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Written by **Anjali Marar**

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G V Pavan Kumar's podcast, Pratidhvani, is now three weeks and three episodes old

WHEN THIS experimental physicist at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Pune decided to host a podcast, the bottomline was this: “I wish to humanise science.”

G V Pavan Kumar’s podcast, Pratidhvani, is now three weeks and three episodes old.

Pratidhvani means reverberations or echo in multiple Indian languages, including Marathi, Sanskrit and Kannada. And, Kumar aims to share his thoughts as an academic-scientist on the history and philosophy of science — with a human touch, in English.

For instance, in one of the editions, available on Spotify, he speaks about science and technology in Japan based on a recent official tour to that country.

“While laboratories and infrastructure are needed for doing experiments and essentially science, it is a human who chooses a problem and wants to address it scientifically. There is a need for a greater emphasis on the humaneness required in academia,” said Kumar who has “deep interest in the history of science”.

Amidst the growing popularity for audio-visual content via platforms like YouTube and Tik Tok, Kumar traces his love for audio to his childhood days and credits radio for many of the invaluable lessons in his life. And his inspiration for joining the bandwagon came from his favourite podcasters, mathematician Stevan Strogatz and Amit Varma, among others.

“There is high-quality podcast content about science emerging from the US and UK. There are noted institutions, too, involved in producing great shows. But we lack an Indian science-centric podcast and I wish to contribute to this space,” Kumar, whose primary area of research is optics and soft matter physics, said.

“Science is an everyday thing and we are surrounded by it. However, in India, what is pitiful is that a large part of science has got reduced to mere examinations, earning marks and degrees at school, college and university-levels.”

Trying his hand on multiple media — after ‘Scatterings’ , his blogging space for several years now — the latest venture is another attempt to learn about the interface between science, philosophy and history, said Kumar. Besides, he said, doing rigorous scientific research, writing, and now podcasting, brings a lot of positivity.

Asked about his target audience, Kumar said, “Science often gets linked to and is perceived to remain limited for students and academics. My thoughts presented on this medium will be for anybody who appreciates science and for those who wish to think deeper, from fellow academics to social scientists, everybody.”

Being a trained researcher for over two decades now, preparing notes for a podcast episode requires no additional preparation, said Kumar.

“Preparing notes is an integral part of being a researcher. The same applies to creating content. I have invested in a good quality microphone and recording does not take away a lot of my time. I can record at home or at my office desk. This is out of sheer personal interest.”

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