

Research Project
on
**Public Knowledge, Attitudes and
Perceptions towards Genetically
Engineered Organisms in India**

**7 February, 2007,
India International Centre, New Delhi**



**J-235/A, Sainik Farms,
Khnapur, New Delhi – 110 062
Ph: +91 11 29556248 Email – genecamp@vsnl.com**



Why this Study ?

- * Social science research on public attitudes and perceptions of biotechnologies.

Why this Study



- Essential to analyze factors that shape perceptions with respect to the benefits and risks of GE technology.
- Results lead policy-makers to reflect on whether GE technology meets the needs of the society.

Why this Study



- Gaps between perception and awareness of stakeholders will lead to confusion and mixed reactions about the technology and this will be reflected in policy.
- Detailed, ongoing public perception studies done in developed countries to track public attitude to Agbiotech.

Why this Study



- No authentic, scientific study in India assessing public attitude to agricultural biotechnology.
- Unclear whether concerns articulated by activists
- The promotions launched by promoters of GE technology in government and outside.

Why this Study



- Shared by the public or reflect their views,
- A study of this kind of GEOs will indicate this lacuna gaps
- Already being articulated in public forums and the media.

Why this Study



- The proposed study is urgent because both the public and private sector in agriculture are starting to commercialize GE products in a variety of conflicting situations.

Why this Study



- India's 20 years old biotechnology program is continuing in the absence of a national policy.
- Recently, the Department of Biotechnology has drafted a biotechnology policy document = Status unknown.

Why this Study



- Public resources are being spent on developing a wide range of products whose suitability and appropriateness is being questioned by many.

Why this Study



- If attitudes and perceptions are not taken into account, public apprehension will increase and rejection of GEOs may lead to a waste of investments and perhaps seal off any future opportunities that may arise from applications of the technology.

Why this Study



- The results of this study should help to rationalize expenditures from the public and private sectors in these products.

The Research -



- Examine attitudes and perceptions about products developed from agricultural biotechnology in India to understand
 - the perceptions among members of the public to GE food and non-food crops.
 - the perceptions, discourses and strategies to key stakeholders in the field of agricultural biotechnology.

Overall Goal



- The overall goal of the proposed study is to contribute towards
 - formulation of public policy in Agbiotechnology in India.
 - taking into account public perceptions and attitudes
 - set priorities for public and private sector investments.

Expected Outcomes



- Data sets on existing attitudes and perceptions of key stakeholders and a disaggregated public on issues relating to agricultural biotechnology.
- A socially sensitive and scientifically objective, multidisciplinary analyses of the data that could serve as the basis for strategic advice to governments, international organizations, NGOs, corporations, farmers and public at large.

Expected Outcomes



- Peer-reviewed publications for disseminating research results among stakeholders, research and academic institutions, civil society groups etc, at the national, regional and international levels.
- The project will generate information and data, which should be useful to all stakeholders in agricultural biotechnology, to enhance the quality of debate and undertake critical technology assessment with respect to public needs.

Risks and Assumptions



- That a sufficient number of respondents (officials and employees of government departments will be found to answer the survey questionnaire.
- That there is some basic degree of awareness among participants about biotechnology, biotechnology products and related services.

Risks and Assumptions



- That the proposed surveys will provide insights into genuine attitudes and perceptions about GM products.
- That the results of this study will inform future policy making since policy makers tend to pay more attention to quantitative (and qualitative) studies conducted by experts than they do to informal public views.