There is no denying that the world has not only witnessed but also is a repository of amazing scientific and technological developments in the physical and biological realms alike. There is now a vast stockpile of scientific discoveries and technological innovations — a stockpile of such a magnitude that it can augment the material life of all nations in the world and provide every human being an opportunity for leading quality of life with human dignity.

In recent times there have been some path-breaking scientific endeavours in the areas of (i) Genes; (ii) Agro-technology; and (iii) Information and Communication Technology. DNA era was ushered in 1953-1954 when the epoch-making paper on the Double Helix structure of DNA was published by James Watson and Francis Crick. Thereafter came up major developments like the identification of genetic code in 1960s, recombinant DNA and DNA sequencing in 1970s, Human Genome Project as well as others since the 1980s. These have undoubtedly far reaching consequences for mankind as a whole. Their beneficial dimensions like breeding new GM varieties that have tolerance to drought, salinity, attack of pests and disease, improvement of nutritive qualities etc. cannot be ignored. That such new varieties need to be developed to face problems of the foreseeable future needs no emphasis because of the global limited resources in water. They would also increase productivity in semi-arid and dry-farming areas to augment food security in these otherwise vulnerable human settlements. The pathway of genetic engineering should have the compulsions of a futuristic vision for the augmentation of nutrition and health of the whole humanity. It is here that humanism should be the sole determinant,
In the twentieth century, human intellect scaled new heights in science and technology – multi-level harnessing of natural resources, materials science, electronics, communication, medicine, space exploration, nuclear energy and several others. However, alongside the last century has also been a harbinger of social tensions, disorders and anti-human conflicts. Behind this scenario lies what may be called human entropy – an entropy not physical, but largely mental. In essence it is an ever expanding disorder – generating selfishness – individual, communal and national. This has erected dangerous barriers between man and fellow-man. A person trained in the method of science is supposed to be an embodiment of the paradigmatic objectivity and rationality. Ironical indeed that in human affairs, between him and his fellow humans, an individual by and large is an impulsively charged ensemble of selfishness and sectarian tendencies. The blinding curtain of self-satisfaction needs to be unmasked, discarded. This is possible only through a conscious fostering of humanism in a way that the individual sees and feels the fellow – man in the same manner as he sees and feels for himself.

There is another side, rather on ugly one, of the scientific and technological developments – the production of armaments and weapons of mass destruction. Several nations are vying with one another for attaining supremacy in this destructive potential of science and technology, of killing man by fellow-man. It needs to be recognized that the killing instinct is very strong in man, stronger than that in other animals. From early times to the present, the history of mankind is more a record of onslaught of man on fellow-man through battles and wars for one reason or the other. The present is no exception. Recent studies by scientists at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, on the cause of armed conflicts over the past three decades, have indicated that the root cause of many of the conflicts could be traced to economic rather than ideological differences. Economic disparities in different parts of the world, the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’, have a long saga – social, colonial and political. These disparities have tended to generate internal tensions and external conflicts of unprecedented magnitude among nations; even within a nation, among its different societal sectors. It is unfortunate that a substantially big proportion of national GDP continues to be spent on armaments and devastating sophisticated weapons. On the other hand, the amount being spent on programs leading to poverty eradication and the fulfillment of basic needs of the vast majority of people is far less. Is it not a distressing fact that the number of children, men and women living in abject poverty today exceeds the entire human population that existed in 1900, despite the enormous