ter 4 deals with the politics of the different interest groups in EU and the US. Public risk perception, industrial structure and behaviour of NGOs are different on either side of the Atlantic, leading to weakening of the pro-biotech support in EU. Excess production capacity, inferior competitiveness of European farmers, low public trust in the regulatory system, pressure by NGOs, processors and retailers decision not to use or market GE products have contributed to the opposition. The author concludes that reversal of this trend is unlikely in the near future. Though some cracks in the pro-GE policy have been seen in the US, any major reversal is ruled out.

International trade conflicts are analysed in Chapter 6. The different perceptions and the resulting regulatory framework have not only created tensions in international trade, but also a major conflict between the two largest bilateral trading partners, EU and the US. In May 2003, the US filed a complaint against EU's moratorium on GE crops in the WTO's dispute settlement. The possible future scenarios are examined. In the concluding chapter (Chapter 7), suggestions for policy reforms to avoid global confrontation and stagnation of technology are made. Policy reforms, including 'strong regulatory authorities backed by robust liability laws, market-driven product differentiation based on mandatory labelling of GE products' are suggested. Help for establishing regulatory framework in the developing countries is recommended. Labelling of GE products is mainly a European requirement to satisfy the public 'right to know' what one is eating. This however, differs from the widely accepted views of plant geneticists and the scientific community that the technique used for the development should not be the criterion for differentiation between cultivars.

The book is well written, though professional scientists may find repetition of thoughts, as is common in social sciences publications. Each chapter starts with a summary of the previous one, the main topic of discussion that is pursued in depth, and ends with the summary and the conclusions drawn. The book is recommended for all those engaged in GE research, its regulation and policy issues. Even youngsters entering the field would benefit by reading the first chapter – Introduction and summary, if not the entire book. The take-home message of the author for the technocrats engaged in R&D is 'success (or failure) of technological innovation hinges not only on what natural scientists or engineers achieve in their labs, but also on consumer perceptions, campaigns by NGOs, the political behaviour of the firms, government regulations, and the like'.

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Red List of Threatened Vascular Plant Species in India – Compiled from the 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants. C. Kameshwara Rao *et al*. (compilers). ENVIS, Botanical Survey of India, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Kolkata. 2003. 144 pp. Distributed free of cost on written request to Director, BSI Central National Herbarium, Howrah 711 103.

The impact of habitat destruction and habitat fragmentation mainly due to anthropogenic disturbance, is strongly perceived in the decline of species ranges and even extinction of some species. Globally, the natural forests are under great stress and forests are disappearing due to the tendency of man to exploit them for better-living. This has rendered a large number of biota threatened. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), rose to the occasion and focused the attention of biologists to the species of plants and animals that are under threat of extinction as early as 1963, in the form of *International IUCN Red Data Books* and provided guidelines to determine the threat status of a species. Although these guidelines were revised in 1994, the IUCN published a *Red List of Global Threatened Plants* based on pre–1994 IUCN categories and this list included 33,798 species of vascular plants under different categories of threat in different parts of the world, including the Indian region. No doubt, this publication brought considerable awareness among botanists for a relook on the status of these plants in their own region. Keeping in view the great demand for this book by Indian botanists, and also in view of extra efforts one has to put in for searching a species from a bulky document, it was useful to have a separate list of Indian Threatened Plant Species included in this massive volume.

The present compilation is a welcome contribution by the authors. This list enumerates 1255 species of vascular plants belonging to 573 genera and 140 families. The threat status of these plants according to IUCN per-1994 categories as Extinct (Ex), Endangered (E), Vulnerable (V) and Rare (R) is indicated for all plant species.

The enumeration of families of threatened plants is also according to the IUCN 1997 Red List and follows the system of classification of Cronquist (1981). For each species entry, the global threat status [Ex, E, V and R], correct name of the species with authors' name followed by a number that refers to a literature reference to the source of the threatened species, abbreviation for threat status of the species in the Indian region, its reference to the source indicated by a number, Indian distribution and again a number which is the literature reference to distribution data source are provided exactly as done in the massive global IUCN document.

Although the present book is just a compilation of the list of threatened plants of India from a massive global list, the work could have been made more useful by providing additional data on their threat status, conservation initiatives, additional distribution localities and many such useful information generated by flora writers and field botanists during recent years. Information from *Red Data Books* published by Botanical Survey of India could have also been included. Data on their reproductive biology (where known) could have thrown some light upon their rarity.

The publication of this list ends the search for an IUCN publication by the Indian botanists. Also being a handy compilation, this book helps all botanists in their fields/work. Being a partial reproduction from the global IUCN list, the book serves the same purpose for the Indian botanists as the IUCN list serves for the global community of botanists. On the whole, the book will be useful to Indian botanists, conservation biologists, teachers and students interested in conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources.

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