Newsletter on Eco-labelling and Eco-friendly Products

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Environmental Information System
INDIA
ENVIS CENTRE

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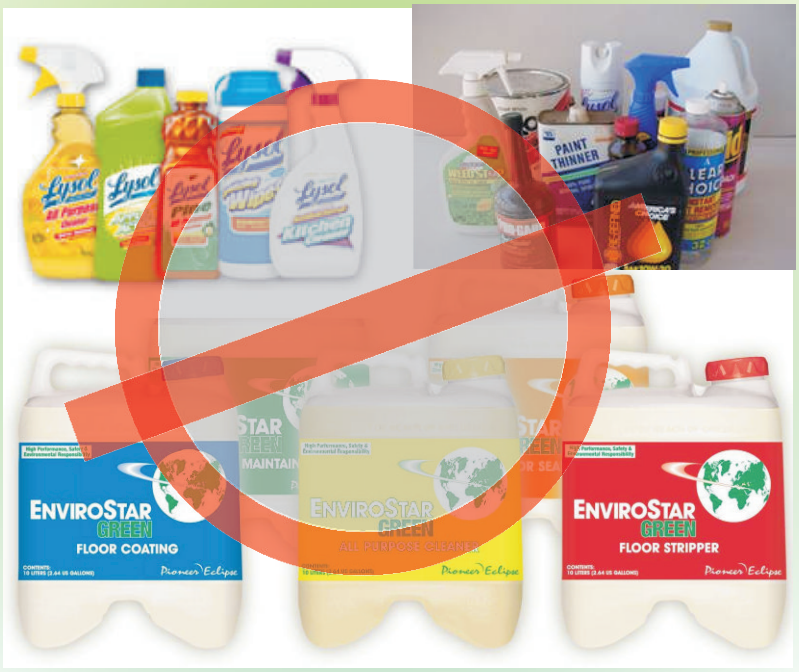

Hazardous Chemicals - (i)

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Eco-labelling and Eco-friendly Products

Foreword

Environmental pollution knows no bounds. Toxic chemicals and substances like persistent organic pollutants travel long distances far from the source of generation, use and emission. Application of pesticides bring about pollution imperceptibly to water and air and to eatables and beverages. The discharge of industrial effluent results in the deposit of heavy metals like Mercury, Lead, Cadmium in the water channels with every possibility of their getting an access to a deeper level affecting the first level acquifer. These therefore pose a very serious hazard to the environment of which human beings are but a part.

A number of organizations on a global scale are now involved in trying to regulate the chemical usage and reduce the hazardous content so that the life on this earth, be it in the form of human, animal or plant or even in the forms of minutest living organisms sustain themselves.

As a part of this exercise, CERC-ENVIS has worked out two issues of the quarterly newsletter for the benefit of general public with specific reference to the topics connected with CERC-ENVIS areas.

Household chemicals affect everyone at home. Regulation on chemicals outlines the European Union's legal concern on chemical use at work and the environment. Listing of some hazardous chemicals given by Environment Protection Agency (EPA) also gives useful information. In short, within the space available, some useful information is packed in this issue to cover the information about the risks involved in dealing with chemicals from the angle of the consumers.

Some more information on the subject will appear in the next issue.

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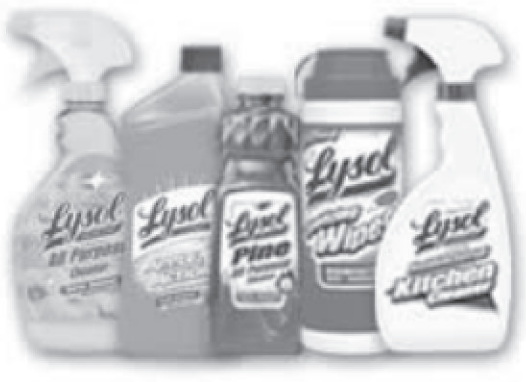
HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS AND THEIR SUBSTITUTION

A number of household products being used at home contain chemicals that are hazardous to health and environment. While some of such products have never been mentioned as hazardous chemicals, the fact remains that they are hazardous. As a part of international campaign, these chemicals are getting substituted to non-toxic ones. Some of such household products and their substitutes are given in this article.



