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Tuesday , March 13, 2007

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NEWS

Cell phone tower radiation may be killing plants and animals

Khushboo Sandhu

Chandigarh, March 12: Ever wondered where the butterflies, some insects and birds like sparrows have vanished? Well, your constantly ringing cell phones could be responsible for this.

A study conducted by three departments of Panjab University has found that cell phone towers are the dominating source of electromagnetic radiations in environment in the city and this could lead to diseases in plants and animals.

The study was conducted by Centre for Environment and Vocational Studies, Department of Botany and Department of Zoology from December 2005 to September 2006. Dr V P Sharma, Dr R K Kohli, Dr H P Singh, Dr D R Batish and Dr Upma Bagai were involved in the study.

It was found that there are 199 mobile towers in the 52 sectors and industrial areas in the city. Of these, 74 per cent are present in the Southern sectors and the remaining in the northern ones. The measurement of radiations was done at 100 metres, 200 metres and 300 metres with the help of RF Field Strength Meter at heights ground, 4 feet and 5-6 feet level.

Dr Kohli says the electromagnetic radiations generate heat. Due to this, the microorganisms present in the soil near it would be killed. This in turn harms those organisms which feed on them. It disturbs the ecological cycle.

The towers continuously transmit radiations even when nobody is using a cell phone. In the city, the maximum radiation content was found in Sector 46. It was 97,926 micro watt/square metre. The minimum of 564 micro watt/square metre was in Sector 1. Radiations were found to be maximum at 5-6 feet and minimum at ground level.

Prof Kohli says a petition has been filed by a Gujarat-based NGO in the Supreme Court, saying the maximum permissible limit should be less than 10 micro watt/square metre.

Another conclusion of the study is that though the power density of the

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electromagnetic radiations is less than the recommended safe levels, even at this level, diseases can be induced.

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