International POPs Elimination Project

Fostering Active and Efficient Civil Society Participation in Preparation for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention

Publication of Awareness and Educational Material on POPs

Kheti Virasat Mission

Punjab, India
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About the International POPs Elimination Project

On May 1, 2004, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN http://www.ipen.org) began a global NGO project called the International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP) in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provided core funding for the project.

IPEP has three principal objectives:

- Encourage and enable NGOs in 40 developing and transitional countries to engage in activities that provide concrete and immediate contributions to country efforts in preparing for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention;

- Enhance the skills and knowledge of NGOs to help build their capacity as effective stakeholders in the Convention implementation process;

- Help establish regional and national NGO coordination and capacity in all regions of the world in support of longer term efforts to achieve chemical safety.

IPEP will support preparation of reports on country situation, hotspots, policy briefs, and regional activities. Three principal types of activities will be supported by IPEP: participation in the National Implementation Plan, training and awareness workshops, and public information and awareness campaigns.

For more information, please see http://www.ipen.org

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the institutions providing management and/or financial support.

 This report is available in the following languages: English

Publication of Awareness and Educational material on POPs

BACKGROUND

Punjab is one of the highest pesticides-consuming States in India. It was once the highest users of POPs as well. Recent studies on blood samples from the region have shown high contents of POPs and other pesticides.

The farmers burn paddy and wheat straw every six months after the harvest. This practice produces large amounts of deadly dioxin and furans. According to an estimate, over 60% of the farmers are adopting this practice. This makes the region one of the highest POPs producing regions of India.

Punjab has the highest percentage of cultivable land in the country i.e. 87% with the highest cropping density (188%) and consumes highest amount of pesticides per hectare (923 gm/ hectare), which is four times higher than the India's national average.

Justification

This high amount of pesticide use is posing severe environmental health threats to the people and ecological equilibrium of Punjab. To save the future generations of Punjab, there is a need to initiate people's action today, since tomorrow may be too late.

With this objective KHETI VIRASAT MISSION (KVM) with support under IPEP undertook mass education and awareness programme to build a participatory community movement aimed at eliminating POPs and seeking a replacement of these deadly pesticides.

To take up this awareness campaign at the grassroots, KVM proposed to publish awareness, education and information material in Punjabi and Hindi. Since there was no awareness material available on POPs in the local language (Punjabi) it was felt necessary to have information available in local language in order to take the message far and wide among the rural population most at risk form its use.

Activities Overview

The following material has been produced and translated into the local language:
- Fact-sheets on harmful impacts of POPs and pesticides on the environment, human and livestock. (In English & Punjabi)
- Booklets on biological and eco-friendly alternatives to pesticides and environmentally sustainable agriculture practices (16 pages in Punjabi)
- Posters (Set of 2; in Punjabi and English)
- Leaflets (Set of 2; in Punjabi)
- Banners (Set of 2; in Punjabi)
- Badges (Set of 2; in Punjabi and English)

- Press - Kit for media (in Punjabi, Hindi and English)

KVM published this material for distribution among the framers and other stakeholders.

These publications carry information on POPs with special reference to the local situation in Punjab. It helps people relate to the issue better and makes campaign more effective.

Besides distributing the material at the People's Dialogues organized at several locations, farmers in large numbers have been approaching KVM to collect the publications.

Response

- The material has helped in creating awareness during the meetings and peoples' dialogue. The participants mainly farmers, youth activists, academicians, health professionals, agriculture experts, local/ village governing council members and women have shown great interest in the information.

- Most of the participants of awareness meetings and peoples' dialogue who want to know more about POPs and environmental health impacts of pesticides and offered to join movement against POPs – Pesticides as volunteers, had taken very keen interest in the literature.

- The Central Council of Punjabi Writers, *Kendriya Punjabi Lekhak Sabha* has not only expressed solidarity but also offered literary and creative contribution to develop more creative literature on POPs and Pesticides.

- A special meeting was held with the creative artists to draw an action plan and to identify issues for literary writings on impacts of POPs and Pesticides.

- These publications have also sensitized the medical professionals and academicians.