

# Nationwide Anti GM Campaign

9.4.07

## Press Report

A protest march was held in Najangud town on 9.4.07 under the auspices of 'Anti GM Campaign, Najangud', 'South Against Genetic Engineering (SAGE)' and 'Institute For Cultural Research And Action(ICRA)' against GE crops, specifically BT cotton invading farmers' field. Around 700 farmers and farm women from surrounding villages, especially cotton growing areas took part in the protest march.

### **The context**

It's decade since GE crops hit the world agriculture and the damage and havoc it has created is there for us to see. The hype weaved around GE crops caught up the poor vulnerable farmer who became an easy prey for the agro-chemical companies to sell their products. All through the years we have seen how GE crops have systematically debilitated the world agriculture and all the more small and marginal farmers. Wide cases of farmers' suicides, genetic contamination, economic disasters, environmental damage and unexplained decline in fauna and many more are all the clear negative manifestations of GE crops.

Over the years, it has become increasingly evident that GE crops are being met with stiff resistance by the farming community, consumers and awareness is being spread on the disastrous affects of GE crops.

In parts of Mysore district, in spite of repeated failure of BT cotton in farmers' field, the government is stridently promoting it. Government has banned DCH-32 hybrid variety of cotton, which was grown by farmers since long time in parts of the district, only to pave way to companies to promote their seeds.

In an attempt to break away from the vicious circle of BT cotton, many cotton-growing farmers in the District have taken to organic agriculture. They have saved 90% of the expenses on the external inputs and got very good yield. Organic cotton has proved its superior quality in the market. Now an independent market is emerging for organic cotton with assured supportive prices for the farmers. In such a situation, government promoting BT cotton will bring more disasters. The genetic contamination caused by BT cotton would destroy the emerging market for organic cotton.

### **The Demands**

- 1. Ban BT Cotton, which has proved disastrous to human, cattle and environment.**
- 2. Declare our district as GM free zone.**
- 3. Lift ban on DCH-32 cotton variety in chamarajanagar and Nanjangud Talukas.**
- 4. Address the technical issues related to spurious seeds, decline in yield immediately.**
- 5. Support farmers directly rather than seed and fertilizer companies.**

The procession started from the R M Circle, took a halt at ADA office in R P Road and submitted a memorandum. After receiving the memorandum the ADA declared that the ban on DCH-32 variety cotton has been lifted and the same will be made available to the farmers in the coming season. The procession proceeded to Tahashildar office in Hullalli circle and a memorandum was submitted. Tahashildar received the memorandum and promised to forward the demand immediately to the District Commissioner, Mysore. He expressed concern over the demands raised by the organisations.

The protest march was lead by Mr.M.Shivalingegowda of Anti GM Campaign, Nanjangud: Mr.K.Satya Shankar and Mr.Basavaraj Biradar of Institute for Cultural Research and Action and farmer leaders like Mr.Shivamadappa ofhaginavalu village, Mr. Nagarajappa of Kaggalur village, Mr. Puttalingashetty of Channapatna village. Anti GE and BT slogans were raised thought out the protest march.

We request you to Publish this in your esteemed daily.

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