

***Government of West Bengal***  
***Department of Biotechnology***  
**Statement of Activities**

**Overall performance during 2008-2009**

***National Institute of Bio-Medical Genomics:***

The Government of India has taken the decision to set up “National Institute of Bio-Medical Genomics” (NIBMG), an autonomous institution under the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India (DBT) at Kalyani. The Government of India notification has been published to that effect. The Health and Family Welfare Department, the Biotechnology Department and Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata will work together for this Institute. Principal Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of West Bengal has been nominated the Nodal Officer. A sum of Rs.42.00 lakhs has been sanctioned by Government of India for this Institute (vide their Letter No.BT / MB / 01 / ICGP / 2008 dated 20.03.2009). The basic infrastructural works would start soon.

***BIOTECH PARK, KHARAGPUR:***

About 100 acres of land has been acquired near Kharagpur in the district of West Medinipur for setting up a Biotech Park in association with Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. The Biotechnology Department is now looking for a private partner to develop this park on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. A sum of Rs.10.00 crores (5.00 crores + 5.00 crores) has been sanctioned for the acquisition of land. This year Rs.5.00 crores has been released for payment of cost of acquisition of land.

***PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENT:***

In the financial year 2008-2009, 5 (five) new schemes were vetted by the Departmental Technical Committee. All the said schemes would continue for two years. The grant-in-aid amounting to Rs.29, 38,750.00 (Rupees twenty nine lakhs thirty eight thousand seven hundred fifty) only has duly been disbursed to carry out the said schemes. In the last financial year, i.e., 2007-2008, 8 (eight) schemes were granted financial aid. Except two, all the schemes are being implemented successfully. The said schemes (2007-2008) would be completed likely in March, 2010.

A few schemes could not be provided with the second installment as the researchers could not submit the utilization certificate in due time.

In order to combat the burgeoning population and consequent destruction of the ecological balance in the environment, the Biotechnology Department, Government of West Bengal has formulated a composite scheme in a scientific way of fostering rural development. These are totally dedicated to the poorest of the poor, for example, in the fields of *i*) Tissue Culture, *ii*) Cultivation and Popularization of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, *iii*) Mushroom, *iv*) Lac, *v*) Food Preservation, *vi*) Vermi-composting, *vii*) Biofertilizers, *viii*) Biopesticides and *ix*) Biofuels and the like. A keen interest has been shown by the people living on the forest-fringe of Purulia and Bankura for cultivating Lac in a scientific way as a source of alternative income.

Hence, different NGOs, organizations, universities, institutions have come forward with their different research projects to launch a major initiative for biotech-based products, processes and

technologies in order to enhance the cost-effectiveness and productivity of agriculture, modern medicine, healthcare, pollution-control, bio-diversity conservation and bio-industrial development with the mission to ensure scientific and technological empowerment of the people of this State as well as to ensure optimum utilization of the human and natural resources of West Bengal for the varied applications of biotechnology.

This Department was an official State-partner of the 6th. Global Knowledge Millennium Summit, 2009 – “Bio Nano for Sustainable Agriculture”, organized by ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industries of India) in New Delhi on 13th. & 14th. of February, 2009. Many a researcher, university teacher, and even biotechnology farmer from West Bengal attended the said summit. In the said Fair, a stall was allotted to the Government of West Bengal and it was decorated with the information about the biodiversity and investment opportunities in West Bengal.

It is a pleasure to state that the formation of “West Bengal Biotech Development Corporation Limited” has recently been approved by the Cabinet after the consent of Finance Department of this Government. It is now possible for this Department to handle the commercial and promotional aspects of Biotech Parks, different projects, schemes etc.

A Departmental Technical Committee has been constituted in order to study and to examine the overall feasibility of the various proposed schemes and projects on research and development of biotechnology that are submitted by individuals / institutions / organizations for Government grant in aid.

The West Bengal State Council of Biotechnology has been reconstituted and brought under the administrative control of this Department and its advisory field has been extended.

The Government has formulated a Biotech-policy. The followings are the salient features of this policy:

1. Human Resource Development (HRD) : Academic & Industry needs.
2. Infrastructure development and manufacturing.
3. Biotechnology Parks and bio-incubators.
4. Research & Development in Biotechnology.
  - i) Agriculture & Food biotechnology
  - ii) Bio-resources.
  - iii) Environmental biotechnology
  - iv) Industrial biotechnology
  - v) Medical biotechnology and genomics
  - vi) Bio-engineering and Nano-biotechnology
5. Bioinformatics and IT-enabled biotechnology
6. Biotechnology for societal development.
7. Promotion of Bio-fuels
8. Promotion of Industry & Trade
  - i) Fiscal incentives and concessions
  - ii) Venture Capital Fund
9. Regulatory mechanisms
  - i) Biosafety
  - ii) Bioethics
  - iii) IPR & Patent Law
10. Formation of Self-help working groups among rural women.