

India: overcoming drought & debt

- Emphasis on cash crops in drought-stricken areas have created hunger and debt in Andhra Pradesh
- Up to 10,000 farmer suicides in past 6 years
- Rediscovery of indigenous farming systems and local seeds has saved lives and livelihoods in 65 villages; and prevented malnutrition
- Low-caste *dalit* women held key to resilience through their knowledge and control of local seeds
- **Lesson:** Complex disasters require long-term, developmental solutions, based on local knowledge

FARMING HOPE

*STORY OF DDS
SANGHAMS*

Nature of communities



- Multiple marginalisation
- Rural
- Poor
- Dalit
- Women

"Their" agriculture



- Semi arid area
- Totally rainfed
- Ecological and diverse
- Low input
- traditional knowledge

"Others" Agriculture



- Driven by “new” policies
- Monoculture
- Totally chemical
- High external input and knowledge

The crisis & Disaster



- Cash crop dependence
- Debt ridden
- Collapse of small farmers
- Over 10,000 suicides

The Contrast



- Externalised agriculture collapses, despair
- Community controlled, autonomous farming flourishes, generates hope

SEEDS OF HOPE





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**Seed
Sovereignty**

SEED SOVEREIGNTY



- ***EVERY FARMER HAS OWN SEEDS AT HOME***
- ***WORKS WITH OVER 15 VARIETIES***

SEED SOVEREIGNTY

- *OVER 100 VILLAGES ESTABLISH OWN SEED BANKS: **COMMUNITY GENE FUND**; NO NEED FOR OUTSIDE SEEDS*
- *SUPPLIES UNAVAILABLE VARIETIES*
- *STORES FOR FUTURE*

THE CONTRAST

- *CASH CROPPING FARMERS ARE DESPARATE FOR EXTERNAL SEEDS*
- *RUSH TO GOVT DEPOTS; FIRED UPON; TRAMPLE EACH OTHER; SEVERAL DEATHS*
- *SEED SOVEREIGN **SANGHAM** WOMEN TOTALLY SELF SUFFICIENT; LEND SEEDS TO OTHERS*

ECOLOGICAL FARMING



DIVERSE, RAINFED, NO EXTERNAL INPUT

**OUR CROPS
OUR
KNOWLEDGE**



**WOMEN LED
FARMING**

**WE WILL
PRODUCE
FOR
OURSELVES**





OUR
KNOWLEDGE
CAN FEED
US





LOCAL PRODUCTION, STORAGE, DISTRIBUTION



SELF PROVISIONING COMMUNITIES

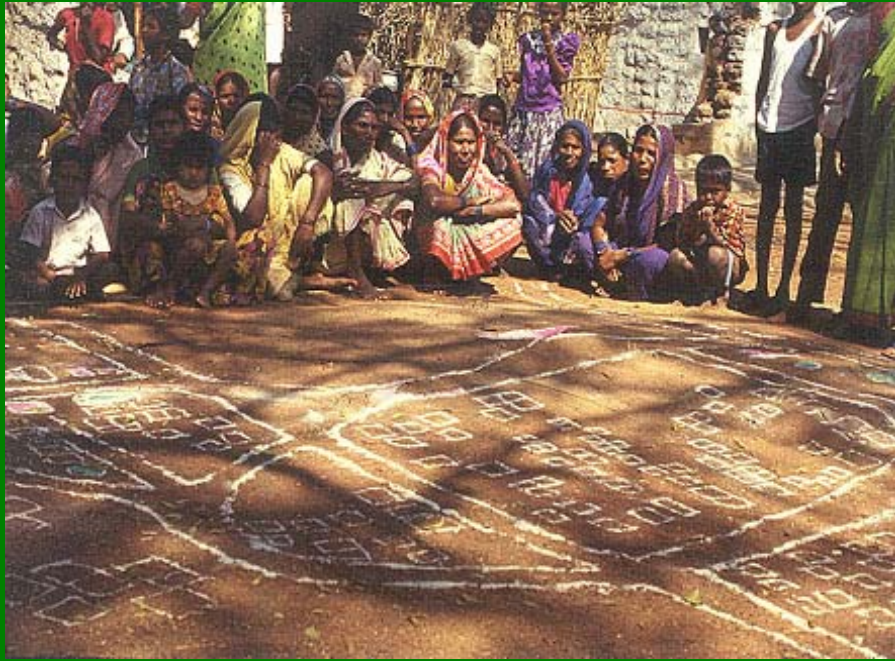
- 52 COMMUNITIES PRODUCE ALL THE FOOD & FODDER THEY NEED
- PROVIDE FOR THE LANDLESS, POOR AND THE DESTITUTE
- CREATE A SELF PERPETUATING **COMMUNITY GRAIN FUND**
- NO DEPENDENCE ON OUTSIDE FOOD

IN THE YEAR OF DROUGHT

- HIGH TECH STATE OF A P BORROWS 500,000 TONNES OF FOOD EVERY MONTH TO FEED ITS HUNGRY
- IRRIGATION, FERTILISERS, H Y V s FAIL TO PRODUCE FOR POPULATION
- WOMEN IN SEMI ARID, RAINFED DECCAN REFUSE OUTSIDE FOOD; SAY ***WE ARE SELF SUFFICIENT***

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

*INDIRECTLY WORK
WITH OVER 10,000
COMMUNITIES*



BIODIVERSITY FESTIVALS CELEBRATORY CULTURAL CAMPAIGN



BIO DIVERSITY FESTIVALS

*DIALOGUED WITH OVER
200,000 FARMERS*



SOME LESSONS

- *COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO COPE ARE ENORMOUS*
- *POOR AND THE WEAK CAN LEAD US OUT OF DISASTERS*
- *THEIR KNOWLEDGE ROOTS ARE STRONG, LIFE AFFIRMING*

SOME LESSONS

- *GLOBALISED AGRICULTURE IS A LOOMING DISASTER*
- *GOVERNMENT POLICIES MUST PREVENT THIS DISASTER BY BEING ENABLING FOR AND STAND BY SMALL FARMERS*

SOME LESSONS

- *FARMING MUST BE ALLOWED TO BE LED BY WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES*
- *LOCAL FARMING SYSTEMS MUST BE RESPECTED, STRENGTHENED & SUPPORTED THROUGH FISCAL AND AGRICULTURAL POLICIES*