Toxic chemicals in the home can be eliminated simply by making thoughtful choices in the supermarket after educating oneself about where the hazards are in common consumer products. How can you determine what toxics you have in your home? Take this "toxics tour."

In the Kitchen

All-purpose cleaner, ammonia-based cleaners, bleach, brass or other metal polishes, dishwater detergent, disinfectant, drain cleaner, floor wax or polish, glass cleaner, dishwashing detergent, oven cleaner, and scouring powder contain dangerous chemicals. Some examples are:

sodium hypochlorite (in chlorine bleach): if mixed with ammonia, releases toxic chloramine gas. Short-term exposure may cause mild asthmatic symptoms or more serious respiratory problems;

petroleum distillates (in metal polishes): short-term exposure can cause temporary eye clouding; longer exposure can damage the nervous system, skin, kidneys, and eyes;

ammonia (in glass cleaner): eye irritant, can cause headaches and lung irritation;

phenol and cresol (in disinfectants): corrosive; can cause diarrhea, fainting, dizziness, and kidney and liver damage;

nitrobenzene (in furniture and floor polishes): can cause skin discoloration, shallow breathing, vomiting, and death; associated with cancer and birth defects;

formaldehyde (a preservative in many products): suspected human carcinogen; strong irritant to eyes, throat, skin, and lungs.

In the Utility Closet

A number of products are likely to contain toxic ingredients: carpet cleaner, room deodorizer, laundry softener, laundry detergent, anti-cling sheets, mold and mildew cleaner, mothballs, and spot remover all usually contain irritant or toxic substances. Examples:

perchloroethylene or 1-1-1 trichloroethane solvents (in spot removers and carpet cleaners): can cause liver and kidney damage if ingested; perchloroethylene is an animal carcinogen and suspected human carcinogen;

naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene (in mothballs): naphthalene is a suspected human carcinogen that may damage eyes, blood, liver, kidneys, skin, and the central nervous system; paradichlorobenzene can harm the central nervous system, liver, and kidneys;

hydrochloric acid or sodium acid sulfate in toilet bowl cleaner; either can burn the skin or cause vomiting diarrhea and stomach burns if swallowed; also can cause blindness if inadvertently splashed in the eyes;

residues from fabric softeners, as well as the fragrances commonly used in them, can be irritating to susceptible people;

possible ingredients of spray starch (aside from the starch) include formaldehyde, phenol, and pentachlorophenol; in addition, any aerosolized particle, including cornstarch, may irritate the lungs.

In the Living Room and Bedroom

Even the furnishings of the typical American home

can be harmful. Fabrics that are labeled "wrinkle-resistant" are usually treated with a formaldehyde resin. These include no-iron sheets and bedding, curtains, sleep wear -- any woven fabric, but especially polyester/cotton blends, marketed as "permanent press" or "easy care." More modern furniture is made of pressed wood products emits formaldehyde and other chemicals. Carpeting is usually made of synthetic fibers that have been treated with pesticides and fungicide. Many office carpets emit a chemical called 4-phenylcyclohexene, an inadvertent additive to the latex backing used in more commercial and home carpets, which is thought to be one of the chemicals responsible for "sick" office buildings.

In the Bath

Numerous cosmetics and personal hygiene products contain hazardous substances. Examples:

cresol, formaldehyde, glycols, nitrates/nitrosamines and sulfur compounds in shampoos

butane propellants in hair spray (replacing carcinogenic methylene chloride), as well as formaldehyde resins;

aerosol propellants, ammonia, formaldehyde, triclosan, aluminum chlorhydrate in antiperspirants and deodorants' glycols, phenol, fragrance, and colors in lotions, creams, and moisturizers.

Safe Substitutes in the Kitchen and Bath

One shelf of simple and relatively safe ingredients can be used to perform most home cleaning chores. All that's needed is a knowledge of how they work and how different ingredients should be combined to get the cleaning power needed for a specific job.

Baking Soda is sodium bicarbonate. It has a number of useful properties. It can neutralize acid, scrub shiny materials without scratching, deodorize, and extinguish grease fires. It can be used as a deodorizer in the refrigerator, on smelly carpets, on upholstery and on vinyl. It can help deodorize drains. It can clean and polish aluminum, chrome, jewelry, plastic, porcelain, silver, stainless steel, and tin. It also softens fabrics and removes certain stains. Baking soda can soften hard water and makes a relaxing bath time soak; it can be used as an underarm deodorant and as a toothpaste, too.

