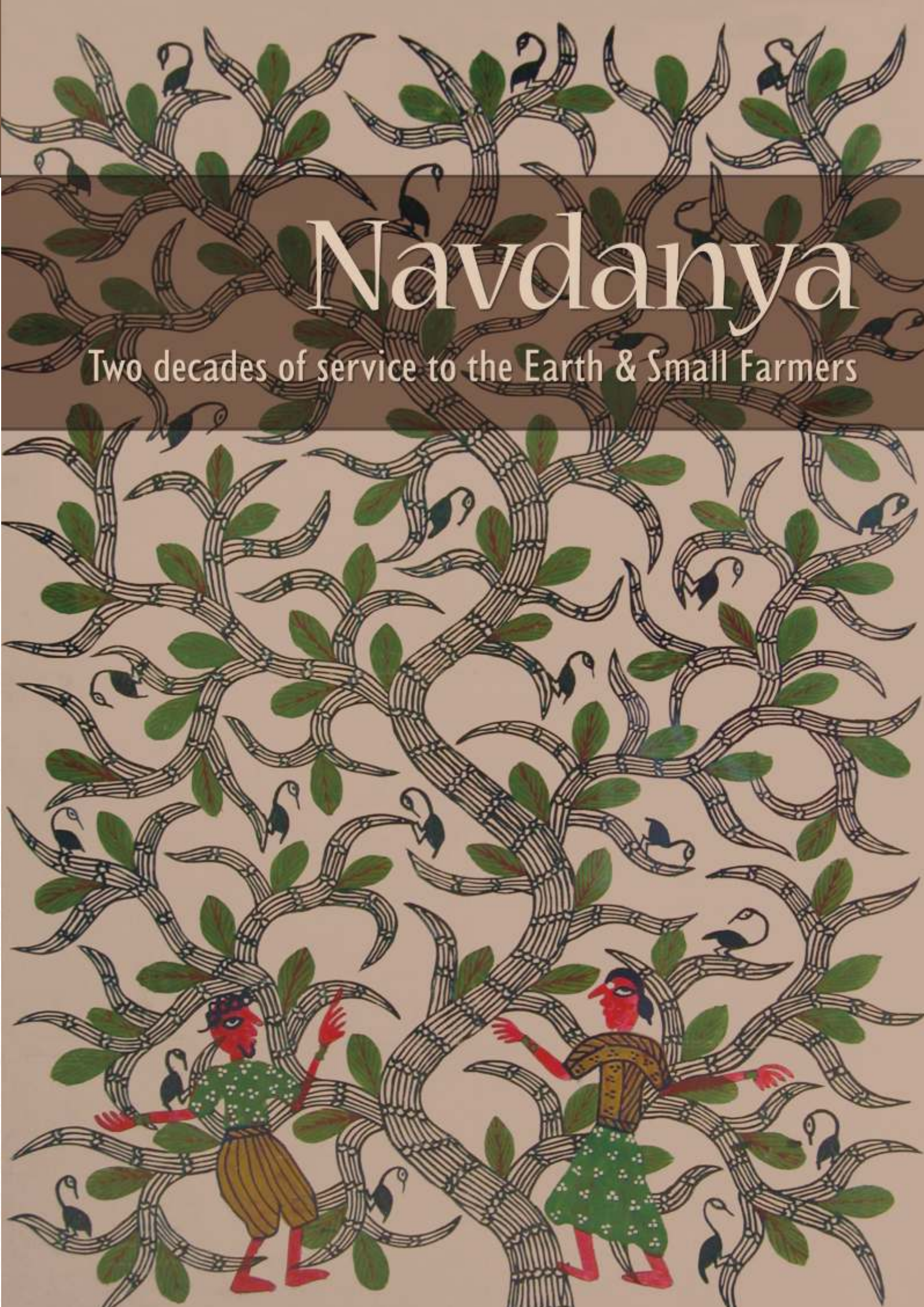
Navdanya

Two decades of service to the Earth & Small Farmers



AN INTRODUCTION TO NAVDANYA

Navdanya started as a program of the Research Foundation for science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE), a participatory research initiative founded by world-renowned Scientist and Environmentalist Dr. Vandana Shiva.

