

**National Council of Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), New Delhi**  
**Indian Science Fiction Writers' Association (ISFWA), Faizabad**  
**Indian Association of Science Fiction Studies (IASFS), Vallore**

Announce

**The First Ever National Discussion**  
**Science Fiction: Past, Present, Future**

*November 10-14, 2008; Varanasi, India*

A sheer balance between fact and fiction on the grounds of science and technology paves the way towards imaginative faculties of human mind which we often refer to as creative dream and that may come true sometime as well! A science fiction is a fine fabric of a number of elements together interwoven in a manner so that it at one end can entertain and can arouse one's creative imagination at the other. At the same time, it can inform you with an analytical and rational approach and also enable you to foresee the futuristic perspectives. We all are aware of a number of classical science fiction stories that had prepared the ground for several landmark inventions. Moreover, because of its enormous potential in educating, motivating and entertaining the common man especially the children, science fiction has been a popular means of science communication.

The discussion is aimed at focusing on various aspects of science fiction and its role in communicating science and technology related issues to the common people and children. The goal of the five-day exercise is to prepare a draft for "Benaras Document 2008". The programme would also examine as how science fiction input could be enhanced and successfully employed in various science communication modules currently in vogue in India.

There will be at least one plenary session everyday besides usual technical sessions, followed by in-depth analyses on given topics in working group discussions. There would be a special forum for young researchers and students. The discussion is also aimed at bringing science fiction and fantasy writers, scholars, critics, enthusiasts, noted social fiction writers, *littérateurs* and scientists together. Attendees would be encouraged to discuss their views on the given topics, share knowledge and perspectives in an informal environment in order to encourage free flow and cross pollination of ideas for further advancement of science fiction profession.

The discussions, amongst others, would include topics such as science fiction as a learning device, various familiar story-telling formats including rich Indian oral traditions, and science fiction writing in regional languages, etc. Conflicting issues would be specially tackled by a distinguished panel of experts, including a Chairperson, a Co-chairperson and a Facilitator for each discussion group. A peer review system for the assignments and outcomes would also be observed during the programme to have a stock of the progress and achievements of the sessions and set the trend for the next discussion sessions accordingly.

The National Council for Science & Technology Communication is the apex body of Government of India mandated for public communication of science and technology and inculcation of scientific and technological temper among masses. The Indian Science Fiction Writers' Association (ISFWA) and Indian Association of Science Fiction Studies (IASFS) are non-profit professional bodies dedicated to enhancing science fiction and fantasy in literature and mainstream media.

**Sub Themes :**

Following 5 sub themes are incorporated in 5 technical sessions. However, the discussion on a particular theme or topic may continue informally beyond the stipulated session until the final conclusions are drawn, reviewed and finalized.

**i) Science Fiction - Historical Perspective :** The programme shall begin with analysing the development and evolution of science fiction in India vis-à-vis in the world with comparative and analytical accounts on evolutionary trends.

**ii) Understanding Science Fiction - A Cognitive Approach :** A number of definitions and theories are prevalent across the world when it comes to understanding science fiction. The session will try to redefine various forms such as science fantasy, story, fiction, tale, etc., with pedagogical and cognitive enrichment.

**iii) Current Trends in Science Fiction :** This shall examine many contemporary issues on science fiction currently debated. It may present an overview on possible cultural influences on the genre, emerging trends,

changing styles and evolving characteristics of science fiction.

**iv) Science Fiction for Science Communication :** This session shall emphasize on various formats and styles suitable for presenting different contents and concepts using mass media, such as drama, theatre, puppetry, tableaux, novel, cartoon strip, film, etc.

**v) Science Fiction : Future Perspective :** The discussion shall focus on whether science fiction could be made better by making it more like mainstream fiction. The future scope and possibilities of science fiction in development of science and technology would also be explored. The session will also try to understand whether insinuation of science fiction or fantasy into serious mainstream literature is detrimental to hard science fiction!

**Special Training Session on Science Fiction Writing :** Apart from above, a special training session for young science fiction amateurs has also been planned. It is an added attraction for young participants enabling them to inculcate and develop amongst themselves science fiction writing skills, including important tips, tricks of the trade, subtleties and nuances of the genre under the supervision of noted science fiction experts. The group discussions can be divided into split groups to encourage more focussed approach.

