

Capitulating to Monsanto and Wall Street: What Future for India?

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Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#)

Indian Oil and Environment Minister Veerappa Moily has added fuel to the debate about genetically modified organisms (GMOs) by approving field trials of 200 GM food crops on behalf of companies like Monsanto, Mahyco, Bayer and BASF. This is despite Supreme Court appointed Technical Expert Committee (TEC) recommending a ten-year moratorium on GM organism approvals until scientifically robust protocols, independent and competent institutions to assess risks and a strong regulatory system are developed.

This will involve a deliberate release of GM organisms in the open environment and a potential contamination of non-GM crops, as has been the case in the US, with GM open field trials having contaminated parts of the wheat supply (1). Despite mounting evidence appearing in peer-reviewed journals that GM and glyphosate are adversely impacting human health, the nutritional value of food crops, plant immunity, soil fertility, biodiversity, the environment and yields (2 - 15), politicians seem hell-bent on facilitating the aims of the GM biotech sector.

It was a similar story with the 'Green Revolution'. The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations backed this chemical-laden revolution in agriculture and managed to co-opt strategically placed scientists, institutions and politicians in various areas of the globe (16). With their compliance, the result has been that over the past 50 to 60 years, thanks to chemical fertilizers and pesticides, agriculture has changed more than it did during the previous 12,000 years.

We need look no further than Punjab to see the impact of the Green Revolution. Reports of water scarcities and contamination, increasing levels of cancer, farmer indebtedness and decreasing yields highlight the unsustainable and deleterious impacts of chemical-industrial agriculture (17). It all begs the question, what was wrong with agriculture in the first place that warranted this disastrous shift towards chemical agriculture and now GMOs? The answer to that is, by comparison, probably not a lot.

In 2013, researchers at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand concluded that the GM strategy used in North American staple crop production is limiting yields and increasing pesticide use compared to non-GM farming in Western Europe (18). Led by Professor Jack Heinemann, the study's findings were published in the International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability. The study found that Europe is decreasing chemical herbicide use and achieving even larger declines in insecticide use without sacrificing yield gains, while chemical herbicide use in the US has increased with GM seed. In effect, Europe has learned to grow more food per hectare and use fewer chemicals in the process.

Moreover, a September 2013 report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD) states that farming in rich and poor nations alike should shift from monoculture towards greater varieties of crops, reduce the use of fertilisers and other inputs, provide greater support for small-scale farmers and move towards more locally focused production and consumption of food. More than 60 international experts contributed to the report (19).

The report states that monoculture and industrial farming methods are not providing sufficient affordable food where it is needed, while causing mounting and unsustainable environmental damage. The system actually causes food poverty, not addresses it.

As for India, Arun Shrivastava notes that the world doesn't need modern technology of poisonous pesticides, destructive fertilizers and patented GE seeds that can't match 1890 or even 1760 AD yields in India (12). But even if we discard the debate over yields, Shrivastava (and others) asserts that modern technology has actually destroyed the nutrition in common foods and that, failing to set any yield or nutrition standard in any food crop, it is part of an insane industry that has muddled through.

So, how did we arrive at this stage, whereby 12,000 years of conventional farming were swept aside in favour of chemical/oil-based agriculture?

As William F Engdahl argues, the Green Revolution was a Rockefeller family plan to monopolize global agriculture as it had done with oil. It was aimed at removing traditional agriculture from farmers and placing it in the hands of corporate agribusiness. As a result, large multinational seed companies were able to control seed supplies. Moreover, the introduction of modern US agricultural technology, chemical fertilizers and commercial seeds made local farmers in developing countries dependent on US agribusiness.

Developing nations could not pay for the huge amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This new form of agriculture was also water intensive and required large irrigation projects. Nations would therefore get credit courtesy of the World Bank and special loans made large US banks to construct huge dams and flood previously fertile farmland. The loans went mostly to the large landowners. For the smaller peasants the situation worked differently. Small peasant farmers could not afford the chemical and other modern inputs and had to borrow money at higher rates of interest from elsewhere.

Engdahl notes that super-wheat produced greater yields only by saturating the soil with huge amounts of fertilizer per acre, the fertilizer being the product of nitrates and petroleum, commodities controlled by the Rockefeller-dominated major oil companies.

