

1. **“ The Game of Eclipses”**, by Nirupma Raghavan, N.B.T., Rs. 18. (1997).
2. **“ Trees: An Ecology book for Children on Asia/Pacific Trees”**, N.B.T., Rs. 22.50, (1996).
3. **“ Little Toys”**, by Arvind Gupta, N.B.T., Rs. 17, (1997).
4. **“ My Journey to the Magnetic North Pole”**, by Preety Sengupta, N.B.T., Rs. 7.50,(1996).
5. **“ The Voyage of Trishna”**, by Brig. T.P.S. Chowdhury, N.B.T. Rs. 10.50, (1996).

The world over, science reporting in the media, both print and electronic is neglected. This is even more true in our own country, where we have seen the folding up of the science magazine, Science Today. One look at the newspapers shows clearly that the number of column inches spent on science related stories is minuscule. Compare this to the extraordinarily large amount of coverage given to lifestyles, fashions or even food. Most newspapers do not have any regular science correspondents or even reporters who are knowledgeable about science related issues. The situation in the electronic media is no better where there are almost no programs on science, the UGC programs and the Discovery Channels being notable but insignificant exceptions. To make matters worse, there are very few popular science books published in India, both in English and the regional languages. In the last few years, National Book Trust has started a very healthy trend of publishing books on popular science topics, for adults as well as for the young readers. The books under review are part of their publication for the young readers.

For those of us who have witnessed a total solar eclipse (the latest one in India was on the day of Dipavali, 1995) it is an unforgettable experience. The twilight like ambiance, the chirping of the birds returning to their nests, the sudden darkness, the stars in daytime, the diamond ring and then light again. It is truly one of the most fascinating sights on earth. But the solar eclipse is not only a pretty sight but a rare opportunity for scientists to learn about the Sun especially its corona which is normally not visible. Why do eclipses occur? And why don't they occur more frequently? What can we learn from the eclipse? What are the various myths associated with eclipses? Dr. Raghavan's book answers all these questions and more in a simple, easy to follow language devoid of jargon. It also suggests many activities which the readers can undertake to experiment with easy to assemble apparatus'. These activities serve to reinforce and supplement the information in the chapters. This author has brought her experience as an astronomer and science educator to write a fascinating account of these majestic heavenly phenomena .

It was only a couple of decades ago that ecological and environmental awareness started becoming a part of ordinary discourse and now these have even found a place in school curriculum. Sadly though, like most other subjects taught in schools, the students do not make the connection of what is in their books to their everyday lives. How many of them can, for instance name the trees found in their neighborhood? Or for that matter, what the various uses of the different trees are? “Trees, an ecology book for children”, tries to overcome this lacuna by talking about trees. It is not just a compendium of the various trees found in the Asia/Pacific region, but also incorporates fascinating stories, myths, poetry that has evolved around trees. For example, the 1100 year old Gingko tree in Yongmunsa temple near Seoul is believed to have grown from the walking stick of Buddha. Apart from this, there is a lot of scientific information about trees and their role in the balance of nature. All this is presented in a wonderfully reader friendly fashion with good illustrations and blurbs. This is a great book to present to school going children if you want them to not only learn about trees but also love them.

Among the science popularizers in India, Arvind Gupta is a unique personality. An engineer by training, he has been working in the field of low cost and appropriate educational toys for almost two decades now. Apart from writing many books he has also made several films on activity based science. His creativity is evident once again in “Little Toys”, a

charming book which tells us how to make toys from material found around the house. Like his previous books, this one too gives detailed instructions on how to make educational and entertaining toys using in most cases garbage which is normally thrown out. Among his favorite materials are discarded rubber slippers and now tetrapak containers! In these days of GI Joe and Barbie dolls, the joy of making a working model or toy with one's own hands is something which children are missing. This book, like the authors' previous ones could encourage the children to use their hands and make wonderful toys.

"The Voyage of Trishna" and "My journey to the magnetic north pole" are both about adventure travel. In 1985, a team of armymen undertook the daring feat of circumnavigating the globe in a 11m fiber glass yacht named Trishna. Battling storms, sharks and other hazards, they completed the journey in 15 months. Complete with adventure, heroism and witty anecdotes, this is a wonderful travelogue of the journey around the world. Though the style is descriptive and pedantic, it will certainly appeal to young readers and may even be a source of inspiration for them. "My journey to the magnetic north pole" is an account of the author's trip to the Arctic. Though there are several nuggets of information in it (for example, igloos shine at night in the Polar Regions as if they were made of opaque glass), the book is disappointing. This is just too much of an account of the author herself rather than about the journey. Nevertheless, it is an interesting chronicle of an incorrigible traveler to the end of earth.

All the books are well produced and most importantly, very reasonably priced. They would make excellent presents for school going children who seem to be fast losing the reading habit to television. National Book trust should once again be congratulated for doing a wonderful job of producing good, informative and affordable books for children.