charge, racketeer, cheat someone
Degeneration		downfall, degenerate, reprobate, corruption, debauchery
Enhance		boost, increase, augment, vitalize
Glaring		dazzling, blazing, bright, blinding
Fissures		opening, crevice, crack, breach, fault
Erstwhile		former, old, past
Churn		stir, agitate, beat, whip, whisk

Low tactics:

India and Pakistan must cease targeting each other's diplomats and their guests

India has issued a public statement of protest over the harassment of guests attending an Iftar party hosted by the Indian High Commission in Islamabad on June 1. Guests were allegedly intimidated and stopped by Pakistani security force personnel from attending the event. Those who did attend reportedly had their cars towed away. Describing the action by Pakistani security forces as "against all notions of civilised behaviour", India has asked the Pakistan government to conduct an inquiry into the incident. This development follows alleged actions by Indian security agencies in stopping guests to the Pakistan High Commission National Day function in New Delhi in March, as well as at its Iftar party on May 27. On both occasions, the Pakistan government had protested in similar terms, terming the behaviour of the security agencies towards invitees as being in "blatant disregard of traditional eastern values" and violative of the Vienna convention for diplomatic protocol. It is clear that regardless of how undignified the actions appear, both governments are following a tit-for-tat approach to ties, targeting even diplomatic missions. Last winter, for example, Pakistan

authorities refused to give clearances for gas connections for heating in the Indian High Commission's residential complex in Islamabad, despite the biting cold; while Indian authorities reportedly blocked construction workers from entering the Pakistani residential complex in New Delhi to undertake urgent repair work. Other forms of harassment that plumbed new depths included ringing the doorbells of diplomats at late hours of the night to intimidate them, and even tailing cars ferrying diplomats' children from school.

This cycle of undiplomatic behaviour simply vitiates an atmosphere already fraught with tensions, and must end. Post-elections, the Indian Air Force has removed airspace restrictions, and Pakistan has begun to open airspace routes to and from India that it had closed after the Pulwama attack. Such positive steps need to be augmented. Earlier, Pakistan granted former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj permission to fly over its territory, and India made a similar concession to Pakistan's Foreign Minister. India and Pakistan have extremely serious issues to resolve. The harassment of diplomats and their guests is a diversion from the issues at hand. With a new government assuming charge in India, and a possible meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation next week, it is likely that both sides will try to turn the page in bilateral ties. The new External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, is a former diplomat himself and should reach out to his counterpart in Islamabad to raise the level of engagement above the petty point-scoring that such harassment of guests at diplomatic functions represents.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Cease		come to an end, end, conclude, wind up
Intimidate		frighten, menace, subdue, threaten
Tow		pull, haul, drag
Notion		idea, inkling, abstract
Blatant		shameless, abashed, ashamed
Tit-for-tat		Retaliation, reprisal, counter attack
Plumb		explore, search, investigate
Ferry		transport, convey, carry, shuttle
Vitiate		nullify, annul, invalidate
Fraught with		filled with, full of, pregnant with, teem with, infested with
Augment		increase, enhance, embellish, snowball
Resolve		settle, sort out, solve, find a solution to
At hand		imminent, approaching, readily available
Counter part		Equivalent, equal, analogue
Petty		Trivial, trifling, skimpy, paltry, puny scanty, sparse, petite.