

Women, Trade, Ecology and Development: The Context in South Asia

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A majority of rural poor i.e. 70 percent of South Asians depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Among them the poorest are women. They produce food but are denied access to land and receive the lowest wage. The number of rural women living in poverty has increased in the region in the last decade, in spite of claims that 300 million people could be pulled out of poverty due to global trade by 2015. (World Bank estimate)

Discrimination against women in South Asia has strong roots which are further reinforced by current developments enforcing Structural Adjustment Policies, inadequate spending by governments on health care and education. This is reflected in educational deprivation of girls and women. As a region, South Asia has both – the lowest literacy rates and the largest gap between the rates of male and female literacy – 64.1% and 37.2%. While South Asian women make up 21 percent of the world's female population, 440/1000 of the world's illiterate women are South Asian. The gender gap in

education is much larger for poor households, particularly dalits and tribals. The literacy rate for women in Nepal is only 42.49 percent with rural women further disadvantaged. Pakistan has the lowest rates of the region. Increasing work burden at home and the need to contribute to family income deprives girls from acquiring school education to escape poverty.

Food Security & Health

Around 500 million people in the region live in absolute poverty and 400 million go hungry every day, a majority of them are women who eat last and work the most. The region carries the highest proportion of underweight, stunted and wasted children. Almost half under the age of five are chronically malnourished. 95 out of 1000 children on average still die before reaching the age of five with the girl child most at risk. Since women grow most of the food in the region, they have the potential to create community level house hold food security.

The Chain of Violence

Discrimination against South Asian women starts early. Female foeticide is now made possible due to new medical technologies which is leading to an alarming skewed sex ratio among children below six years of age. Female infanticide, gender biased feeding practices and neglect of the girl child add to the high female mortality.

Heavy work burden, lack of access to prenatal and post-natal care, neglect of health at all stages of life add to the life risk of women in the region. As a result South Asia has the most distorted sex ratios in the world. Only 940 females survive for every 1000 males. (global average 1060 females to 1000 males) In India alone, 40 million women are reported missing i.e. killed due to a multitude of neglect.

Domestic Violence is Growing Steadily in the Region

In 1996, India recorded 115,723 violent cases against women and it is growing 10% annually. Caste violence against dalit women continues. Communal violence in Gujarat in 2002 devastated Muslim women. Sri Lanka reported 26,565 cases of violence against women, but the conditions of women in the North are unrecorded. Bangladesh has the worst rape statistics in the region. 10 women out of every 10,000 are reported to have been raped. Severe poverty contributes to brutal violence against women

In Nepal, 50 percent cases against women involve domestic violence. So called dowry deaths are increasing due to demands from the bridegroom's parents. The inability of young men to earn their own living and a growing consumer culture add to the problem.

Increasing Vulnerability of the Girl Child

The deep rooted poverty conditions in the region in addition to depriving girls of basic food, shelter and education has resulted in forcing them into sex work. 100,000 children, the majority girls were (UNICEF report cited in Middawatta 1999) involved in sex work. The child sex trade is growing rapidly due to fear that adult sex workers may transmit HIV virus. Around 2,00,000 Nepalese girls are reportedly working as sex workers in India. Bangladeshi girls are brought into India and Pakistan while Indian girls transported elsewhere. In Sri Lanka, 30,000 children are reportedly used as sex workers for foreign tourists. Children in the war zone are compelled to sell their bodies to escape according to news reports. Girl babies in the region are sold for as little as US \$10 to adoption homes for international trade.

While trade liberalization has been touted as a panacea to escape poverty, we can see that the patriarchal order of society combined with rapacious unequal terms of trade have worsened the situation of the majority of the poor women in the region.

WOMEN & GOVERNANCE

Empty Seats and Empty Rhetoric

All over South Asia while women share the greater proportion of the burden of poverty they are alienated from decision making positions at all levels. In India, a million women are elected to local bodies and while in position need support to become effective grass roots change agents. Without the support they are treated as puppets and their positions occupied by proxy by male family members.

However at the higher level in Parliament less than 10% are women. The situation is equally dismal in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Though some state policies advocate equal rights for men and women, in practice women are victims of discrimination in all aspects. In Bhutan, where women enjoy greater freedom and support than in most South Asian countries, women are still under represented in national decision-making bodies.

