



SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS Technology Enabling Centre (TEC) KIIT Deemed to be University

Journal Name: Microbial Biotechnology

IF: 6.7

Title: Promoting Microbiology Literacy and Holistic Health: IMiLI and IMiLI-SAC Perspectives on Microbes, Diet, Lifestyle and Society—A 5-Year Journey

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Details: Volume 19, Issue6, June 2026

Abstract: This manuscript summarises the 5-year journey of the International Microbiology Literacy Initiative (IMiLI) and its South Asian Regional Centre (IMiLI-SAC). The main focus of the centre has been to propagate microbiology literacy and at the same time translate microbiome science into society. IMiLI-SAC played an important role in engaging audiences from diverse backgrounds across India and beyond by conducting lectures, organising workshops and outreach programs. In addition, it has also translated many educational resources in regional and cultural languages for wider presentation. IMiLI-SAC played a pivotal role in connecting microbial science with real-world issues like sustainable development, human health, dietary choices, lifestyle, preventive healthcare and planetary health. This initiative practically translates the role of microbes in different contexts using examples like microbiome studies in India, extremophiles and their biotechnological applications, and bioremediation of contaminated sites. It also supports the concept of ‘food as medicine’ and ‘antibiotic stewardship’. However, there are certain challenges like financial constraints, resources limitations and not as much awareness. Yet, IMiLI-SAC proposes that coordinated and multilingual community engagement will address this gap between science and society. The long-lasting vision of IMiLI-SAC is to incorporate microbiology literacy into school curricula, policies and public health to have a sustainable and healthy world.



URL: <https://enviromicro-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1751-7915.70400>

