

America's Political Subjugation of India Rests on Monsanto's Overriding Control of Agriculture

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After a study of GMOs over a four-year plus period, India's multi-party Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture recommended a ban on GM food crops stating they had no role in a country of small farmers. The Supreme Court appointed a technical expert committee (TEC), which recommended an indefinite moratorium on the field trials of GM crops until the government devised a proper regulatory and safety mechanism. As yet, no such mechanism exists, but open field trials are being given the go ahead. GMO crops approved for field trials include rice, maize, chickpea, sugarcane, and brinjal.

The only commercially grown genetically modified (GM) crop grown in India at this time is Bt cotton. It is hardly the resounding success story the pro-GMO lobby would like us to believe.

Pushpa M Bhargava is founder director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad, India. Writing in the Hindustan Times [1], he states that

- Bt cotton is far from having been an unqualified success in India. It has worked only in irrigated areas and not in rain-fed regions that represent two-thirds of the area under cotton cultivation in the country.
- Out of over 270,000 farmers' suicides, Bt cotton farmers constitute a substantial number.
- In Andhra Pradesh, there have been deaths of thousands of cattle that grazed on the remnants of Bt cotton plants after harvesting of cotton.
- Resistance to pests in Bt cotton has developed over the years. There has also been a marked increase in the number of secondary pests such as mealy bug.
- The soil where Bt cotton has been grown over a prolonged period has become incapable of sustaining any other crop.
- Some 90 percent of the member countries of the United Nations, including almost all countries of Europe, haven't permitted GM crops or unlabelled GM food.
- There are over 500 research publications by scientists of indisputable integrity, who have no conflict of interest, that establish the harmful effects of GM crops on human, animal and plant health, and on the environment and biodiversity.
- On the other hand, virtually every paper supporting GM crops is by scientists who have a declared conflict of interest or whose credibility and integrity can be doubted.

- The argument that we need GM technology to feed the increasing population of India is fallacious. Even with low productivity, which can be increased, India even now produces sufficient grain in the country to take care of its requirements.
- India can double its food production by using non-GM technologies, such as molecular breeding.
- Few chronic toxicity tests have been done anywhere on GM food crops. Whenever these tests have been done, GM food has been shown to lead to cancer.

Back in 2003, after examining all aspects of GM crops, eminent scientists from various countries who formed the Independent Science Panel concluded:

“GM crops have failed to deliver the promised benefits and are posing escalating problems on the farm. Transgenic contamination is now widely acknowledged to be unavoidable, and hence there can be no co-existence of GM and non-GM agriculture. Most important of all, GM crops have not been proven safe. On the contrary, sufficient evidence has emerged to raise serious safety concerns that if ignored could result in irreversible damage to health and the environment. GM crops should be firmly rejected now.” [2]

On a similar note, writing in The Statesman Bharat Dogra quotes Professor Susan Bardocz as saying:

“GM is the first irreversible technology in human history. When a GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) is released it is out of our control; we have no means to call it back....” [3]

Dogra also notes that 17 distinguished scientists from Europe, USA, Canada and New Zealand wrote to the former Indian Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh warning against “the unique risks (of GM crops) to food security, farming systems and bio-safety impacts which are ultimately irreversible.” This letter adds:

“The GM transformation process is highly mutagenic leading to disruptions to host plant genetic structure and function, which in turn leads to disturbances in the biochemistry of the plant. This can lead to novel toxin and allergen production as well as reduced/altered nutrition quality.” [4]

Writing in The Hindu, Aruna Rodrigues states that the consensus on the negative impacts of GMOs in various official reports in India is remarkable [5].

Yet India seems to be pressing ahead with a pro-GMO agenda regardless. Little surprise then that Bhargava argues that the Central Government departments in India act as peddlers of GM technology, probably in collusion with the transnational corporations which market GM seeds.

There is no ‘probably’ about it and the collusion goes beyond GMOs.