The Project called Development

As early as 1989 Vandana Shiva, in her presentation at the South Asian Workshop, had already raised alarm about the dominant politics of transformation embodied in the patriarchal project of development. She emphasized that while gender subordination and patriarchy were the oldest forms of oppression, they had taken on newer and more violent forms through the

project of development. 'Patriarchal categories' she said which understand destruction as 'production' and regeneration of life as 'passivity' have generated a crisis of survival. She highlighted how the devaluation and derecognition of nature's work and productivity has led to the ecological crisis, the devaluation and de recognition of women's work has created sexism and inequality between men and women. The devaluation of subsistence, or rather sustenance economies, based on harmony between nature's work, women's work and men's work has created the various forms of ethnic and cultural crisis that plague our world today. She also made a critique of modern science whose patriarchal roots as a system of power were being increasingly recognized by feminists and that the dominant system of science emerged as a liberating force not for humanity as a whole but as a masculine and patriarchal project that necessarily entailed the subjugation of both nature and women. She particularly stressed how the biotechnology era heralds the ultimate fragmentation and control of life itself, by engineering it into a reductionist mould.

During the discussions that followed, the distorted connections between women and nature that could sometimes be perceived in a paradigm of biologist and essentialism were debated. The new insights that rural women in the Third World are associated not in passivity but in creativity in the maintenance of life indicates that women and nature are intimately related and their domination and liberation similarly linked affirming that

the women's ecology movements are essentially one and primarily are counter trends to patriarchal mal development.

The Collapse of the Berlin Wall and Domestication of the Women's Movement

In that same year the Berlin Wall collapsed. The Cold War apparently ended and the world became the open playing field for global capital. Those that battled for perhistorika in the east did not necessarily realize how capitalism would override them. But that is exactly what happened. People's struggle for democracy was to be substituted for apparent democracy in the market place as the market was to be the final leveler of inequality and difference. The 1990s saw a series of international Conferences providing a semblance of dialogue and interaction as to how the New World Order would be restructured. There were the United Nations Convention on Environment and Development in Rio with a comprehensive plan of Action in Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Statement of Principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity that were adopted by more than 178 governments in 1992.

While these were radically different strategies of international relations and trade they were being introduced at a historic time when nation states were just coming of their own after the long period of colonialism. Several of them, in order to catch up with ongoing technological

development were under the 'guidance' of the IMF and the structural adjustments imposed were not bearing the desired results. Along with this came the much applauded cyber space revolution that connected the entire world lending to a flow of information and permitting international transactions and exchanges. This facilitated the principle of comparative advantage especially where the use of skilled labour was concerned and gave the apparent facade that the world was flattened and had become an equal playing field.

During this period of the 1990s, the women's movement in the East also saw wide changes taking place. While in Nairobi, it was the women from the developing world that challenged the development paradigm and refused to see women's liberation outside this framework, the international and funding organizations saw to it that this revolt would be quelled by the tools and support they lent to derailing it. On the one hand a large chunk of the women's movement were drawn into working on sexuality issues and among sex workers and on the other, those that were in the development arena got carried into micro credit and then the phenomenon of self help groups. Gender mainstreaming was another important area of women's involvement and this in a big way dissipated the struggle against patriarchy and the class struggle as a whole. This did not mean that women in the larger working class struggles were absent completely. There were still important representation of women in the farmers, fishers, miners, indigenous, slum dwellers and displaced peoples struggles but to a large extent these different streams

seemed to work apart instead of creating a united and overwhelming force.

In a way, both the workers movement and the women's movement, faced setbacks, largely as a result of the maneuvers of global capitalism and the so called postmodern ideology that was popularized at the time.

Control for Resources & War

With the end of the cold war, the growing greed of capitalism enhanced by the all pervading information and interlinking technological revolution, necessitated the impetus to sustain the investments earlier made in the technologies for war. Moreover, the persistent dependence of all these technologies on oil necessitated the domination of oil reserves and what better way was open than to commence a rabid war on Islam whose followers sat upon these resources. Although these wars had commenced much earlier, they became more rabid and were justified in the 1990s fuelled also by the growth of Islamic fundamentalism primarily aimed at attacking American chauvinism. In this period there grew a cynical blend of technology, the forces of destruction and human ingenuity making war the games of foolish adults who either wielded the guns themselves or stayed hooked on to cheer the games of those who played. This technology numbed the human emotions of those who watched just as others admired its scientific precision and while this process filled the coffers of those who controlled it, they were cheered on by the created psychosis of others who feared and

desired to be protected in their already meaningless and materialist lifestyles. Once again the end of the 20th century was a time in history when a large chunk of human kind threw away what was left of its humanity agreeing to succumb to so called market mechanisms that have neither a face, a heart and certainly no soul.