1984 was the year of the Punjab Violence and the Bhopal tragedy. This violence demanded a paradigm shift in the practice of agriculture. Navdanya was born of this search for non-violent farming, which protects biodiversity, the Earth and our small farmers. Since 1987, we have been saving seeds, promoting chemical-free organic agriculture, creating awareness on the hazards of genetic engineering, defending people's knowledge from Biopiracy. Our seed-to-table program defends people's food rights; build food sovereignty as alternative to corporate globalization, which is destroying biodiversity, our farmers and our health.

Navdanya is the first initiative in India to have started direct marketing of organic produce from our farmer members to our consumer members. At Navdanya, we believe in Food Sovereignty and Fair Trade, which provides a fair price to the farmers, creates sustainable economic opportunities for rural communities, and offers an alternative to the unfair "Free Trade."

For us, Fair Trade

- Is patent free,
- Is GMO free,
- Is chemical free,
- Guarantees just price,
- Promotes conservation of water, soil and land
- Ensures food sovereignty of the producers
- Brings healthy and nutritious food for consumers, who become co-producers through their choices.

Our program on sustainable living provides education on Earth Democracy at Bija Vidyapeeth on Navdanya Agro-biodiversity Conservation and Ecological Farm.

Navdanya informs policy makers as well as the public about the dangers of genetically modified organisms and provides an authentic and diverse picture on the status of GM crops and food in various countries. It has been mobilizing people around the world to fight for their basic democratic right to choose GMO-free food and create GMO free zone.

We fight against patents on seeds and plants and stand up for seed sovereignty and people's right to food and water security.

Navdanya is a women-led gender sensitive movement, which puts women first. Our gender program called Diverse Women for Diversity seeks to strengthen women's grassroots movements and provide women with a common international platform to air their views.

Finally, Navdanya is a movement based on diversity of races, creeds and genders, striving to protect diversity in nature and culture.

SEED KEEPERS

Strengthening Community Seed Supply

Navdanya pioneered the movement of seed saving, which began in response to the crisis of agricultural biodiversity. We realize that conservation of agricultural biodiversity is impossible without the participation of the communities who have evolved and protected the plants and animals that form the basis of sustainable agriculture.

The Navdanya program works for promoting ecological agriculture based on biodiversity, for economic and food security. For last 2 decades Navdanya has worked with local communities and organizations serving more than 4,00,000 men and women farmers from the States of Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, Jharkhand and Maharashtra. Navdanya's efforts have resulted in the conservation of more than 3000 rice varieties from all over the country including indigenous rice varieties that have been adapted over centuries to meet different ecological demands. We have also conserved 75 varieties of wheat and hundreds of millets, pseudo-cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and multipurpose plant species including medicinal plants.

Over the past two decades Navdanya has initiated Community Seed Banks with many partners including Beej Bachao Andolan in Uttar Pradesh, Green Foundation, Navdarshanam and Centre for Tropical Ecosystems, all three in Karnataka, Rishi Valley in Andhra Pradesh, Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems in Tamil Nadu, Vrihi in West Bengal, Prakruti Paramparika Bihana Sangarakhna Abhijan in Orissa, Kisan Samvardhan Kendra in Madhya Pradesh, Kisan Vigyan Kendra in Banda, Uttar Pradesh, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, CISSA and the Environment collaborative in Kerala, Jharkhand Alternative Development Forum and Manavi in Jharkhand and the Women's Alliance and Ladakh Ecology Group in Jammu & Kashmir. Navdanya encourages partners to become self sufficient & self supporting to reflect our philosophy of seed sovereignty.

Navdanya has established 54 seed banks in 16 states across the country as we believe in operating through a network of community seed banks in different ecozones of the country, and thus facilitating the rejuvenation of agricultural biodiversity, farmer's self-reliance in seed locally and nationally, and farmer's right. Additionally, these seeds conserved by Navdanya have climate resilient properties developed through hundreds of years of farmer selection, and are vital to overcome the agriculture crises caused by climate instability. For example, Navdanya has provided saline resistant seeds to Orissa after the cyclone, drought resistant seeds to Bundelkhand after the drought and flood resistant seeds to Bihar after the floods.

