

ductive meristem has interested scientists for a long time. Considerable progress has been made in unveiling the mechanisms behind flowering. However, there are still gaps which need to be bridged for an in-depth understanding of the entire mechanism. Such understanding, in future, will not only open up new vistas of science but also provide us with a better ability to manipulate the process of flowering for improvement of crop plants.

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Speaking of Science and for Science

Conveying the essence of science and its excitement in an understandable way to a layman or a non-expert is an art that few scientists have mastered. This has its very important role and value in society; it is also an important duty of the science community, that is being neglected in modern times. KSK had this skill as it is clear from his many articles on science and related issues in Tamil and English as well as the talks that he has given in All India Rao. He was also an ardent spokesman for science.

KSK strongly believed that one can convey even very complicated scientific facts in his mother tongue – in this case, Tamil. His scholarship and appreciation of Tamil literature must have given him the gift to perform this task with ease. In one of his articles he speaks of his school science teacher Thirumalai Kozhunthu Pillai, who enthused the students by teaching science in an understandable way in chaste Tamil. Listening to him he got the conviction that difficult scientific concepts could be conveyed in Tamil.

Those of us whose spirit is strong but flesh is weak can gain strength to write science in our mother tongue by studying the works of people like KSK and modern scientists like Narlikar and others.

Through his own first rate scientific work and also through his scholarly personality he was a spokesman for Indian science. One hears that KSK was in many committees and held many responsible scientific administrative positions: he was President of the National Academy of Sciences and also Member of Atomic Energy Commission. It is said that whenever Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru found time (or wanted to get away from politics) he would rush to NPL to listen to KSK of the latest in science. Apparently he always enjoyed listening to KSK, but at the end never forgot to ask KSK 'how this is going to help my countrymen'. I really do not know what KSK's reply was.

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