While expansion of global capital created an aggressive middle class in the developing nations blinding them to the actual economic destruction that was taking place, international politics saw to it that the advantages of the new order went into making the rich richer. Despite violent protests from those that understood these devious games and those that were facing the brunt of them, those who called the shots went on. They integrated to the maximum all the protest discourse – mainstreaming or malestreaming it all to their own advantage.

According to an old hand of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz – if globalization has not succeeded in reducing poverty, neither has it succeeded in ensuring stability. Crises in Asia and Latin America have threatened the economies and the stability of all developing countries. For most people in the communist world, the market economy proved to be worse than their communist leaders had predicted. (*Joseph Stiglitz: Globalisation and its Discontents, Penguin Books, 2002*)

But the fact remains that despite repeated promises of poverty reduction made over the last decade of the twentieth century, the actual number of people living in

poverty has actually increased by almost 100 million. This occurred at the same time that total world income actually increased by an average of 2.5 percent annually. (*World Bank, Global economic prospects and the developing countries 2000; Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000*)

The Impact of Globalization on Women, Trade and the Environment

As Vandana had explained two decades ago, market mechanisms and the inter connections with technology, power and money have impacted drastically on livelihood, women and the environment. All negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) have had their twists and turns to the disadvantage of developing countries and their poor.

Global warming continues although international efforts to control greenhouse gas emissions began in the early 1990s. These early attempts to create a climate accord produced the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change agreed upon in 1992 followed by the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 which for the first time established 'legally binding' reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2008–2012 for all industrialized countries. But subsequent negotiations on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol from 1997 to 2001 focused mainly on two main points: provision of tradable emissions permits and inclusion of allowances for 'carbon sinks' which would provide emission credits for forests and farmlands. In Kyoto, in

1997, nations of the world agreed the Clean Development Mechanism (CMD) was a competent way to combat climate change. CDM was designed to — a) help developing countries in achieving sustainable development and b) 'assist' industrialized countries meet emission reduction targets.

The aim: industrialized countries would invest in 'clean' projects in developing countries; emissions reduced through such investment would be credited to the investor. This simple idea today has become a mess, which can be easily exploited to lose sight of substantial policy goals. But as with any mess, business finds it to its liking, a clear method exists — 1) to ensure CDM provides cheap emission reduction options to the rich world. Private companies are allowed to dominate the field. CDM is thus about creating a carbon trading market outside the pale of regulatory control. 2) To ensure what ever is done is certified, so that each deal is backed up with proof that it reduces an actual ton of carbon dioxide equivalent. (*Down to Earth, Issue Nov 15, 2005*) CDM is not about a financial mechanism. It is about finding real and workable answers to climate change, increasingly threatening our world. But the current CDM design has been to make it a bilateral business deal between two self-interested players. This has made CDM what it is today – a cheap and corrupt development mechanism.

But no consensus was reached until the Bush administration declared that the Kyoto Protocol was "fatally flawed" and announced that it was unilaterally pulling

out of the climate accord in 2001. Although the Kyoto Protocol was kept alive in Bonn, despite the exit of the US, it was very ambiguous and belayed the targeted reduction in emissions.

On February 16th, 2005, the Kyoto Protocol to combat global warming became law, binding industrial nations to reduce by 2012 their green house gas emissions to 5.2% below the 1990 levels. But the US which is a major polluter had pulled out of this in 2001. With no halt to the greenhouse effect, farmer's lives are thrown haywire, the lives of coastal people are threatened with sea levels rising and the thirst for water has become the death knell of the day. The lives of women dependent on agriculture become increasingly vulnerable to vagaries of nature and disasters.

Whither our Water?

