

CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

(Opp. Anna Centenary Library,
Next to Kotturpuram Police Station, Kotturpuram)
Room No.4, 1st Floor, ISTE Professional Centre,
Anna University Staff Quarters Campus,
Gandhi Mandapam Road, Chennai-600 025
Phone: 044-24420579, 43066848

N.S.VENKATARAMAN
SECRETARY

Dear Sir,

BARC SCIENTISTS SPEAK ON KODANKULAM

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING AT CHENNAI

Chemical Industries Association, an apex body representing the cross section of chemical industries organized an interactive meeting on Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant issues at Chennai.

DATE: - 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2011

VENUE: BHARATHIYA VIDHYA BHAVAN, MYLAPORE, CHENNAI

The proceedings of the meeting are given below for your study.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING AT CHENNAI ON KODANKULAM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT ISSUES

The meeting was addressed by the following senior nuclear scientists, bureaucrat and chemical engineer.

Mr. G.R. Srinivasan - former Director-Projects, Nuclear power Corporation of India and former Vice chairman of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)

Mr. B.S. Raghavan IAS (Retd.) - former Chief Secretary, Government of Tripura

Prof. Dr. V.Venugopal ? former Director, Radiochemistry & Isotope Group, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) Mumbai

Mr. P.K.N.Panicker ? former President, Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers & President, Chemical Industries Association.

The meeting was attended by large number of people, including scientists from CSIR lab, college professors, engineers serving in India and abroad, member of legislative assembly and political leaders, college students, social activists and others.

After the conclusion of the speech with power point presentation by the eminent speakers, there was a question and answer session when the learned speakers explained the details.

The senior scientists who have served in Atomic Energy Commission for over 40 years each and have widespread international exposure in nuclear science and technology strongly said that the Koodankulam power plant represents the best design, operational and safety standards and there is absolutely no ground for the type of fear and anxiety expressed by the local people and some political activists. They explained as to how the design and safety standards are evolved, continuously scrutinized and updated by highly dedicated scientists and technologists in Atomic Energy Commission, who are the pride of India and whose talent and knowledge level are well recognized internationally.

The scientists also explained about the recent accident in Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan and explained the safety measures that have been incorporated in Koodankulam power plant, that would ensure that Fukushima type of accident would not take place in Koodankulam, even in the unlikely and unfortunate event of earthquake and tsunami occurring in Koodankulam.

The senior scientists also pointed out that 20 nuclear reactors are presently operating in India with excellent safety record and there have been no significant accident at all in the last several decades. Learning from all that has happened all over the world and the Indian Scientists being by nature very conservative, have provided multiple tier safety arrangement in the plant and an emergency situation will come into picture only if all layers of safety systems fail one after the other, an eventuality almost impossible.

Finally, the scientists said that the element of safety risk in Koodankulam is only as much as or even less than the safety risk involved in other normal activities such as air travel, road traffic etc. This is because the Koodankulam plant is provided with a passive cooling system for 72 hours during an emergency.

By way of conclusion, the scientists said that it is not possible to explain the technicalities in a detailed manner to the common man and political personalities, since they involve in depth engineering and technological factors. They appealed to the people to have faith in the Indian scientists and technologists serving in Atomic Energy Commission and other specialized agencies who are as much concerned about the safety and well being of the people as anyone else. They also offered to go and speak to anyone at any level to explain the details if invited. They regretted that they are not being called to explain by those who agitate and have unnecessary fears.

The safety drills and other awareness steps undertaken recently and which seems to have frightened the local people, were only intended to be an awareness programme, so that the public will be in the know of what to do and how to act in case of an emergency. The fear, according to the scientists, is unwarranted and uncalled for.

The senior bureaucrat pointed out that in the case of Koodankulam power plant there is public relations disaster? and the government have failed to communicate with the people in effective manner. Though the agitating people may not be technologically well informed, however, they will understand if the scientists and the technologists would speak to them in communicable language?. He also pointed out that there is difference of opinion even amongst the scientists and technologists and such differences expressed in open forum are contributing to creation of confusion amongst people. The scientists have to put their heads together and take a united stand.

The senior chemical engineer pointed out several instances relating to safety issues in industries and stressed how the design features of the plant can largely take care of the safety risks.

Finally, during the interactive session, the consensus view that emerged was that there is a communication gap between the government and the people and the scientists and technologists involved in designing and implementing the Koodankulam project should take a leading role in allaying the fears of the people, instead of leaving it to the politicians and bureaucrats.

Thanks and regards

**N.S.Venkataraman,
Secretary,
Chemical Industries Association
Director,
Nandini Consultancy Centre**