

Webinar on Environmental Contamination of DDT and phasing it out from public health programs

A Webinar was organised by CSIR-NEERI on “Environmental Contamination of DDT and phasing it out from public Health Program” on 29th Jan 2021 with an objective to engage the stakeholders, policy makers, vector control personnel and public in the project activities. Dr. A. Ramesh Kumar, Sr. Scientist welcomed the participants and briefed the activities carried out under the project “Development and Promotion of Non-POPs Alternatives to DDT”.

Dr. Jitendra Sharma, Associate Programme Management Officer at UN Environment Programme spoke about phasing out DDT as one of the priority tasks for India and focused on alternatives of DDT using IVPM. He emphasised on different conventions such as Minamata and Rotterdam Convention which are dealing with mercury and hazardous chemicals & pesticides respectively.

Dr. Roop Kumari, Technical Officer (Malaria & VBD), WHO Country office for India was the expert speaker for the webinar and she explained present situation of malaria and Kala-azar, global technical strategy to eliminate malaria, high burden high impact (HBHI) based on API (Annual Parasite Index) categorisation. In 2019, 119 districts were high burden districts but API and *pf* (*plasmodium falciparum*) has shown declining trend since last one year. Dr. R. Kumari briefed on vectors of vector borne diseases and chemicals like malathion, DDT, synthetic pyrethroids which are being used in Indoor Residual Spray (IRS), and highlighted about re-emergence of vector as soon insecticidal spraying is withdrawn. She discussed about WHO recommendation to use of DDT in IRS, LLIN, ITNs (Insecticidal Treated Nets) and in LSM (Larval Source Management). She also discussed about introduction of DDT, reduction in number of cases and development resistant. She talked about properties of DDT like persistency and accumulation in environment, thus contributing to environmental contamination. She showed data on declined production of DDT from 1956 MT in 2019-2020 to 1110 MT in 2020-2021. DDT can be used selectively and there is urgent need to develop environment friendly and find out new, affordable, cheaper and effective alternatives of DDT.

Total 219 people from Central/State vector control officials, Entomologists, Academic and research institutes registered and 122 participants attended the webinar. Dr. L. J. Kanhekar proposed vote of thanks. Participants were awarded with certificate of participation.

