

11th April, 2014

Dear colleagues,

I for one would always like to think of what might have been rather than what is. Surely, things have not turned out the way they exactly should have. Nevertheless, the positives far outnumber the negatives. The indicators of progress include the increased number of PhD scholars, average impact factor of our publications, technology demonstrations, consultancy projects, ERP implementation, new equipment and installation of Turnstile Physical Access Control System. I owe a big thanks to one and all for making these possible. Our forward movement has harshly been undercut by sudden resource limitations and austerity measures, but we sail through by the sheer whole-hearted support displayed in the research and administrative activities of this institute.

The past three months have been witness to our staff and students winning accolades and for notable accomplishments. From what I know of you, I have reasons to believe that you have a considerable store of latent talent in each one of you that can be brought to the fore by digging a bit deeper. But let me first congratulate the following.

Dr. Subhendu Kumar Panda: Bhaskara Advanced Solar Energy (BASE) Fellowship Program.

Dr. K. Subramanian and his team: complete demonstration of technology to NOCIL, Mumbai.

Dr. S. Mohan: a new project from Boeing, USA.

Dr. N. Kalaiselvi: MRSI award; and India's Most Inspiring Woman Engineer/Scientist for 2014 by Engineering Watch.

Dr. M. Paramasivam: Bharth Jyothi Award.

Mr. S. Vignesh: admission for PhD program at Temple University (financial assistance: \$25,000).

ERP team: going live on many modules.

CFE team: getting approval for MTech program from AcSIR.

Shri. R. Meenakshisundaram and his team: conducting the DST-PAC meeting at CECRI.

During the period in question, we celebrated the National Science Day and the International Women's Day. It would be a good idea to conduct these functions in a nearby school next year, explaining to school students the importance of science in quotidian life and sensitizing them on gender discrimination. We also convened the first meeting of the new Management Committee with Dr. Suresh Das as the external member. Incidentally, CECRI is perhaps the only laboratory under CSIR that sends the approved minutes of the MC meeting to its members on the third day following the meeting; this is proof of our new-found administrative efficiency. The CECRI Chennai Unit organized an Indo-US workshop at which Prof. P.M. Ajayan of Rice University was the key speaker. In another development, CECRI signed an MoU with PMU for collaborative research. Among

important visitors to the institute during this period was the General Manager of Southern Railways, who wanted CECRI's assistance in developing nano-particulate coatings for rail coaches, health check-up and monitoring of bridges in service along the sea coast.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate all my colleagues who have gained promotion. I also would like to add a word of praise to Dr. G. Radhakrishnan, who has been given additional assignment of heading the IT Division of CSIR, and to Dr. M. Jayachandran for extension of his services by two years.

One of our duties to the nation is to nurture young talents. In that vein, I urge a more pro-active involvement from senior colleagues in mentoring our BTech and PhD students. This also calls for a higher level of introspection by the BTech Coordination Committee and the hostel wardens. I also acknowledge the good work done by the Colony Affairs Committee. We need to embark on a monthly program to plant saplings so as to restore and enhance the greenery in the campus. I would like the colony residents to be alive to the problem of water shortage in our area. Thanks to Dr. Selvam, the Shopping Complex is back functioning. Efficiency needs to be improved in all domains, especially at the supervisory level. Senior members of the staff should ensure that proper arrangements are made before they proceed on leave. That several issues do not get resolved by collective effort despite the monthly administrative collegium meetings is also a concern.

I do not specifically work with any scientist unless my PhD students are involved. Hence promoting young scientists in general is not for any personal benefit. I will certainly monitor their performance, and non-performers will not be given any undue advantage. In this context, I would request everyone to follow ethical guidelines for authorship of publications and claims to patents. Problems in this regard may be solved by open and timely communication, especially by e-mail.

The ERP ensures a high level of synergy among the finance, stores & purchase, TTBD, PPMG and administrative sections. Embracing this digital mode will increase productivity and transparency, and decrease the cost of maintaining files and other accessories. The XII FYP projects are progressing well. However, the project leaders must refrain from overbooking in order to avoid complications later. We also need to be frugal in the coming financial year. The economic impact of each activity will be critical in our efforts to fulfill the aspirations of our founders.

As before, let me once again request you not to approach me with matters trivial. As for major problems, we do have a system in place that all of you can make use of resolving the issue. Please refrain from blaming your colleagues; instead, display your appreciation for any good work they do. You are welcome to my office for discussion any time, but with prior appointment. However, please leave me alone with my students on Saturdays and Sundays. To make this institute more dynamic and globally competent, we have to keep aside prejudices, narrow-mindedness and indolence, and strive for common benefit. If we are true to our conscience and discharge our duties accordingly, we can get motivated to perform better and contribute to the betterment of this institute.

“Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.”

Mother Teresa