

# Amateur Astronomy – An Alternate Way of Astronomy Education

Somenath Chatterjee, Sabitri Debi Institute of Technology (School of Astronomy); ([somenath79093@yahoo.co.in](mailto:somenath79093@yahoo.co.in))

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## Abstract

Astronomy, the oldest science is being subject of attention to increase scientific temper, awareness of science from school level. In India, history of amateur astronomy is quite bright. People of different zones in India got themselves involved in different sky observation projects of their own, form astronomical institutions, wrote books on astronomy, organize telescope making workshops, recorded data of different astronomical observations and endeavored popularizing astronomy. In 1991, amateur astronomers meet created platform and inspired amateur astronomers to run their works.

## 1. Introduction

Astronomy education in school level is not significant in India though in geography and science curriculum astronomical knowledge is included in different names. A survey shows (Author conducts the survey in 22 schools) most of the students do not know anything about astronomy. So, they have to introduce this subject separately with small practical arrangements with low cost materials. Amateur astronomers are working in this fundamental level as their own. In 1991, in Pune the amateur astronomers meet opens a forum to discuss the problems faced by individuals. About 200 amateur astronomers of several parts of India took part in this meet. Prof. Jayanta Vishnu Narlikar, the great cosmologist and astronomer realized that a common organization is needed. Prof. Narayan Chandra Rana, the astrophysicist, was deputed to help in the formation of the amateur astronomers' federation.

The enriched history of astronomical knowledge of India inspires students' years after years and in this paper I noticed two names, one in 19<sup>th</sup> century and other of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

From amateur astronomers meet the resolution is taken as: the proposed activities are a) observation, b) instrumentation, c) popularization. Another point should be added that astronomy education.

## 1.1 History of Amateur Astronomy in India

In 576 CE, Aryabhat was born made a great contribution on mathematical and observational astronomy. Here I mention a name, Samanta Chanra Sekhar who was born in a Royal family in Khandapara in 1835. He started doing astronomy at the age of fifteen. The astronomical texts (Siddhantas) dealing with the instruments gave hardly a hint here and there, which were to be improvised all by himself. He started recording his observations and formulations in the form of a treatise at the age of 23.

Another Indian amateur astronomer of outstanding merit is Radha Govinda Chandra, who is credited to be the first person in India to have observed a nova in the constellation of Aquilla on June 7, 1918. Chandra contributed 37000 variable stars to Amarical Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO).

## 2. Activities to enhance consciousness of astronomy

- \* Popular Lecture
- \* Publish Newsletter
- \* Observation and Recording
- \* Instrumentation
- \* Publishing

### **3. Summary and Conclusions**

Amateur astronomy is an important part of education in India. Amateurs are devoted in this work passionately as their individual effort. Interested learners and common people get their astronomical knowledge by this effort.

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