Borax is a naturally occurring mineral, soluble in water. It can deodorize, inhibit the growth of mildew and mold, boost the cleaning power of soap or detergent, remove stains, and can be used with attractants such as sugar to kill cockroaches.

Cornstarch, derived from corn, can be used to clean windows, polish furniture, shampoo carpets and rugs, and starch clothes.

Isopropyl Alcohol is an excellent disinfectant.

Lemon Juice, which contains citric acid, is a deodorant and can be used to clean glass and remove stains from aluminum, clothes, and porcelain. It is a mild lightener or bleach if used with sunlight.

Mineral Oil, derived from seeds, is an ingredient in several furniture polish and floor wax recipes.

Soap (NOT detergent) is made in several ways. Castle soap can be used as a shampoo or as a body soap. Olive-oil based soap is gentlest to the skin. An all-purpose liquid soap can be made by simple dissolving the old ends of bar soap (or grated slivers of bar soap) in warm water.

Steel Wool is an abrasive strong enough to remove rust and stubborn food residues and to scour barbeque grills.

TSP is trisodium phosphate, a mixture of soda ash and phosphoric acid. TSP is toxic if swallowed, but it can be used on many jobs, such as cleaning drains or removing old paint, that would normally require much more caustic and poisonous chemicals, and it does not create any fumes.

Vinegar is made from soured applied juice, grain, or wine. It contains about 5 percent acetic acid, which makes it a mild acid. Vinegar can dissolve mineral deposits, grease, remove traces of soap, remove mildew or wax buildup, polish some metals, and deodorize. Vinegar can clean brick or stone, and is an ingredient in some natural carpet cleaning recipes. Use vinegar to clean out the metallic taste in coffeepots and to shine windows without streaking. Vinegar is normally used in a solution with water, but it can be used straight.

Washing Soda or SAL Soda is a sodium carbonate decahydrate, a mineral. It can cut stubborn grease on grills, broiler pans, and ovens. It can be used with soda instead of laundry detergent, and it softens hard water.

These items are available from drug and chemical-supply stores.

For common household tasks, try these nontoxic strategies using the above ingredients:

Freshen air by opening windows and doors for a short period; distribute partially filled dishes of vinegar around the kitchen to combat unpleasant cooking odors; boil cinnamon and cloves in a pan of water to scent the air; sprinkle 1/2 cup borax in the bottom of garbage pails or diaper pails to inhibit mold and bacteria growth that can cause odors; rub vinegar on hands before and after slicing onions to remove the smell; use bowls of potpourri to give inside air a pleasant scent.

All-purpose cleaner can be made from a vinegar-and-salt mixture or from 4 tablespoons baking soda dissolved in 1 quart warm water.

Disinfectant means anything that will reduce the number of harmful bacteria on a surface. Practically no surface treatment will completely eliminate bacteria. Try regular cleaning with soap and hot water. Or mix 1/2 cup borax into 1 gallon of hot water to disinfect and deodorize. Isopropyl alcohol is an excellent disinfectant, but use gloves and keep it away from children.

Drain cleaner. Try a plunger first, though not after using any commercial drain opener. To open clogs, pour 1/2 cup baking soda down drain, add 1/2 cup white vinegar, and cover the drain. The resulting chemical reaction can break fatty acids down into the soap and glycerine, allowing the clog to wash down the drain. Again, do not use this method after trying a commercial drain opener--the vinegar can react with the drain opener to create dangerous fumes.

Floor cleaner and polish can be as simple as a few drops of vinegar in the cleaning water to remove soap traces. For vinyl or linoleum, add a capful of baby oil to the water to preserve and polish. For wood floors, apply a thin coat of 1:1 oil and vinegar and rub in well. For painted wooden floors, mix 1 teaspoon washing soda into 1 gallon hot water. For brick and stone tiles, use 1 cup white vinegar in 1 gallon water and rinse with clear water.