Ever since the early 1980s, the WB and the IMF has been imposing SAP on third world countries as conditions for renewing their financing and international debt payments. Through these programmes the governments were compelled to undertake series of radical measures, ranging from the sell-off of public enterprises to pay back debt loans to massive reductions in public spending on health, education and social services. These structural changes led to devastating impacts on the living conditions of the poor majority in these countries over the past decade and a half.

In recent years, one of the prime conditions for the renewal of WB and IMF loans has been the privatization

of a country's public water and sanitation facilities. The big corporate players in the global water industry have not left things to chance. Getting the governments in key countries on their side is also a major factor in implementing the global water industry's agenda. To carry out these strategies, the major corporate players realized they needed to develop mechanisms for political massaging. As a result, an integrated network of lobby organizations, professional associations and corresponding political machinery was put in place.

In 1992, two events laid the foundation stones for the formation of a network of international agencies: the International Conference on Water and the Environment in Dublin and the United Nations Conference in Rio. Three integrated agencies emerged: the Global Water Partnership (GWP) in 1996, the World Water Council in 1996 and the World Commission on Water for the 21st century in 1998. On the surface these appear to be neutral because in theory they exist to facilitate dialogue between the various stakeholders and to bring about a more sustainable management of water resources, but a closer look reveals that these agencies promote the privatization and export of water resources and services through close links with global water corporations and financial institutions. – considering water as an economic good, representatives of global water corporations are strategically placed at the top levels of all three, at the same time the water corporations have their own network of industry associations for promoting their own projects for water

privatization and exports, lobbying governments for legislative and financial assistance, and building community or public support for their agenda. In addition to maintaining close working relationships with the WB and other global financial bodies. The big water corporations have strategically positioned themselves to play an effective role in the WTO especially in the negotiations to establish a new set of global rules for cross border trade in services. Two powerful lobby machines have been established to advance corporate interests in the WTO service negotiations: the US Coalition of Service industries and the European Forum on Services. Water giants Vivendi and Enron (before it collapsed) are both active members of the US Coalition and Vivendi and Suez are key players in the European Forum on Services.

When it comes to financing water services in the non-industrialized countries, the main sources of funding are international lending institutions like the IMF and the WB. This financial global architecture is further buttressed by a network of regional development banks such as the European investments Bank, the ADB, the Islamic Development Bank etc. A random review of IMF loan documents involving 40 countries revealed that the IMF imposed conditions requiring water privatization or cost recovery on 12 countries in the year 2000. The WB has had a wider role to play than even the IMF when it comes to financing water projects. One of the major priorities of the bank has been the financing of hydroelectric dams in the non industrialized countries of the south. Much of this money is spent in the north

rather than the south and this involvement in mega dams has been a savior for the corporations, equipment suppliers and technical consultants in the north as markets have dried up in the north.

Like the IMF and WB, the WTO has played a key role in opening up markets for transnational corporations by promoting the privatization and export of goods and services. In order to ensure the free flow of capital, goods and services across national borders, the WTO has a mandate to work progressively towards eliminating all remaining tariff and non-tariff barriers. By designating water as a tradable good, and by failing to enforce GATT Article XX, the WTO is playing right into the hands of global water exporters. The WTO rules are not designed to protect the environment as the rights of commerce are upheld against the rights of the environment.

The global commons, including water, are also under threat of being commodified and concentrated in the hands of a very few because of mechanisms like Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITS). These BITS are among the best kept secrets but they can provide the global water corporations with the additional economic and political clout they need to pry open markets and resources. For Vivendi and Bechtel, BITS have become increasingly important tools since the defeat of the Multilateral Investment Treaty. As developing countries do not speak in unison while defining environmental goods, we are at the losing end. (*Blue Gold; the fight to stop the corporate theft of the world's water: Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, Left Word Books, New Delhi, 2002*).

GATS

The General Agreement on Trade in Services, GATS, has and will continue to be a controversial agreement. It was one of the key results of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations (1986-1994) that led to the formation of the WTO. The focus of GATS is on the liberalization and de-regulation of 12 identified services sectors. Countries are expected to open the 12 sectors in four different ways or modes. The fourth mode of 'supply' or Mode 4 was introduced into the GATS since many developing countries saw this as one of the few ways they could gain benefits from liberalization and globalization. They also successfully argued that if Mode 3 (commercial presence of Foreign /direct Investment) constituted 'trade in services', then movement of labour should also be included. In the run-up to the 6th Ministerial Meeting of the WTO in Hong Kong (Dec. 2005) Indian negotiations have signaled that if the US agrees to India's Mode 4 demands, they are willing to provide concessions on its demands on increasing FDI in crucial service sectors as well as reducing tariffs in other areas such as Agriculture and industrial tariffs (NAMA).

