

Initiate democratising agriculture research

Food insecurity and agrarian crisis lead one to question the government's approach to agricultural research in India

Alliance for Agricultural Research in Asia is to hold a meeting in India

November 10 to Deccan Development Society Director

The Deccan Development Society is pioneering in India.

He stated this while addressing participants at a meeting regarding the initiative 'Prajaateerpu' in Dharwad regarding agriculture scientists, representatives of NGOs, journalists, and development activists, and deliberations of

The focus of the meeting was discussing agricultural activities from the point of view, he said, that agriculture is an integral part of the economy in India and agriculture has changed. Research universities are

involved.

There was an ex-

remely disturbing shift towards biotechnology and genetic engineering as the engine to drive Indian agriculture in the coming decades. Technology was being imposed on the farmers' knowledge, which had evolved over generations. To narrow the gap, organisations which shared similar interest around the world have initiated ADARSA. "The Farmers Jury is one of the steps towards achieving Democratisation of Agriculture Research," he added

He further stated that such an event was previously organised in Andhra Pradesh, which created policy-level impact. ADARSA wants to repeat the experience by holding Farmers Jury in Karnataka. Prior to the commencing of Farmers Jury, ADARSA will hold a consultative meeting in Bangalore with experts from South Karnataka, he added.

Head of K H Patil K V K (Hulkoti) L G Hiregoudar, Dharwad All India Radio Assistant Station Director C U Belakki, Agriculture scientists Dr Devakumar, Dr Ramesh Bhat, Dr Hanumaratti, and Dr Prabhurao, farmers C R. Budihal, Sure-



Deccan Development Society Director P V Satheesh addressing a preliminary meeting of 'Prajaateerpu' in Dharwad.

shagouda Patil, seed conserver Shrenikaraju Yelavatti, Dr Sanjeev Kulkarni, Ramakrishna P Hegde, water activist Channabasappa Shivappa Kombali, Dr Prakash Bhat, Shivaraj Hunugund of Green Foundation, Dr Raghu Murthugadde, environmental activist Pandurang Hegde, Agriculture Officer Channappa Angadi were among those who shared their views on the initiative.

Background

It is everyone's knowledge that while India boasts of having

the largest number of billionaires in the world, it is 125 in the Human Development Index. It also is home to the largest number of farmers suicides in the world. Over the last ten years, nearly 1.50 lakh farmers have committed suicide. While the country claims increasing level of productivity in food production over the years, India also has the highest number of hungry people. It also has the distinction of having more children suffering from malnutrition than the sub-Saharan Africa.

A study commissioned to find out the research trend in four leading agricultural universities and two major initiatives of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) the apex body of the Indian Government for agricultural research in India clearly points to an extremely disturbing shift towards biotechnology and genetic engineering as the engine to drive Indian agriculture in the coming decades.

IAASTD

It is in this context, there is a rethinking world over on agri-

cultural research. International Bank, UN sponsored World Bank, UN Environment Programme, UNESCO, WTO, major global organizations have parted from thinking on the edge and re-

Called IAASTD, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development initiative challenges the global rethinking on the rate of change which is the cause of the Green Revolution in agriculture. It is a multi-institutional effort with experience on existing culture.

The South Asian Development Bank called Alliance for Agricultural Research in South Asia, Deccan Development Society and participating in Nepal, Bangladesh, along with other groups from