Metal cleaners and **polishes** are different for each metal -- just as in commercial cleaners. Clean aluminum with a solution of cream of tartar and water. Brass may be polished with a soft cloth dipped in lemon-and baking-soda solution, or vinegar- and-salt solution. Polish chrome with baby oil, vinegar, or aluminum foil shiny slide out. Clean tarnished copper by boiling the article in a pot of water with 1 tablespoon salt and 1 cup white vinegar, or try differing mixtures of salt, vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice, and cream am of tartar. Clean gold with toothpaste, pewter with a paste of salt, vinegar, and flour. Silver can be polished by boiling it in a pan lined with aluminum foil and filled with water to which a teaspoon each of baking soda and salt have been added. Stainless steel can be cleaned with undiluted white vinegar.

Oven cleaner. Sprinkle baking soda on moist surface and scrub with steel wool. Or use Arm & Hammer Oven Cleaner, declared nontoxic by Consumers Union.

Scouring powder can be made from baking soda or dry table salt. Or try Bon-Ami Cleaning Powder or Bon-Ami Polishing Cleaner.

Toilet bowl cleaner can be made from straight bleach (do NOT mix with any other substance except water), baking soda and vinegar, or borax and lemon juice.

Tub and tile cleaner can be as easy as rubbing in baking soda with a damp sponge and rinsing, or wiping with vinegar first and following with baking soda as a scouring powder.

Window and **glass cleaner** is easy with these tips: to avoid streaks, don't wash windows when the sun is shining. Use a vinegar-and-water solution, cornstarch-vinegar-and-water solution, or lemon-juice-and-water. Wipe with newspaper unless you are sensitive to the inks in newsprint. As the acceptance and adoption of the ISO 14000 series of standards by industry and governments continues to increase around the world, it may prove advantageous for ecolabelling programs to demonstrate consistency with the guiding principles contained in the relevant ISO environmental labelling standards (refer to ***Boxes 3 and 4***). Such consistency could provide greater perceived legitimacy and soundness for ecolabelling programs in place and under development. Nevertheless, Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) officials have initiated efforts to devise and implement a "GEN Guiding Principles" document pertinent to the

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HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN CONSUMER PRODUCTS

The hazards connected with chemicals and the risks contained therein require to be fully understood by the people working on the same. This short article by Canadian occupational safety gives quite some useful information on the subject.

People are often not aware of the presence of hazardous chemicals in consumer products. In general, people rely on the government and the producers for the safety of the products they buy. They assume that the products they find in the shop do not contain hazardous substances. Unfortunately, the restrictions on the use of toxic substances in consumer products only apply to a relative small number of chemical substances. As a result consumers are continuously exposed to toxic chemicals in their everyday life without being aware of this.

Together with partners and other environmental organizations, WECF strives to raise awareness among consumers as well as influencing policy-makers at the national and international level. WECF conducts research, provides information about chemicals and organizes workshops and trainings for a diversity of people and groups.

WECF fought and lobbied hard for a new EU chemicals legislation, called REACH. REACH entered into force in June 2007 and gives consumers the right to find out about hazardous chemicals in everyday consumer products.

Internationally WECF co-operates with other NGO's to implement and strengthen SAICM, Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, and the extension of the Rotterdam Convention with asbestos.

Asbestos continues to be widely used in Eastern Europe and citizens are not aware of the great health problems linked to this substance. The Nesting project is another example of how WECF provides consumers with information on hazardous chemicals in baby products.

This website does not only inform future parents about certain products, materials and ingredients that have turned out to be a health risk and might even be dangerous for children, but also gives information on alternates and product labeling to make sure that babies grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

WECF does not only focus on toxic chemicals in consumer products. In Armenia, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine old pesticide stockpiles pose a serious threat to the environment and public health. Partner organizations try to attract attention to these problems and cooperate with the local and national authorities to isolate or remove the stockpiles and reduce the threat to humans, animals and the environment.

NOTE : WECF stands for women in European for Common Future

EU : stands for European union

Ref: http://www.wecf.eu/english/issues/chemicals.php

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Environment fact sheet:

REACH — a new chemicals policy for the EU

REACH is a new European Commission Regulation on chemicals and their safe use. It deals with the Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemical Substances (REACH in short). The new regulation entered into force in all EU countries w.e.f. 1st June 2007.

A FACT-SHEET on the Environmental Policy matters is outlined in the following brief:

Modern society needs chemicals, and the EU chemicals industry is an important sector for the EU's economy. But the production and wide-spread use of substances may pose risks to human health and the environment.

The number of incidents of allergies, asthma, certain types of cancer, and reproductive disorders in Europe is increasing. It is suspected that chemicals are contributing to this trend, but we need more information.