The World Bank/IMF/WTO’s goals on behalf of Big Agritech and the opening up of India to it are well documented [6]. With the help of compliant politicians, transnational companies

want farmers' lands and unmitigated access to Indian markets. This would entail the wholesale 'restructuring' of Indian society under the bogus banner of 'free trade', which will lead (is leading) to the destruction of the livelihoods of hundreds of millions [7,8,9].

Moreover, Monsanto, Walmart and other giant US corporations had a seat at the top table when the Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture was agreed with the US [10]. Monsanto also controls the cotton industry in India [11] and is increasingly shaping agri-policy and the knowledge paradigm by funding agricultural research in public universities and institutes: it is the "contemporary East India Company." [12]

If further evidence were needed in terms of just who is setting the agenda, Vandana Shiva highlights the arm twisting that has gone on in an attempt to force through GMOs into India, with various politicians having been pushed aside until the dotted line for GMO open field testing approval was signed on [13].

Those like Shiva and Rodrigues who legitimately protest, resist or offer constructive alternatives are demonized by an Intelligence Bureau report whose authors might appear to some as having been sponsored by the very transnational corporations that are seeking to recast India in their own images [14].

Bhargava states that 64 percent of India's population derives its sustenance from agriculture-related activities. Therefore, whosoever controls Indian agriculture would control the country. And here lies the crux of the matter. To control Indian agriculture, the bedrock of the country, one needs to control only seeds and agro-chemicals. Monsanto and its backers in the US State Department are well aware of this fact. And to control Indian politicians is to control India.

US foreign policy has almost always rested on the control of agriculture:

"American foreign policy has almost always been based on agricultural exports, not on industrial exports as people might think. It's by agriculture and control of the food supply that American diplomacy has been able to control most of the Third World. The World Bank's geopolitical lending strategy has been to turn countries into food deficit areas by convincing them to grow cash crops - plantation export crops - not to feed themselves with their own food crops." Professor Michael Hudson [15].

US foreign policy is about power and control: the power to control food, states and entire populations.

Politicians in India and elsewhere continue to ignore the evidence pertaining to the dangers of GMOs. They are handmaidens of US corporate-geopolitical interests. The US relies on compliant politicians in foreign countries. These spineless figures are just as important for furthering US geopolitical goals in India [16] (whether BJP or Congress) as much as they are elsewhere [17].

Notes

1] <http://www.hindustantimes.com/comment/analysis/us-is-trying-to-control-our-food--production/article1-1249456.aspx>

2] <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/ispr-summary.php>

- 3] <http://www.thestatesman.net/news/81605-New-hype-about-GM-mosquitoes.html?page=3>
- 4] <http://frontierweekly.com/articles/vol-47/47-16/47-16-GM%20Hazards.html>
- 5] <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/nip-this-in-the-bud/article5012989.ece#comments>
- 6] <http://www.bhoomimagazine.org/article/cash-food-will-strike-very-foundation-economy>
- 7] <http://www.orissapost.com/epaper/221014/p8.htm>
- 8] <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/en/Blog/Guest-blog/restructuring-india/blog/47265/>
- 9] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-eu-india-free-trade-agreement-india-up-for-sale--to-western-corporate-capital/5332214>
- 10] <http://www.projectcensored.org/8-kia-the-us-neoliberal-invasion-of-india/>
- 11] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-seeds-of-suicide-how-monsanto-destroys-farming/5329947>
- 12] <http://dissidentvoice.org/2009/07/monsanto-a-contemporary-east-india-company-and-corporate--knowledge-in-india/>
- 13] <http://www.asianage.com/columnists/galileo-syndrome-321#comment-54109>
- 14] <http://kavithakuruganti.wordpress.com/2014/06/17/foreign-hand-in-the-ib-report--joint-statement-from-vandana-shiva-aruna-rodrigues-kavitha-kuruganti/>
- 15] <http://www.prosper.org.au/2014/10/10/think-tank-times/>
- 16] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/gmo-scandal-the-long-term-effects-of-genetically--modified-food-on-humans/14570>
- 17] http://www.gmfrecymru.org.uk/news/Press_Notice13May2014.html

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