Community Seed Bank
Set up by Navdanya
1991 - 2008

Jammu & Kashmir
1 Ladakh
Himachal Pradesh
2 Kangra
3 Pangi
4 Rarang
5 Puruwala
Punjab
6 Bhatinda
Uttarakhand
★ Agastyamuni
★ Guptakashi
★ Bhanaj
★ Chopta
★ Bharat Nagar
★ Gorya
★ Sankri
★ Sor
★ Jakhol
★ Kharsadi
★ Purola
★ Chakrata
★ Chamiyala
★ Thauldhar
★ Pratap Nagar
★ Nagni
★ Ramgarh
Uttar Pradesh
24 Barauth
25 Faridabad
26 Chandanhedi
27 Gorakhpur
28 Banda
29 Khajurabo
30 Lalitpur
31 Padwi
32 Maoranipur
33 Terahi Maphi
Rajasthan
34 Deshma
35 Udaipur
36 Beawar
37 Jodhpur
Jharkhand
38 Dumka
39 Hazaribag
40 Ranchi
West Bengal
41 Bankuda
42 Nandigram
Bihar
43 Bhitarwa
44 Patori
Madhya Pradesh
45 Sivni
46 Indore
Chattisgrah
47 Raipur
Maharashtra
48 Daman gaon
49 Kalaspur
Karnataka
50 Sirsi
51 Bangalore
Tamilnadu
52 Chennai
Kerala
53 Alleppy
Orissa
54 Balasore

Harmonizing its philosophy, Navdanya has also established a conservation and training center at its farm in Doon Valley. More than 70,000 farmers are primary members of Navdanya. These farmers in turn are spreading the movement in their neighboring villages through Bija Yatras Today, the biodiversity conservation program which are directly run by Navdanya or supported by it, are underway in Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, West Bengal, Karnataka, Haryana.

In August 2004, Navdanya organized Vasundhara – International Organic Farmers' & Seed Keeper's Gathering- of around 300 farmers and seed keepers, to celebrate diversity and renew their vow to keep agriculture and biodiversity free and in the commons.

The Organic Revolution:

From the Suicide Economy to Living Economies

The agrarian crisis leading to farmers' suicides is a result of debt, and the debt is a result of the convergence of rising costs of non sustainable and inappropriate production systems and falling prices of agricultural products due to unjust and unfair trade patterns. Below is a list of those who have taken their lives in desperation under the burden of debt, and the name of those they have left behind. They have committed suicide by drinking the lethal pesticide, which became both the cause and source of what took their lives.

- Gurjit's husband Budh Singh
- Baljit Kaur's husband Thail Singh
- Karamjit's husband Bhola Singh
- Manjit Kaur's husband Sunder Singh
- Gurmeet's husband Gudu Singh
- Paramjit's husband Pritpal
- Gurdayal Kaur's husband Jarnail Singh
- Sukhpal's husband Gurcharan Singh
- Jeet Kaur's husband Gurmeet Singh
- Malkeet's husband Nishatar
- Tel Kaur's husband Nirpal
- Sarabjit's husband Prem Singh
- Jagat Kaur's husband Balbir
- Surjeet Kaur's husband Dilwar Singh
- Kulwinder Kaur's husband Sindoore Singh
- Manjir Kaur's husband Chattar Singh
- Amarjeet's husbank Pappi
- Jasbir's husband Nirpesh Singh
- Sukhdev Kaur's husband Birpal
- Paramjeet's husband Pappi Singh
- Sukhdev Kaur's husband Balwant Singh
- Daljit Kaur's husband Sumukh
- Harbans Kaur's son Gurmeet
- Baldev Kaur's son Mewa Singh
- Beant Kaur's husband Jailer Singh
- Tej Kaur's husband Buttu Singh
- Jasbir Kaur's son Jagga Singh
- Tej Kaur's husband Mitti Singh
- Jasbir Kaur's husband Kishan Singh
- Charanjeet Kaur's husband Mahadev Singh

And there were thousands of others...

Chemical agriculture and Genetic engineering are threatening public health and leading to nutrition decline. Costs of production, which includes hybrid and genetically engineered seeds, chemicals and irrigation etc., are increasing with every season pushing farmers into the debt trap and also to suicides. Thousands of farmers have given their life in India in last two decades because of the debt. As an insurance against such vulnerability Navdanya has pioneered the conservation of biodiversity in India and built a movement for the protection of small farmers through promotion of ecological farming and fair trade to ensure the healthy, diverse and safe food. The movement is now spread throughout India through our partner organizations and farmers networks.

Navdanya's pioneering research on the hazards of chemical farming, the costs of industrial agriculture and the risks of genetic engineering have led to a paradigm shift. Our research has proved that contrary to the dominant assumptions; ecological agriculture is highly productive and is the only lasting solution to hunger and poverty.