Several members of the LDC grouping have successfully used the lack of progress on the Mode 4 demands to stymie aggressive demands from the EU and the US to open their services to FDI. Many civil society groups have squarely taken on this position and have termed this trade-off as 'shocking'. India's rather tame Mode 4 demand is likely to be met sooner or later since there will be a steady demand from the American economy

for higher skilled cheap labour. Service corporations in the US will gain the most from an increase in H-1B visas. By providing greater access for highly skilled and relatively wealthy service suppliers, GATS commitments will exacerbate inequalities, promote brain drain as the individuals covered by the commitments are usually those who have greater facility in acquiring permanent residence status or citizenship in the importing countries. (*Benny Kuruvilla: Global Movement of Labour under WTO – GATTs – Who'll move and who won't. In Labour File, September–October, 2005*). This kind of concession is clearly to the benefit of upper class men at great cost to women in agriculture.

Women, Agriculture & Trade

Ninety nine percent of the world's agricultural population is in the third world which accounts for two thirds of the WTO's 147 member states. The US and EU account for only 1% of the world's agricultural population. Since agriculture contributes less than three % of the GDP of the EU and US, the stakes in the negotiation on trade in farm produce are not too critical for them but are enormously critical to the poor member states of the WTO. The adverse terms of trade, use of both tariff and non tariff barriers to block market access for poor countries while dumping heavily subsidized farm products in to their markets disrupting the livelihoods of traditional small farmers are serious issues. The network of multinational corporations which control world food trade are the major beneficiaries of the current arrangements.

If we take the example of India, 8% of the Indian population is dependent on the sugar industry. 550 sugar factories operate in India of which nearly 300 are in the cooperative and public sector. The sugar industry is under tremendous pressure due to the process of dumping. India's share is 15% of world production. Out of the total world production, nearly 35% is traded internationally. Retail prices of sugar are the lowest compared to other countries. India's share in the international sugar trade is less than one percent due to higher subsidies given to the sugar industry in the European Union and the United States. The cost of production of EU is twice more than India's cost of production. But due to higher subsidies EU has a share of 40% in the international sugar trade.

Although the Agreement on Agriculture came into force from January 1995, this agreement failed to remove the distortions in the international sugar trade. The WTO has given a ruling that the export subsidy given by European union are 'illegal' and has directed the EU to remove export subsidies by 2013. By that time the Indian farmer will be dead and gone.

Other serious issues are: New biotechnological, market-oriented advances concerning seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and genetically modified crops that enable big ticket entry to multinational agribusiness companies while leading to farmer suicides in the third world. All these pose a threat to the knife-edge food security of the poor nations, home to the majority of over 120 million food insecure people. If we review the pattern

of forced agriculture development and the impact of globalization we find the following.

Global trade in Agriculture and attendant ideology has led to:

- Destruction of rural livelihoods
- Destruction of food security
- Demolition of sustainable agriculture
- Loss of community control (women's control over seeds and agricultural processes).
- De-skilling
- Destruction of social structures (migration, wretchedness, dehumanization, brutalization)
- Total loss of human dignity

(P V Satheesh, Deccan Development Society)

The impact on agriculture in the region has been disastrous. In India alone, more than 100,000 farmers have committed suicides since 1993 and the situation continues. There is little recognition in the country as well as the region that women form the backbone of subsistence agriculture and it is their skills, their abilities and culture which is in the process of being wiped out.

An UNCTAD study shows that after adjustments for inflation, the prices of all farm sector produces have shown a tendency to move down as they declined by as much as 60-70% between 1980-2003. It contended that the primary commodities have over this period lost more than half of their purchasing power vis a vis

manufactured goods. This is juxtaposing the millionaire western farmer to the subsistence farmer of the developing countries.

