

COMPLETED PROJECT

ATTITUDE SCIENTISTS AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS TOWARDS GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROP

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Extended Summary

Biotechnology Experts/Scientists are trying to introduce biotech crop (Bt crop) or Genetically Modified crop (GM crop) to minimize food shortage. In spite of the benefits associated with biotechnology, it is likely to be judged by the public not simply in terms of its scientific merit but other fundamental questions pertaining to ethic, control, voluntaries, and other considerations. Some public perceived that there is risk in GM crop. Some of them have little scientific arguments, but in most cases there is a lack of enough scientific knowledge. The biological and agricultural scientists as well as University Teachers of biology or agriculture related departments might be very much conscious about the matter. Therefore, it is necessary to know the knowledge and attitude of those scientists and educationists of Bangladesh towards GM crop before introducing it in the country. For this reason, the study was conducted to determine the extent of attitude of Scientists and University Teachers of Bangladesh towards Genetically Modified (GM) crop and to determine the relationship of some selected characteristics of the Scientists and University Teachers of Bangladesh with their attitude towards GM crop. Five agricultural research organizations and eight universities of Bangladesh having biological departments were selected randomly as the study area. The Scientists and Teachers of these organizations related to biological disciplines were selected as the population of this study. A total of 300 respondents were selected randomly as the sample for the study by taking 20 scientists/educationists from each of these organizations. Data were collected by the Data Collectors from the respondents with the help of a pre-tested interview schedule containing direct questions and some scales during the period from March to May 2009.

For measuring attitude towards genetically modified crop (GM crop), initially 40 statements related to attitude towards GM crop were collected after through consultation with the relevant experts and researchers, search of internet, review of related literature and from other available sources. Then these 40 statements were carefully examined in the light of 14 criteria suggested by Edward(1957) and 25 statements were selected. The critical rating (t-value) of these 25 statements was calculated by using the formula suggested by Edward (1957)

based on pre-test data. Twelve statements having 't' values ≥ 1.75 were finally selected for the attitude towards GM crop scale. The nature of responses of the respondents to the statements were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and strongly disagree' and weights were assigned for the negative statements. Thus, the possible range of score of attitude towards GM crop of the respondents was from -24 to 24, where '-24' indicated very high unfavourable attitude towards GM crop.

Findings revealed that about two-third (63.7%) of the respondents had low favourable attitude towards GM crop compared to 6% high favourable, 12.6% neutral and 17.7% low unfavourable attitude towards GM crop, i.e. 69.7% of the respondent had favourable attitude towards GM crop. Spearman's rank correlation (Nonparametric correlation) was run to determine the relationship of the selected characteristics of the respondents with their attitude towards GM crop. Service length, service position, use of information sources and knowledge on GM crop of the respondents had significant positive relationship with their attitude towards GM crop, while age and education of the respondents had no significant relationship with their attitude towards GM crop.