We know very little about our chemicals: for 99 % we don't have enough information about effects, uses and how they need to be handled to be safe.

The proposed new EU chemicals policy, REACH, will require producers and importers of chemicals to register them along with the information needed to use them safely.

REACH will provide a high level of protection of human health and the environment. At the same time, it will enhance the competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry by fostering innovation and ensuring high safety standards for its products.

Fact 1: We need chemicals and a strong industry

Today, chemicals are the basis of most of our products. They can make them soft or firm, washable or degradable, transparent or colourful, whatever the specific need. Since 1930, global production of chemicals has risen from 1 million tonnes to over 400 million tonnes annually.

The chemicals industry is important to the EU economy. The chemicals sector is the third-largest manufacturing industry in the EU, encompassing 31 000 companies that employ 1.9 million people. Internationally, the EU is the leading chemicals-producing area. In 2004, it accounted for 33 % (EUR 580 billion) of global sales (EUR 1 736 billion) (1).

Fact 2: Chemicals can pose risks, but information is sketchy

Chemicals can have hazardous properties. They can be irritant, toxic and corrosive; and they can cause cancer, mutations and reproductive problems. The problem is that we know very little about the vast majority of the chemicals we use.

In the EU, more than 100 106 chemicals were reported to be on the market in 1981, which was the first and only time that the chemicals used in the EU were listed.

For 99 % of chemicals (by volume), information on properties, uses and risks is sketchy. Chemicals produced in high volumes (above 1 000 tonnes per year) have been examined more closely. Still, there are no data for about 21 % of those, and another 65 % come with insufficient data (2).

Information about high-volume chemicals

Potential negative effects of chemicals

The number of incidents of allergies, asthma, certain types of cancer, and reproductive disorders, including low sperm counts, are on the increase in Europe. Chemicals may be one of the causes. Some chemicals have endocrine- disrupting properties, which means they mimic or inhibit hormones. In some animals, such as frogs, birds, fish and molluscs, they have produced infertility and gender changes.

In 2004, the environmental campaign group WWF tested the blood of government ministers from 13 EU Member States for chemicals that can negatively affect human health and wildlife. WWF found on average 37 out of the 103 tested substances in the ministers' blood (3).

Some chemicals can travel long distances. High levels of toxic chemicals have been found in Inuit and polar bears. Chemicals can also accumulate in mothers' milk.

Two studies commissioned by the European trade unions' association ETUC show that a third of all recognised occupational diseases in Europe are related to exposure to chemicals. The benefits of REACH for occupational skin and respirator diseases could range from EUR 21 to 160 billion in the next 30 years. (4).

According to the EU Agency for Safety and Health at Work, occupational skin diseases alone result in the loss of 3 million working days each year, valued at EUR 600 million

(1) 'Fact and figures The European chemical industry in a worldwide perspective', January 2005, CEFIC (European Chemical Industry Council) (http://www.cefic.org/factsandfigures/).

(2) 'Public availability of data on EU high production volume chemicals', European Chemicals Bureau, Joint Research Centre, European Commission (http://ecb.jrc.it/Data-Availability- Documents /datavail.doc).

(3) 'Bad blood? A Survey of chemicals in the blood of European ministers', WWF, October 2004 (http://www.worldwildlife.org/toxics/pubs/badblood.pdf).

(4) 'The impact of REACH on occupational health', School of Health and Related Research (University of Sheffield, UK), September 2005 and 'Skin sensitisers', Facts, Issue 40, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, June 2003.

(5) http://agency.osha.eu.int/publications/factsheets/40/en/index.htm

Fact 3: Current legislation does not provide the necessary level of protection

Current EU legislation on chemicals makes a distinction between:

chemicals put on the market **after** 1981, so-called 'new substances' (around 4 000 until now); and chemicals put on the market **before** 1981, so-called 'existing substances' (100 106 substances).

To avoid risks, new substances must be tested and notified to the authorities before they can be marketed.

With regard to the 100 106 existing substances, public authorities are in charge of identifying the hazardous among them, prioritising those used in highest volumes for risk assessment and, where needed, developing risk management measures. This is a complex procedure that depends on information from industry. Since 1993, the European Commission and Member States have prioritised 141 high-volume chemicals, but the procedure has so far been finalised for only 39 substances.

