

A report of the IIA's work on the IYA 2009 presented at the meeting at the IUCAA on the 3rd October, 2008 by Dr S Chaterjee.

Easy-To-Use Tools for Astronomy

- In line with the Galileoscope Cornerstone project of IYA09 that seeks to distribute a simple, accessible and easy-to-use telescope to a very large number of people, IIA has completed the design and proto-type construction of a 4" reflecting telescope, costing Rs.1800/- only. A tender has been invited to make 1000 such numbers. The details can be found at the IIA's IYA09 website.
- As a part of the IHY07 IIA had designed and constructed a radio interferometer for solar studies. The first recipient has been the Mohan Lal Sukhadia University, Udaipur. More numbers will be constructed during the IYA 2009 to promote astronomy at ALL levels.
- IIA has designed and produced a Pocket Solar Spectroscope, costing Rs. 50/-. Several pieces of these spectroscopes have been donated to schools.

Developing Astronomy Globally: Astronomy for All

- Initiating activities under the 'Astronomy for All' Cornerstone project of IYA09, IIA organized a one-day seminar titled "Universalizing the Universe" at its Bangalore campus on the 4 April, 2008. The seminar brought together on a single platform, scientists, students, teachers, science popularizers, cultural activists and social activists. The details of the seminar are on the IYA09 webpage of IIA. Attended by 80 participants from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Pondicherry, Kerala and Andra Pradesh, it was noted that every department had a role to play. The seminar had inter alia a session on 'She is An Astronomer', which had a talk and panel discussion on this IYA09 Cornerstone project. At the end of the seminar, it was resolved to follow up with a materials preparations workshop. It was decided that apart from popularizing astronomy, the historic role played by Galileo in challenging obscurantism should be emphasized. This automatically means that astrology should be debunked and the gender equity question should be brought to the fore front.
- As a sequel to the seminar on "Universalizing the Universe", the Pondicherry Science Forum, in collaboration with IIA, organized an All India level materials preparations workshop at Pondicherry , on 6th-7th September, 2008 in which representatives from 12 states took part. Three scientists from IIA participated as resource persons. S.Chatterjee spoke on the question of landmarks in astronomy and gave an account of the historical evolution. C. Muthumariappan spoke on the plans to expand the public outreach at the Vainu Bappu Observatory, which gets 200 visitors on an average per week, as a part of the IYA2009 preparations. M.Safonova gave a lecture on the issue of "She is an astronomer". Co-ordination and brainstorming with several science popularization groups all over the country to take forward the planning and execution of the IYA2009 is on. (iii) The IIA has opened an educational extension programme, with the government high school,

Madivala, Bangalore. Many of the ideas on IYA 2009 are being worked out in this school.

Ongoing Activities

- The IIA has been selected by the DST to produce a tableau, with the theme IYA 2009, for the Republic Day parade. Several presentations have been made by the IIA and the tableau production is in the final stages.
- Landmarks in Astronomy: a CD: IIA will produce this CD which is to be released in early 2009, as a part of IYA 2009 activity. The first draft of the concept is ready.

Planned Activities

- IIA plans to conduct one hundred astronomy lectures in 2009, in schools, colleges and other institutions and organizations all over the country. These lectures will be delivered by IIA faculty who are expected to participate in large numbers. Tentative venues in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have already been fixed.