

adding to water. Alternatively, fluoride-regulated water should be disinfected before use. LR or Analar grade alum is better. There is a low cost alternative of commercial alum available at routine grain merchants. It is imperative to check the quality of this commercial alum for presence of chemical impurities. It is important for government and private bodies to arrange to provide Indian nationals the IP grade alum in bulk at reasonable cost.

Finally, the ill effects of excess fluoride in water is gradually in increasing order. The use of mass media like television, newspapers, radio, advertisement through ration card, etc. would be very helpful to conquer the fluoride devil at domestic level.

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4. Shreir, L. L., Jarman, R. A. and Burstein, G. T., *Corrosion*, Butterworth Heinemann Publishers, 1994, vol. 1, pp. 3.15-3.16.

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## NEWS

### TIFAC cell inculcates patent awareness in scientist-masses

The Patent Facilitating Cell (PFC) of the Technology Information and Forecasting Council (TIFAC) of the Department of Science & Technology extends technical and financial support for patenting inventions from universities. PFC has been providing technical and financial support to the legal protection of inventions resulting from DST-funded projects as also those from projects funded by other government agencies. PFC has filed 36 patent applications including five in foreign countries. It is also open to extending its facilities to state level institutions supported by state governments.

PFC has conducted 34 patent awareness workshops in different parts of the country sensitizing about 3200 scientists, technologists and policy makers from 80 universities, 80 R&D institutions, 105 industries and government departments. Mission agencies like DAE, ISRO, ICMR and ICAR have

joined hands with PFC in making their scientists aware of the basics and intricacies of patenting. PFC has brought out 30 issues of a monthly bulletin on IPR, which is circulated to about 10,000 readers. In its role of a watch dog, PFC has brought to the notice of the scientists, policy makers and public the patents related to turmeric, neem, par-boiled rice, tamarind, food products like dosai, quantum dots, heart pacemakers, etc.

A key feature of the *IPR Bulletin* is a listing of 'Patents for opposition', which enables the vigilant researcher or company to legally oppose the grant of those patents in India which potentially circumscribe or infringe their own legal rights. Databases on patent applications being filed in India and applications accepted by the Patent Office and open for opposition will be put on CDs and the CDs will be available to all on nominal charges.

In order to make such facilities available closer to the work sites of scientists all over the country, PFC has decided to start and support patent information centres at the state level by involving the state S&T councils and other agencies with an objective to create awareness and guide inventors regarding patenting. Five such centres have already been established in Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal. A three-day training programme arranged by PFC from 28-30 July 1998 at New Delhi, for training the officials of these centres was inaugurated by Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister (S&T) on 28 July. More such centres will be opened in this financial year.

PFC's *IPR Bulletin* is available from: Patent Facilitating Cell (PFC), Technology Information and Forecasting Council (TIFAC), Department of Science & Technology, Technology Bhavan, New Mehrauli Road, New Delhi 110 016.