This system is unable to produce the level of protection that is needed. Most chemicals continue to be used without safety information. In addition, the system discourages the introduction of new and possibly safer chemicals, as it is easier to continue to use existing substances than to introduce new ones which have to be tested and notified.

EU citizens are concerned, in a recent survey, the impact of chemicals used in everyday products came fifth in a list of 15 environmental issues of concern. When asked about which issue they feel they lack information, citizens cited chemicals first (6).

Fact 4: We need REACH to be able to use chemicals safely

On 29 October 2003, the European Commission presented a proposal for a new EU regulatory system for chemicals: REACH, which stands for Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals. REACH places responsibility for the safety of chemicals on manufacturers and seeks to produce the information on chemicals that has been lacking so far.

Registration: Under REACH, each producer and importer of chemicals in volumes of 1 tonne or more

per year and per producer/importer around 30 000 substances will have to register them with a new EU Chemicals Agency, submitting information on properties, uses and safe ways of handling them. They can use existing data and share data. The producers and importers will also have to pass the safety information on to 'downstream users' manufacturers that use these chemicals in their production processes so that they know how to use the substances without creating risks for their workers, the end consumers and the environment. The Agency will make non-confidential information available to the public.

Evaluation: Through evaluation, public authorities will look in more detail at registration dossiers and at substances of concern. They can request more information if necessary. At this stage, they will also scrutinise all proposals for animal testing to limit it to the absolute minimum. REACH makes datasharing on animal test results compulsory and prescribes the use of alternative methods wherever possible.

Authorisation: Use-specific authorisation will be required for chemicals that cause cancer, mutations or problems with reproduction, or that accumulate in our bodies and the environment. Authorisation will be granted only to

What will it bring?

A high level of protection from the risks that chemicals may pose to human health and the environment, through the generation and dissemination of information on chemicals, in particular safety information.

A sustainable and competitive EU chemicals industry that can innovate more easily and whose products meet high safety standards. This will increase consumer confidence, reduce liability risks and improve workers' health. Downstream users will enjoy much of the same benefits and know more about the chemicals they use.

Compliance with the global commitment agreed at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 'to achieve, by 2020, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to a minimisation of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment'.

(6) 'The attitudes of European citizens toward the environment', Special Eurobarometer 217 / Wave 62.1, conducted in November 2004, published in April 2005 (http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/barometer/index.htm).

Fact 5: REACH is the result of a comprehensive consultation process

REACH is the result of a comprehensive drafting and consultation process run jointly by the Commission's Environment and Enterprise Directorates-General.

When EU environment ministers came together in 1998 on the UK town of Chester, they agreed to ask the European Commission to review the current policy on chemicals. The result was a decision to reform it. The development of REACH included a White Paper in February 2001 and thousands of meetings with stakeholders (industry, foreign trade partners and retail, consumers', environmental and animal welfare groups). In 2003, an Internet-based consultation on a first draft of the proposal was conducted, which attracted over 6 000 comments. Based on these comments, the proposal was streamlined and expected costs were cut by 80 %.

Fact 6: The costs under REACH are manageable

The Commission has conducted an extended impact assessment on REACH. Macroeconomic effects in terms of GDP are expected to be limited, and REACH is expected to yield business benefits including improvements in innovation, competitiveness and workers' safety, as well as significant health cost savings. The costs of registration, including the necessary testing, are estimated at EUR 2.3 billion over the 11 years that it will take to register all the substances covered by REACH. The total costs, including those to downstream users, are estimated at EUR 2.8 billion to EUR 5.2 billion, depending on the extent to which registration costs will increase prices of chemicals and on the costs of substituting chemicals that will be withdrawn (an estimated 12 %).

If REACH succeeds in reducing chemical-related diseases by only 10 %, the health benefits are estimated at EUR 50 billion over 30 years.

SEMINAR ON "SOAPS AND DETERGENTS - ARE THEY ECO-FRIENDLY?"

A Seminar was organized on "Soaps and Detergents - Are they Eco-friendly?" on 29 February 2008 at Hotel Kohinoor Continental, Mumbai by Chemical Department, BIS. The Seminar was inaugurated by Shri P.K. Shilotri, SC F & Head, Pune Branch Office, BIS. The Seminar was attended by over 35 delegates from small, medium, large and multinational companies, various consumer organizations, scientific and technical organizations.

