

Lucknow Declaration- 1st November 2012

Towards A Paradigm shift from Globalized Food Dependency To Bio-Regional Food

Sovereignty

We, the delegates from Northern India representing peasants , farmers, dalits, nomadic tribes, indigenous peoples, artisans, women, displaced people from their land and communities working on sustainable alternatives gathered in Lucknow on 31st October and 1st November 2012 to deliberate on the issues of Bio-Regional Food Sovereignty from people's perspectives, experiences, knowledge and practices.

The two day deliberations have recognized the increasing dependence on globalized food chains and the destructive character of modern agriculture based on corporatization of land and natural resources leading to an ever increasing control of people's bio regional natural resources by agribusiness and seed companies. The bio regional natural resources are the source of life for the toiling masses and small peasants.

The two day deliberations made aware of the importance and urgent need of bio regional food sovereignty. Bio regional agricultural practices were the dominant practices before the onslaught of corporate agriculture. The farmers through their experience realized that each bio region has its specific characteristics and produces nutritious food for its people. The bio regional practices were the source of food diversity based on the nature of land attributes, topography, geology, climate, soil, vegetation, ground water etc . But today due to commercial agriculture and standardized food habits dictated by the market has led to the obliteration of food diversity. Each eco system created its own cultural systems and practices like poetry, folk songs, literature, music, seasonal agricultural festivals etc.

The bio regional agricultural practices were community based on the principles of mutual collaboration, shared work, caring and participating in each other's work. The economic principles were based on sharing of resources. These practices have created ethos of responsibility and co-responsibility.

But today, the bio regional resources of the people on which the majority of rural poor depend on their livelihoods and survival are under threat. The shameful pillage of community's collective natural resources is being plundered under the spell of neo liberal economic model; even those areas of life forms once considered sacred like genetic codes, flora, fauna, water once considered common heritage of humanity are now converted into commodities and tradable items for profit. This process has the following consequences: global warming, impending water shortage, declining area and declining yields of productive land, chemical pollution on land, freshwater and bio diversity loss.

We, the participants of the Consultation representing the collective will of the members resolve the following:

- The food sovereignty based on bio regional specificity upholds the right of the people, communities and nations to determine our own systems of production, farming, fishing which are ecologically, socially and culturally appropriate to specific regional context.
- Women's access and control over productive resources such as land, seeds, water etc must be respected and protected.
- We the participants urge the government of India to devise policies for scientific agrarian reforms to fight against poverty, hunger and malnutrition and thus assure fundamental rights of all citizens to food, energy, health and education including other economic, social and cultural rights.
- We also demand for immediate actions to stop and annul the creation of special industrial zones by forcing farmers to evict from their lands that they have nurtured for centuries, which are the tenets of corporate globalization.
- Take appropriate measures to counter increased feminization of poverty which has further added to the sufferings of already victimised women farmers; hence poverty must be eradicated as the most priority area.
- We also affirm our responsibility to protect forest, water, biological resources from which the majority of the people derive their livelihoods and call upon the responsibility of the state to protect and preserve our bio regional food sovereignty systems.
- We demand the sovereign rights of the people to develop agricultural practices related to the bio regional food sovereignty.
- Ban the use of genetically modified seeds and organisms. Urgent action is needed to prevent the genetic contamination of the vast bio diversity of the region.
- Ensure genuine participation of farming communities in the decision making process affecting their livelihood systems especially in food and agricultural policies and programs.