**Format of the Programme :** The research papers are invited from the science fiction writers, scholars, experts, researchers, scientists and students on various aspects of main theme and sub themes, which will be presented during technical sessions followed by debate and discussion. The papers should be in standard research paper format. Research papers, including empirical studies, historical observations, analytical accounts, review papers, discussion papers, debates, and innovative approaches in science fiction are welcome. Each presenter may get around 10 minutes with more emphasis on discussion. Power point presentations would be encouraged. Deliberations will be in Hindi and English. The hard and soft copies of papers and presentations essentially be submitted. High standard papers could be selected for publication.

**Who can participate :** Anyone genuinely interested in science fiction profession with suitable contributions.

**Registration :** Some 100 science fiction buffs including subject specialists, experts and young researchers/ students will be invited to participate. There is a provision of limited travel fellowships covering travel expenses, accommodation, meals, and registration fee only for selected/ invited delegates from India. International delegates will make their own travel arrangements; the organizers could offer free stay and meals. An Expert Committee will evaluate the applications for final selection.

**Last date for receipt of fellowship application, registration and research paper :** October 20, 2008.

**How to reach Varanasi :** Varanasi is one of the premier tourist destinations in India, well connected by air from Delhi, Agra, Mumbai, Khajuraho and Katmandu. Fast trains from all major cities are available. It would be beginning of winter in Varanasi hence light woolens may be required.

Please contact for further information, if any :

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INDICATIVE PROGRAMME

NOVEMBER 10	
12:00-01:00 PM	PRESS CONFERENCE
01:00-02:00 PM	LUNCH
03:00-07:00 PM	REGISTRATION/ INTERACTION/ TEA/ COFFEE
07:00-10:00 PM	AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME/ RECEPTION DINNER/ CULTURAL PROGRAMME
NOVEMBER 11	
08:00-09:00 AM	INTERACTION/ BREAKFAST
09:00-10:00 AM	REGISTRATION
10:00-11:30 AM	INAUGURAL FUNCTION
11:30-12:00 NOON	TEA/ COFFEE
12:00-01:30 PM	TECHNICAL SESSION I
01:30-02:30 PM	LUNCH
02:30-04:00 PM	TECHNICAL SESSION II
04:00-04:30 PM	TEA/ COFFEE
04:30-06:00 PM	TECHNICAL SESSION III
07:00-10:00 PM	EVENING TALK/ CULTURAL PROGRAMME/ DISCUSSION DINNER
NOVEMBER 12	
08:30-10:00 AM	INTERACTION/ BREAKFAST
10:00-11:30 AM	TECHNICAL SESSION IV
11:30-12:00 NOON	TEA/ COFFEE
12:00-01:30 PM	TECHNICAL SESSION V
01:30-02:30 PM	LUNCH
02:30-04:00 PM	SPLIT GROUP DISCUSSION A
04:00-04:30 PM	TEA/ COFFEE
04:30-06:00 PM	PREPARING 'BENARAS DOCUMENT 2008'
07:00-10:00 PM	CRUISING ACROSS RIVER GANGA ON 'DEV DEEPAVALI'/ DINNER
NOVEMBER 13	
08:30-10:00 AM	INTERACTION/ BREAKFAST
10:00-11:30 AM	SPECIAL TRAINING SESSION ON SCIENCE FICTION WRITING
11:30-12:00 NOON	TEA/ COFFEE
12:00-01:30 PM	SPLIT GROUP DISCUSSION B
01:30-02:30 PM	LUNCH
02:30-04:00 PM	FINALIZATION OF 'BENARAS DOCUMENT 2008'
04:00-04:30 PM	TEA/ COFFEE
04:30-06:00 PM	VALEDICTORY FUNCTION
07:00-10:00 PM	EVENING TALK/ CULTURAL PROGRAMME/ DISCUSSION DINNER
NOVEMBER 14	
07:00-08:00 AM	INTERACTION/ BREAKFAST
08:00-01:30 PM	FIELD VISIT
01:30-02:30 PM	LUNCH
	END OF PROGRAMME

Click here: [for the Format](#)