A whole new pro-sustainable development, symmetrical trade paradigm has to be negotiated. Or rather we need to recognize that it is not the developing countries who need to trade, but the countries of Europe and the US which are dependent on the variety of food grown across the world. South Asian countries can in fact feed themselves by promoting a new paradigm recognizing people's traditional skills and ingenuity.

It has to be borne in mind that despite being highly industrialized and post-industrial economies, these very countries continue to dominate the trade and markets for products such as cereals, sugar, beef, dairy products and some edible oils because they give subsidies to their own farmers (read agri-business) to the tune of one billion dollars a day. The poor population account for only one-third of the total farm exports and this share has remained unchanged for the last three decades. (Dr. Kamal Nayan Kabra: *Quo Vadis? WTO Agreement on Agriculture*, in Labour File, September-October, 2005)

The WTO's Trade and Environment Committee has two main agendas: to negotiate the relationship between WTO's trading rules and multilateral environmental agreements, and removing trade barriers on environmental goods and services. This committee has about 20 multilateral environmental agreements—such as the Basel Convention on hazardous waste on its anvil. These

environmental treatise often clash with trade commitments – moratorium of GM products for instance. MEA issues have become the secondary focus of the Trade and Environment committee.

The Gender Agenda

Molyneux and Razavi in their paper '*Beijing plus Ten: an ambivalent record on gender justice*' in *Development and Change Journal* (2005) give an overview of the achievements (or lack of achievement) for the area of gender equality ten years after the Beijing Conference.

They acknowledge that there has been significant progress made in the social, political and economic status of women, but they give several examples of slow progress, or lack of progress, made in reducing gender inequalities. For instance they highlight that women still make up only 16 percent of national political representation, in some countries in Eastern Europe, Central Europe and Central Asia, women's political representation has fallen by as much as 50 percent since the former communist party quota system was abolished. Women continue to make up the bulk of workers in low paying, low status jobs with little job security, and tend to be concentrated at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, in the private sphere, women are still largely responsible for most of the family care and domestic work throughout their lives. The authors point out that while "the social" has been rediscovered and new language used the fundamentals have not changed. While vocabulary is shared with Poverty and Social

protection included, conflicting understanding of social policy continues. These are based on different values and understanding of state responsibilities and of the responsibilities of different individuals and social groups to each other. In the new social risk management framework proposed, the state is charged only with providing social safety nets for risk coping as well as risk management when the private sector fails. This approach is effectively a continuation of the earlier policy of minimal safety nets and overrides equality agendas.

An alternative social policy would be premised on the centrality of redistribution, equality and universal social provision. This is being tried in several countries like Brazil, Chile and South Africa.

Is There a Way Forward?

Protests and lobbying of people's and civil society organizations have been vigorous over the last decade and have succeeded in challenging if not blocking the total bulldozing of the agendas of the powerful MNCs. The ranks of the World Social Forum have been swelling to indicate that those that think another world is possible are also growing in number and they have to continue to adopt a lifestyle that is in keeping with their ideology. But the anti people's lobbies are even stronger and more violent in their strategies. The point is that there is no international government only international governance in which there is nobody who moderates the negotiations in the way national governments did earlier. The important thing is that there has to be a

lasting alliance created between the lobbyists, the movements and the actual ground realities that not only affirm life and livelihood but physically hold on to the resources that are now up for grabs.

An example of the increased efforts of the US government to not only take control of resources but of people's minds is the Indo-US Knowledge initiative on Agricultural Research and Education which was the agenda of President Bush in March 2006. This initiative has the world's largest retailer Walmart and second largest seed corporation Monsanto on the board on the US side while the Indian business community is represented by Venkateshwara Hatcheries. The board is co-chaired by the Director General of the ICAR and the administrator, Foreign Agricultural Services, US Department of Agriculture. In February, 2005, the Board prepared a draft focusing on four areas, education, food processing, biotechnology and water management.

The US goal is to make sure that the Indian biotechnology markets remain open and the agriculture education system produces people who are mandated to promote bio-technology. They are also positioning themselves to influence premier state Institutions such as the ICAR, which today have been subtly coerced to carry on research to promote GM technology to serve the interests of private sector rather than serve poor and marginalized farmers men and women.

Poor dalit women in India have shown an alternative way forward to manage their own agriculture.

