

For young scientists

At this terminal stage of the International Year of the Child we have been expecting that something really tangible and durable will result from the series of enlightened and intense discourses we have had in recent months on child promotion. The decision to establish a national centre for young scientists has thus been appropriate.

For a couple of years now youngsters have been coming forward on their own to demonstrate a healthy trend of inquiry, improvisation and innovation in various science exhibitions and competitions. Their score-card reads impressive enough with a lowcost cyclostyle machine, irrigation devices, ingenious pedal cycles, food preservatives and synthetic boards among other things to their credit. These manifest their strong common sense and striking knowledge of elementary science.

An organised framework was necessary to sustain such a trend and help it bloom. The already existent science museum and the proposed centre for young scientists—depending on how these are run—can help fulfil the objective of giving a fillip to the scientific pursuit of the young.

For all such things to really happen the way these are intended, the centre we have in mind, has to be a nucleus capable of providing the needed support behind the scientific exploits of our young children. Substance has to be added to the institutional framework so that its impact can be real.

At the formative stage of an institution the need for careful planning for its sustenance can hardly be exaggerated. The centre is contemplated to be the hub of free scientific inquiry and activities among the promising youngsters coming from all strata of the society. They will gain immensely from being guided, evaluated and encouraged from time to time so that the centre has to have a link with some members of the science faculties of universities or other professional scientists. But this guidance should not at all be the imposing type throttling the child's imagination. Instead, it ought to be confined to setting off the processes of thinking and innovativeness in him such as concentrate on an appropriate technology for the country.

He or she must get all the tools and materials to work with and for this they may be generally led to value the indigenous things; but where procurement by import would be necessary we should go all out for it. When a process has been invented it must be acknowledged and seen to be put to use at the earliest. The centre's epitome of success will be in ensuring that all blocks to the child's creative thinking and its consequent outcome have been removed.