

CONFERENCE, WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION MEETING: EXPOSURE TO RADIATION, HOW LOW IT SHOULD BE? RISK OF RADIATION AND COMMUNICATING THE REALITY HELD ON 17 MAY 2018 AT NIAS

Coordinators: **Prof. Sai Baba and Dr. VV Binoy**



The possibility of exposure to the radiation always evoked fear and apprehension in the public. The dilemma of how low the radiation exposure should be, continued and led to very intense scientific debate both amongst public and the researchers associated with the study of the effect of radiation on human beings. Management of the public perception and elimination of the fear of low level radiation could be achieved by promoting multichannel communication between public and scientific community.

As part of a project titled “Managing Public Perceptions and Public Acceptances of Public Risks Associated with New and Emerging Technologies Through Science and Technology Communications”, National Institute of Advanced Studies(NIAS) has organised a meeting on 17th May, with the aim of converging perspectives on the real risk from low-level radiation, hazard perceived by various stakeholders of the society, the communication strategies effective in mitigating the fear etc. The participants included experts in the domain of radiation protection and science communication. Prof. M. Sai Baba, welcomed the participants and the meeting started with the address of Prof. V.S. Ramamurthy, who has highlighted the need for understanding public perception on emerging technologies and set the agenda for the meeting.

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Dr. D.V. Gopinath, former Director, Health & Safety Group of IGCAR and BARC, has given an overview on the theme 'Linear No Threshold' model'. Regulatory aspects of prescribing dose limits, was delved upon by Dr. K.S. Parthasarathi, former Secretary, AERB. Shri L V Krishnan, former Director of Health & Safety Group of IGCAR, deliberated on the topic "An emphasis on the communication of nuclear risk management'. The former Director of Bio Medical group of BARC, Dr K B Sainis spoke on the topic 'Various Facets of Radiation Exposure and Public opinion'. Dr A R Sunderarajan, former director of SRI, AERB summarized the recent studies on Low Level Radiation Exposure Effects. 'The perceptions of occupational workers and public on the low level exposures' was explained by Dr B Venkatraman, Director Health and Safety Group of IGCAR.

The former Director of DIPR, Prof Manas K Mandal addressed the mental health concerns associated with the fear of radiation exposure. Dr. Xavier Raj, the Chairperson of C K Prahlad Centre for Emerging India, LIBA, focused on the various strategies that can be used to engage public in understanding reality of Radiation Exposure effects.

The need for further research to avoid uncertainties in the effects from low level radiation exposure was highlighted in the meeting, need for studies pertinent to the Indian habitats was emphasized. Various methods to understand the risks and multimodal strategies to manage public risk perceptions were outlined. The meeting ended with Dr. V.V. Binoy, thanking the participants.