Not only women farmers in India but also small and marginal farmers in South Asia, the African continent and the Americas have recognized that farmers are destroyed because:

The tools used by globalizing agents are:

- Externalisation of all inputs
- Institutionalising dependence
- Industrialisation of agriculture & other natural resources
- Subjecting people to market forces

Strategies used to fight globalization are to:

- Attack externalisation
- Reinstall self reliance in agriculture
- Move people's agriculture away from mainstream markets
- Reorganise people's markets

This has been done by NGO's such as the Deccan Development Society by promoting:

- Emphasis on food crops
- Encouraged low, internal inputs
- Biomass generation
- Traditional crops
- Reinstalled people's confidence
- Moved from food security to food sovereignty
- Criteria: no external dependence

THE DDS EXPERIENCE

- Organised groups of women to regenerate their own land
- Ploughing and cultivating fallows
- Emphasized growing food crops
- Regenerated land by farm yard manure
- Vermi-composting
- Soil and moisture conservation
- Emphasized bio-diversity 89-food crops grown
- Identified poor in the village and ensured alternative public distribution system

The strategy used by DDS is:

- Shifted control to women and dalits
- Enhanced productivity of poor people's poor resources (marginal lands) using inputs like
- FYM
- Vermicompost
- Rebuilt people's stake on their lands

The result was increased:

- Food security
- Nutritional security
- Fodder security
- Fuelwood security
- Livelihood security
- Ecological security

Regenerating Commons

Supported by the Centre for World Solidarity, the experience of Anatha Paryavarana Pariraskhana Samiti (APPS) network shows how communities can take control of commons.

- Department of land resources notifies 68.35 million hectares as waste lands
- Network of NGO's working in Anathapur, (AP, India,) district regenerated 198 village commons
- 75,000 acres of commons under protection
- Providing fuel wood, fodder, fruit trees, roofing material and significant incomes to the landless
- Women controlled/community managed
- Cost per acre Rs. 350/-
- Conserving Water and Soil

Promoting Non Chemical Agriculture:

- 9 NGO's innovate supported by Center for Sustainable Agriculture
- Upscaling non pesticidal management and pest control to 1,50,000 acres. Food and cash crops.
- Villages say No to pesticides
- Use organic methods and products such as neem seed kernel
- Knowledge intensive – and not product sales
- Implemented by women and men

Result:

- Ecological balance restored, reduced pest incidence
- Villages become knowledge centers
- Pesticide poisoning eliminated
- Credit worthiness of farmers increased
- Food quality improved
- Incomes increased
- Women centered

To Counter Trade Liberalization In Agriculture:

- Demands
- Expand the degree of food sovereignty for developing countries
- Segregate agricultural subsidies and scrap subsidies to multi national companies in developed countries
- Restore quantitative restrictions
- Re-open July 2004 framework on Agreement on Agriculture. Eliminate protection measures for the rich and industrialised countries
- India to push for a Multi Lateral Agreement against Hunger
- Challenge bio-technology and patents on life/seeds

The concept of food sovereignty was first introduced by Via Campesina at the World Food Summit in 1996, though the Indian delegation to the Beijing Conference in 1995 made the demand Food First to the international community.

Their definition of food sovereignty focuses on the rights of small holder farmers to produce food, which is undermined in many countries by national and international agricultural trade policy regulations. During the 1996 World Food Summit, Via Campesina presented a set of requirements that offered an alternative to the world trade policies and would realize the human right to food. In the statement, Food Sovereignty: A Future without hunger, it was declared that food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security, and the right to food can therefore be seen as the tool to achieve it. The seven principles to achieve it are:

1. Food a basic human right
2. Agrarian reform – giving landless and farming people

especially women, ownership and control over the land they work on.

3. Protecting natural resources – sustainable care and use of natural resources
4. Reorganizing food trade – food is first a source of nutrition and secondly an item of trade
5. Ending the globalization of hunger
6. Social peace – food must not be used as a weapon
7. Democratic control

At a time when halving world poverty and eradicating hunger are at the forefront of the international development agenda, reinforcing the diversity and vibrancy of local food systems should also be at the forefront of the international policy agenda.

This paper is written jointly by Ms. Nalini Nayak and Dr. V. Rukmini Rao. Dr. Rao has drawn on her experiences at the Deccan Development Society and the work done by Dalit women farmers supported by P V Satheesh.

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