

Media Workshop on Communicating Science and Biosafety

July 28th and 29th, 2015

Chandigarh

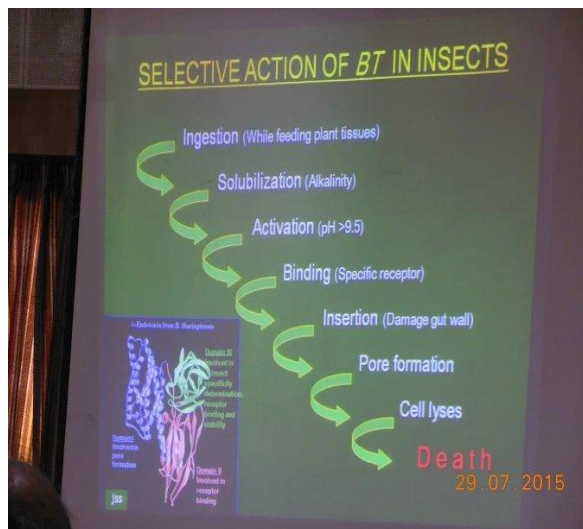
In collaboration with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), UNEP and GEF, Indian Institute of Mass Communication is organizing a series of workshops across the country on 'Communicating Science and Biosafety' as part of the Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety. There has been close collaboration between IIMC and various universities from diverse regions of India for the strategic and systematic organization of these workshops.

In keeping with the paradigm of this initiative, the eighth workshop was organized at ICSSR Complex, Panjab University, Chandigarh on July 28-29, 2015. The workshop aimed at sensitizing media professionals/journalists/communicators on key issues/concerns about communicating science and biosafety to the public as the latter's take on this issue significantly influences public perception and reception of a technology like GM and in turn its acceptance or rejection on the level of implementation. The workshop facilitated a common platform for both the practicing science journalists/communicators and the scientists wherein they got an opportunity to interact and exchange their views and opinions regarding the challenges and prospects for effective communication on emerging sciences and biosafety.



There was active participation from various genres of media viz. print journalism, television journalism, radio and online journalism. The workshop had participants from Dainik Jagaran, Dainik Savera, Radio Jyotirgamaya, Hindustan Times, ETV News, Press Information Bureau, Asia Post(inc), Indian Express, The Tribune and Aaj Samaaj, to name a few. Representatives from Department of Public Relations and Cultural Affairs and Centre for Science and Environment also attended the workshop.

The workshop presentations facilitated extensive discussions on status of biotech innovations in India and abroad, an insight into GMOs/ LMOs and their applications in agriculture productivity, regulatory regimes in the country for ensuring Bio-safety standards in application of innovations in agri-biotechnology: lab to land, information databases and other sources on biosafety, safety assessment of food and feed derived from GMOs, detection methods and monitoring mechanism of GM crops while in panel discussion, the focused area was regional media and its role in communicating science and technology, laying emphasis on the need and the content of biosafety communication. The final stages of the workshop had the participants partake in group presentations based on the range of issues covered during the workshop.



The panel of resource persons comprised renowned scientists and media personnel viz. Dr. Siddharth Tiwari, Scientist, National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI); Dr. Gurinder Jit Randhawa, Principal Scientist, Division of Genomic Resources, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources; Dr. Jagdeep Singh Sandhu, Senior Biotechnologist, College of Agriculture, Plant Breeding & Genetics, Punjab Agricultural University; Dr. Neelam Gulati Sharma, Director (POS), Punjab State Council for Science &

Technology (PSCST); Prof. Daizy Rani Batish, Department of Botany, Panjab University; Dr. R. S. Sangwan, Chief Executive Officer, Center of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB); Dr. Archana R. Singh, Professor, School of Communication Studies, Punjab University; Professor Gita Bamezai, Head, Department of Communication Research, IIMC and Dr. Anand Pradhan, Associate Professor, IIMC.

The workshop was a success in terms of sharing key information in the field of Agri-biotechnology and biosafety communication, linking participants from different sectors to uphold bilateral flow of information and providing a forum to discuss possible ways to maximize effective collaboration and achieve precise dissemination of facts and figures relevant to the concerned field.