Dr. A.N. Bhat of Consumer Guidance Society of India (CGSI) in his keynote address narrated the sequence of events that saw the evolution of ECO-Criteria parameters and Eco-labelling in the country. He simultaneously projected his views on the reasons for the lukewarm response to the scheme and stressed the need for innovative measures to make the scheme popular amongst the manufacturers. Dr. Bhat also pointed out inconsistencies in the parameters as defined for soaps and detergents meant for Eco-labelling in comparison with the normal soaps and detergents.

In his inaugural address, Shri P.K. Shilotri explained the length and severity of recent ecological crisis and the importance of Eco-Mark Scheme to protect the environment. He stated that with the advancement of science and technology, exploiting natural resources, enormous growth of industries through out the world, lot of wastes and hazardous materials are being generated. These pollute our surrounding environment and endanger our life and life of our future generations. He appreciated the efforts of the Chemical Department of Bureau of Indian Standards, New Delhi in conducting the seminar and appealed the manufacturers of Soaps and Detergents to obtain Eco-Mark license for their products to improve the quality of the environment.

The Inaugural Session was followed by Technical Session and chaired by Dr. A.N. Bhat. Talks were delivered on different subjects in the Technical Session as follows :

Eco-friendly Soaps and Detergents
- Market Relevance
Shri H. Tripathi, Consumer Education & Research Centre, Ahmedabad

Overview of National Standards Vis-à-vis ECO Criteria , Sc, E (Chemical)
Shri S.N. Chatterjee, BIS, New Delhi

Eco-friendly Raw Materials for Soaps
Dr. D.S. Sankholkar
Hindustan Lever Ltd, Mumbai

Evaluation of Eco-friendliness of Soaps and Detergents
Dr. R.B. Raizada, Industrial Toxicological Research Centre, Lucknow

Soaps and Detergents Eco-friendly Packaging
Prof. N.C. Saha
Indian Institute of Packaging, Mumbai

The Technical Session was followed by a lively Panel Discussion which was chaired by Shri P.K. Shilotri. The Panel Discussion helped in integrating the views of the speakers and thereby evolve an action plan for making the Eco-Mark Scheme on Soaps and Detergents popular and effective.

Some of the important recommendations that emerged out of the Seminar are as follows :

1. Since National Standards on Soaps and Detergents have been evolved by a group of National experts on consensus principle, and reflect the balance of manufacturing capability and consumer preference, leading manufacturers should volunteer for BIS Certification Marks Scheme first and later venture into obtaining the Eco-Mark license.
2. Criteria for Eco-Mark as given in the National Standards of Soaps and Detergents is to be re-visited and deliberated by Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and BIS.
3. Keeping in view Dr. Raizada's statement that non-animal based test for skin irritation and sensitization potential has been evolved and validated in Europe, Industrial Toxicology Research Centre (ITRC) may provide the details to the National Committee for its consideration.
4. Testing charges for skin irritation and skin sensitization may be reduced. In case the tests mentioned above are acceptable, the testing charges are likely to be lower.
5. National Committee may review IS 4955:2001 `Household laundry detergent powders (fourth revision)' to identify alternative builders in place of phosphates (Though a requirement for phosphates is specified in the standard, but ECO-Criteria disallows presence of phosphates).

Shri E. Devender, Head, Chemical Department, BIS, New Delhi explained the basic objectives of the Seminar. He intimated that the Seminar was organized with the objective to disseminate the information regarding ECO-Mark Scheme with special reference to Soaps & Detergents. The Seminar was also intended to facilitate interaction between the manufacturers and experts.

Vote of Thanks was given by Shri S.N. Chatterjee, Sc. E (Chemical), BIS, New Delhi.

Source : Minutes of the meeting of Soaps & Degergents Sectional Committee CHD 25 of BIS

Addressing consumer concerns about climate change

In a global survey, consumers say that a corporation's performance in addressing the problems of the environment and climate change affects not only how much they trust the company but also whether they would buy its products.

Consumers also want companies to promote the public good by providing healthier and safer products, retirement and health care benefits for its employees, and much else besides. Their expectations vary by industry and geography.

Every business should think about the role environmental issues can and should play in strategy so that they can build trust among consumers and offer products and services that address their concerns.

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