The Health, Safety and Environment Group of BARC, organized a two-day theme meeting on Environmental Baseline Studies for Nuclear Installations during Feb 11-12, 2010. The theme meeting was attended by more than 100 experts including those from the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited, Heavy Water Board, Indian Rare Earths Limited, Nuclear Fuel Complex, Uranium Corporation of India Limited, Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research and Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research. Welcoming the experts, Mr. V. D. Puranik, Head, Environmental Assessment Division said, that environmental surveillance programme for nuclear activities in our country was started at a time when environmental data was either sparse or non existent for most of the locations. The care and concern for environment shown by nuclear industry slowly permeated to other industrial activities and today it is mandatory to have baseline studies in different components of environment, for an environmental management plan for any proposed industrial activity. In his introductory address, Mr. H. S. Kushwaha, Director, Health, Safety and Environment Group stressed the need for baseline studies, considering it as an important aspect in environmental assessment. He further elaborated that nuclear industries conduct two types of EIA studies, viz. rapid EIA for clearing site from
government/regulatory authorities and comprehensive EIA for baseline studies. For a meaningful baseline survey, emphasis is being given to a standard protocol accepted by the regulatory agencies of the country. Dr. Anil Kakodkar, former Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Homi Bhabha Chair Professor, stressed the need to develop skilled human resources at university level, in order to contribute baseline studies to be carried out around proposed nuclear sites. Dr. Anil Kakodkar released the current series of five protocols published by the Health, Safety and Environment Group and developed by experts in the field covering sampling, analysis and statistical interpretation of data. The five protocols are:

1. Protocol for Conducting Pre-Operational Environmental Surveillance around Nuclear Facilities
3. Protocol for Baseline Study on Demographic Pattern and Health Profile around the Proposed Nuclear Facilities
4. Protocol for Assessment of Radiological Risk to Non Human Biota

He hoped that this will also ensure transparency in activities related to the environmental aspects of all the nuclear facilities in the country, so as to comply with the requirements of regulatory bodies.

Dr. R. M. Tripathi, Head, RPS(NF), Environmental Assessment Division thanked the academicians and officials from regulatory agencies including Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), key persons involved in development of the protocols and invited speakers, for participating in this theme meeting covering various environmental aspects related to ongoing and proposed nuclear facilities of the country. Dr. S. K. Jha coordinated the technical programme of the theme meeting.