

## Joyful Years with the Journal: Balancing the Editor–Professor Life

I joined the team of *ACS Sustainable Chemistry & Engineering* as Associate Editor in May 2014. I recall the e-mail from Professor David Allen on April 4, 2014 proposing this idea. Although I had edited books and special issues of journals before, it was my first editorial assignment requiring daily involvement, and therefore, I was somewhat concerned about the time it may demand and concomitantly its impact on my teaching and research. My fellow Associate Editors, Professors Bala Subramaniam (University of Kansas) and Peter License (University of Nottingham) narrated their experiences and assured me that it would be a smooth transition to a teacher–researcher–editor phase in my life. It has now been well over two years—a very rewarding period of intense learning, careful mentoring, and informed decision making. Over 800 articles have come across my desk in this period. Selecting the papers we should publish, guided by the painstaking inputs of the reviewers, has been the most difficult part of my editorial *avtar* [a Sanskrit word meaning an incarnation, embodiment, or manifestation of a person or idea]. It was always a pleasure to receive good reviews and communicate the decision of revision or acceptance. The joy doubled when the authors returned the revision with care. I must place on record a big Thank You to all authors; the confidence they have shown in this journal has been the foundation of its success.

A look through the journal reveals many connections between sustainability and materials. This may appear in the form of sustainable synthesis, new transformations, renewable materials and processes, pollutant removal, energy production, sensors, etc. It is in this research space that I have been associated with the journal. That space has become increasingly rich recently, with nanomaterials and their chemistry attracting greater attention. The societal need, focused funding, and greater sense of accountability helped enhance this frontier. One other aspect obvious in these papers is the increasing interdisciplinarity, which suggests that the journal has made strides to further erase the boundaries within, and between, chemistry and engineering.

The past two years have made drastic changes in my own science. When I received the invitation from the journal, I was getting ready to participate in an international conference in Buenos Aires, commemorating the 100th year of arsenic in the environment. In the last two years, we have installed several affordable iron and arsenic scavenging filters in the field using sustainable materials (Figure 1). A company, InnoNano Research Pvt. Ltd., incubated in the lab on affordable clean water technologies has started standing on its own, employing our own students, ready to take up larger challenges. A new laboratory for clean water has been established with funding from the Department of Science and Technology. From advanced research to manufacturing and implementation in the field, our science has come a long way. In that path, the link with the global scientific community has become stronger through the journal.

Looking back, the eventful two plus years have been intense, but always on a trajectory of growth, both for the journal and for me. The increasing number of submissions from all over the world (50+ countries), upward impact factor (5.27 currently),



**Figure 1.** An arsenic and iron free drinking water product, named AMRIT, implemented by InnoNano Research Pvt. Ltd., in an arsenic-affected area of West Bengal, India. There are various versions of this technology, the one shown above caters to about 100 people. Arsenite and arsenate ions are removed well below the international norms at enhanced kinetic rates with sustainable granular materials. Such materials enable the design of a filtration column with a low pressure drop so that even a child can operate the filter. From the author's collection.

new initiatives (lectureship awards, early career board, social media presence), special issues on important problems in the area, and expanding breadth of disciplines covered suggest that our journal is on the right path. The journal has positioned itself to be relevant and necessary for the field. The impact of research related to sustainable chemistry may take time to be evident. In my personal view, sustainability will make a lasting impact on chemistry and society, if innovations are partnered with policy advocacy.

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#### Notes

Views expressed in this editorial are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the ACS.

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