

Seed – Out of Control

dynamics of technology and policies

The macro-picture

- ◆ Analysis of most policies and legislations starting from the late 1980s shows a clear favoring of private sector entry & expansion – several rights and incentives bestowed on private sector, including exclusive marketing rights
- ◆ Favoring of more R & D of hybrids and transgenics
- ◆ Increase in productivity if stressed, largely dependent on improved seeds
- ◆ Thrust on improving seed replacement rates
- ◆ Vision 2020 wanted AP to become the Seed Bed of India with 18% growth rate in seed industry
- ◆ More and more laws in the IPRs framework
- ◆ Consumer Protection Act inadequate and farmer-unfriendly
- ◆ In AP – MoU system but without any legal teeth
- ◆ Seed out of control

AP Picture

- ◆ 400 crores' worth seed market every year
- ◆ Only 17-20% seed produced in AP is by public sector & 21.5% of market share is with public sector
- ◆ More than 440 seed producing companies/firms operating in AP
- ◆ Registered processing plants: abt 300
- ◆ Seed producing farmers: more than 1 lakh
- ◆ Quantity of seed produced in AP is more than quantity of seed distributed (markets in other states)
- ◆ 60% to 95% of seed requirements for crops like cotton, sorghum, pearl millet, sunflower, hybrid rice etc. met from AP
- ◆ More than 10,000 seed dealers operate in AP

AP Picture

- ◆ Now, a Seed Village programme
- ◆ Certified seed is only 40% of seed supplied
- ◆ AP has highest seed replacement rates for some crops – infrastructure and supply does not match this
- ◆ The margins left for the companies and upwards, in the supply chain is high....ultimately, neither the seed producer nor seed consumer are winners
- ◆ Accountability in commercial seed trade very low
- ◆ Spurious and sub-standard seed cases on the rise every year
- ◆ Violations of scientific norms in testing for new varieties

Issues in AP

- ◆ No mechanisms for automatic monitoring of performance – seed inspection and analysis is a mechanism that tries to ensure quality before sales only
- ◆ Weakening of the public sector – APSSDC, for instance
- ◆ The problem of “high volume – low value” seeds
- ◆ Seed planning and production gone awry – procuring commercial produce as seed?
- ◆ Timely supply of quality seeds – paddy, groundnut etc. from the public sector; on the other hand, artificial shortfalls and black-marketing in the private sector
- ◆ Lack of political will in enforcing regulations
- ◆ Seed prices constantly rising
- ◆ Seed marketing issues – aggressive marketing allowed

Cotton scenario

- ◆ Completely dominated by Private sector
- ◆ Monoculture of genes and monopoly of markets
- ◆ MRTP case to reduce the price
- ◆ Cotton out of Essential Commodities Act-
Seed Control Order no more applicable-
OUT of Control

New laws-Old problems

- ◆ Patent Act
- ◆ Plant Variety Protection and Farmers Rights Act
- ◆ New Seed Bill 2004

Towards Farmer-Centric Seed Systems...

Quality, Quantity, Price, Timely Availability, Access, Accountability seem to be issues in all these places...

What then are the alternatives?

- Mulkanoor Seed Producers Cooperative
- DDS's Community Gene Fund project
- CSA's Seed Village Network programme
- Government's Seed Village Programme
- RD Community Seed Banks
- SERP Community Seed Banks