After two generations of the green revolution, is it any surprise that agriculture in India is in the grip of a combined social, financial and environmental crisis (20)?

Ordinary people, if they are not to be what Vandana Shiva calls 'ignorant links in a malicious corporate-controlled food chain, therefore need to question why governments have kowtowed to a US-driven agenda of chemical and now GMO agriculture. Africa is now targeted for more of the same as the Gates Foundation spearheads the GMO onslaught in that continent (21).

12,000 years of traditional agriculture and biodiversity are being swept aside along with ordinary farmers by vested interests in the US whose geopolitical aim has to been to monopolize markets and ultimately use food as a weapon to control nations and people by

destroying national food sovereignty and potentially using food as a means to depopulate (22,23).

"If you control the oil you control the country; if you control food, you control the population." – Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (12)

Wider 'corporate America' is already setting the broad political, 'development' and economic agenda in India:

"And something Americans don't know much about, the nuclear deal with India has a twin agreement, and that twin agreement is on agriculture. It's called the Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture, and on the board of this agreement are Monsanto, ADM and Wal-Mart. So a grab of the seed sector by Monsanto, of the trade sector by the giant agribusiness, and the retail sector, which is 400 million people in India, by Wal-Mart. These are issues that are preoccupying us regarding democracy in India right now." Vandana Shiva (24).

It's not just 'American' that don't know about this, but most ordinary Indians too!

But even with the upcoming national elections, no one should expect self-proclaimed Hindu-nationalist party BJP to protect the country from the foreign jackals if it gains power. BJP candidate for PM Narendra Modi is fully backed by Wall Street (25).

What future Indian agriculture?

What future India?

600 million booted off the land and the further hollowing out of Indian agriculture and society at the behest of Wall Street (26)?

Notes

- 1) <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/30/us-wheat-asia-idUSL3N0EB1JC20130530>
- 2) <http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2013/10/argentina-cancer-cluster-pesticide>
- 3) <http://www.mdpi.com/1099-4300/15/4/1416>
- 4) http://nhrighttoknowgmo.org/BreakingNews/Glyphosate_II_Samsel-Seneff.pdf
- 5) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/gmo-and-morgellons-disease/8464>
- 6) <http://www.responsibletechnology.org/health-risks>
- 7) <http://covvha.net/glyphosate-gmo-chemicals-101-scientific-studies/#.Uww6cuNdWSr>
- 8) <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14735903.2013.806408#tabModule>
- 9) <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/BtCottonKillsSoilandFarmers.php>
- 10) <http://www.fwi.co.uk/articles/06/02/2013/137518/us-farmers-may-stop-planting-gms-after-poor-global-yields.htm>
- 11) <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/329309/of-falling-bt-yield-disastrous.html>

- 12) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/india-genetically-modified-seeds-agricultural-productivity-and-political-fraud/5328227>
- 13) <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/BtCottonKillsSoilandFarmers.php>
- 14) <http://www.greenmedinfo.com/blog/dramatic-increase-kidney-disease-us-and-abroad-linked-roundup-glyphosate>
- 15) <http://www.gmwatch.org/latest-listing/51-2012/14164-glyphosate-and-gmos-impact-on-crops-soils-animals-and-man-dr-don-huber>
- 16) <http://truththeory.com/2013/06/12/doomsday-seed-vault-in-the-arctic/>
- 17) <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/309654/punjab-transformation-food-bowl-cancer.html>
- 18) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/us-genetically-engineered-agriculture-is-outclassed-by-europes-non-gm-approach/5341518>
- 19) <http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4789-yet-another-un-report-calls-for-support-to-peasant-farming-and-agroecology-it-s-time-for-action>
- 20) <http://agrariancrisis.in/2007/01/09/wsf-2007-green-revolution-a-warning-from-india-with-dr-vandana-shiva/>
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- 24) http://www.democracynow.org/2006/12/13/vandana_shiva_on_farmer_suicides_the
- 25) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/general-elections-in-india-the-choice-is-globalization-or-more-globalization-the-role-of-the-wall-street-lobby/5357992>
- 26) <http://www.globalresearch.ca/mass-poverty-and-social-inequality-in-india-the-devastating-impacts-of-the-neoliberal-economic-development-model/5356153>

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