



Calcutta University



The Energy and Resources Institute

Recommendations adopted in the National Conference on Nanotechnology and Regulatory Issues organized By Calcutta University and TERI

9 – 10 January 2009 at Centre for Research on Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, Kolkata

Press Release

The nanotechnology regulatory regime in India, in concomitance with the technology itself, is fast emerging and is marked by new discoveries and their applications across disciplinary fields. Although both are emerging, this dynamism is not a two-way phenomenon; the technological developments are ahead of the regulatory regime, with the latter reacting to the former.

Several of the challenges posed by nanotechnology are not new and have been confronted and addressed at the time of emergence of biotechnology. However there are some other challenges, which are new and therefore require an entirely new paradigm of regulatory approach and the charting of new regulatory pathways. Also the technology itself being of an enabling nature (or platform technology) also creates its own dynamics in terms of the range of procedural mechanisms that could be employed within regulation to catalyse the participation of various actors at a multi-level.

A two day **National Conference on Nanotechnology and Regulatory Issues**, jointly organized by Calcutta University and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) was inaugurated on January 9th 2009 at the newly built Technology Campus of Calcutta University.

The conference offered multifaceted perspective from over 30 experts who deliberated upon various issues like, whether our existing regulatory mechanism is sufficient or a new regulatory regime needs to be designed for the so called next industrial revolution, i.e., nanotechnology. The Conference was attended by national and international experts from institutions like Indian Institute of Technology, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI), Research Information System for developing Countries (RIS), Maulana Azad medical College, University of Surrey, U.K, Calcutta Medical College, University of Mahidol, Thailand, Symbiosis Law School, NUJS, Forum of Science, Engineers and Technologists (FoSET).

At the inaugural session, Prof Suranjan Das, Vice Chancellor, Calcutta University urged the need to balance present risks concerns and the commercialization of nanotechnology.

Professor M P Singh, VC NUJS, emphasized the need for collaborative and interdisciplinary research by lawyers and nanoscientists. Commenting on the issue of regulations, he observed that the current regulatory regime is adequate in addressing the concerns around nanotechnology developments.

The conference concluded with the following set of recommendations -

1. A comprehensive new law on nanotechnology is not needed but some amendments in the relevant legislation are required.
2. We do not need a separate regulatory authority but we need an expert committee must be constituted comprising members from concerned departments and ministries. The committee should make short term recommendations in light of growing application and commercialization of the technology.
3. Precautionary principle has already been adopted in environmental regulation, and should be extended to nanotechnology regulation, considering the uncertainties. We recognize the relevant international principles in this regard.
4. Manufacturers, especially of those products that have a direct contact/ implications for humans, should have limited liability. These products should be identified and listed. Insurance could be a suitable option for covering such liability.
5. Regulatory framework should take into account the phase of Nanotechnology development and the regulatory intervention should be as per the stage of development and knowledge of risks.
6. All evidence based data should be admissible irrespective of the country of study, while designing the regulatory framework for Nanotechnology
7. The Indian patents Act needs to define a clear definition and classification of nano particles and nanotechnology

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