

Science Communicators call for setting up a Science Helpline

Bhopal, 23 August 2019: Like the child helpline and the women helpline, there is a need for setting up a science helpline in the country. The clarion call was made during a panel discussion at the National Science Communication Orientation Programme today.

The 2-day event that was organized jointly by CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR) and CSIR-Advanced Materials and Processes Research Institute (AMPRI) concluded at Bhopal with a panel discussion that had eminent experts including Dr. Manoj Kumar Patayria, Dr. Avanish K Shrivastava, Prof. V.B. Kamble, Prof. K.G. Suresh, Dr. B.K. Tyagi, Shri. Rajesh Badal, Dr. Anil Saumitra and Dr. Puneet Misra.

The call for the science helpline was suggested following the discussions on the several superstitions that are prevalent in the society even to this day. The experts reflected that there is no authentic and easy to access source of information that the lay public can rely on for obtaining answers to the questions related to science. It was felt that superstitions or superstitious beliefs could be allayed with scientific and rational explanations through such a helpline.

The experts were also of the view that technology popularization is the need of the hour. It emerged that science communicators have an important role to play in technology outreach. Discussing the science communication efforts in India, the panellists were of the view that the impact assessment studies on science communication were negligible or absent in India.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Avanish K. Shrivastava, Director, CSIR-AMPRI said that there should be a point wise agenda programme that should focus on immediate science communication needs in the country. Dr. Manoj Kumar Patayria, Director, CSIR-NISCAIR said that the programme has been successful in orienting and sensitising scientists and researchers on the need for science communication.