

Towards a Policy Framework for Indian SciComm

Deliberating on policy interventions to vitalise Science Communication in India

Policy suggestions as discussion prompts for Day 1:

Funding & Infra-structure:

1. Spreading awareness about the importance of scicomm
2. Creating more institutional positions, freelance opportunities, career progression channels & better pay scales in scicomm
3. Funding more projects & platforms in scicomm
4. Creating more scicomm fellowships, travelling grants
5. Incentivising scicomm outputs via grant / funding requirements
6. Establishing useful databases for people, initiatives, positions, grants, projects
7. Setting up infrastructure for multimedia facilities
8. Establishing a national body for science communicators

Multidisciplinary SciComm Research:

1. Spreading awareness about the need for scicomm research in the Indian context
2. Creating courses, programs, fellowships, grants within scicomm research
3. Conducting national Public Understanding of Science surveys
4. Creating chairs of scicomm research within STEM universities
5. Developing a standardised framework of scicomm curricula
6. Ensuring Continuous Professional Development for SciComm Professionals
7. Emphasising evaluation & impact measurement of scicomm efforts
8. Conducting research on vernacular scicomm + translating scientific terms
9. Making scicomm more dialogic + participatory
10. Fighting misinformation, fake news, pseudoscience
11. Enabling risk communication and health communication studies
12. Developing basic literacy - scientific, vocational, cultural
13. Inculcating critical thinking, rationality, scientific temper, scepticism
14. Promoting discussion on scientific ethics, STS, science and society topics

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Policy suggestions as discussion prompts for Day 2:

Ecosystem & Training:

1. Enabling vertical knowledge transfer: training, mentorship & capacity building channels, - workshops, courses, internships, training programs
2. Enabling horizontal knowledge transfer: ecosystems for cross-disciplinary exchange of (science, social science, scicomm) ideas, expertise and experiences
3. Defining a national framework of scicomm aims, goals and objectives
4. Incorporating scicomm training within STEM curricula – especially UG & PGs
5. Interfacing with the science pedagogy sector to improve school science curricula, content and approaches
6. Promoting greater recognition and respect for SciComm professionals
7. Motivating science organizations to develop well defined scicomm roles and teams

Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity:

1. Ensuring equitable representation for scicomm practitioners and audiences, in terms of gender, religion, caste, sexual orientation, ...
2. Making scicomm accessible to differently abled people (physically, mentally & socially)
3. Increasing representation of vernacular language scicomm
4. Acknowledging and overcoming the rural-urban divide in scicomm
5. Ensuring use of classical media as well as social / digital media for scicomm
6. Embracing greater diversity of multimedia formats for scicomm – art, comics, podcasts, videos, infographics, theatre, poetry, ...
7. Ensuring greater transparency and access to 'science' for independent journalism
8. Removing gate-keeping barriers and encourage people from non-traditional career trajectories in scicomm
9. Incorporating local & hyperlocal contexts for better scicomm
10. Democratising science, *science capital* and access to scientific knowledge
11. Valuing & incorporating lived-in expertise in scicomm better