Navdanya have so far trained above 400,000 men and women farmers, students, govt. officials, representatives of national as well as international NGO's Voluntary Organizations on biodiversity conservation and organic farming. We have also trained several large groups like Yuvacharya of Art of Living, NGO led by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. The group is presently working in about 5000 villages of India. Navdanya trained secretaries and Extension Officers of the Tibetan govt. in exile and now their settlements across the country are in conversion to organic. Biodiversity based farming has changed the economic status of the member farmer across the country.

Organic agriculture is not just a source of safer, healthier, tastier food. It is an answer to rural poverty. Organic agriculture is not just a method of farming. It is saving the Earth and farmers' lives.

High cost corporate agriculture is having adverse impact on the livelihood of farmers. The increasing cost of production and the falling prices combined with the decline in farm credit is putting great burden on farmers, which is pushing them to desperation. Since 1997, more than 250,000 farmers from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Punjab have taken their lives. Since then, RFSTE has been monitoring the impact of trade liberalization policies on Indian farmers and Indian agriculture since the new economic policy (1991) and WTO rules of the agreement on agriculture (1995) came into force.

In celebration of non-violent organic agriculture, every year Navdanya organizes Albert Howard memorial lecture on 2nd October, initiated in the year 2000 to pay tribute to the two messiahs of sustainability and non-violence; Mahatma Gandhi and sir Albert Howard. Past speakers have included Frances Moore Lappé, Masanobu Fukuoka, Marion Nestle and H.H. Prince Charles.

FAIR TRADE

Connecting Farmers to Co-producers

At Navdanya we ensure the linking of the Seed- to- the-Table and of Farmers to Co-producers through our Fair Trade Initiatives. One of our seminal contributions to Fair Trade practices has been the marketing of organic agricultural produces directly from the farmers to the consumers, who through their consumption patterns become the co-producers of agriculture. To this end, we have two outlets in New Delhi. Our very first outlet is at Dilli Haat, which is a platform where crafts people and artisans offer their wares to buyers in the true spirit of Swadeshi; recently to better service both our consumer members as well as our farmer members whose numbers are growing, Navdanya opened another outlet at E-52, Hauz Khas Market, New Delhi. We have a similar space also in Dehradun, the capital of Uttarakhand, a state where we have a sizeable number of farmer members.

At our outlets, we offer a very diverse range of agricultural produce both as grains and in a processed form. The diversity by way of rice, wheat, millets, cracked wheat, breakfast cereals, cookies etc. reflects our commitment to conserving local seeds and biodiversity, practicing a water prudent agriculture and ensuring the livelihoods of small farmers and women in the face of globalization.

We complete the seed-to-table experience through our Café located in Dilli Haat, New Delhi, where you can eat organic food made from nutritious grains including those that are disappearing and being forgotten. Our menu based on diversity will make eating out a treat for all, even those who have major diet restrictions due to diabetes, high blood pressure and food allergies.

We express our concern for the health of the Earth and its people in many other ways; through our door-to-door organic vegetable basket delivery scheme, our annual Abir Gulal festival to celebrate a toxic free Holi, our indigenous cold drinks festivals throughout the scorching summer months to help you beat the heat in a healthy way, while also being respectful to the Earth, water and people's livelihood.

As a recognition to the services Navdanya is rendering to the propagation of sustainable food producing practices at the level of small farmers and artisan food communities, Slow Food, the International Movement for the protection of traditional foods, invited 13 Navdanya Food Communities to be part of Terra Madre, an assembly of more than 5,000 artisan food producers from all over the world. Around seventy Navdanya food growers and food processors attended the very first Terra Madre event held in October 2004, Torino, and have attended again in 2006 and 2008.

For us, Terra Madre is a celebration of all that we believe in and have been practicing for more than two decades; an honest agriculture in which prices do not lie, which does not exploit the earth and the earth's caretakers. Terra Madre is also a celebration of our practice of living economies in which we co-produce with the earthworm and the spider, with the mychorizzae and the fungi. We are all connected in the web of life, and it is food that spins that web.

Freedom from **GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS** (GMOS)

Navdanya has led the national and international movement for biosafety and against the dangers of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in agriculture. Working with citizens' movements, grassroot organizations, NGOs and governments, we have made significant contributions to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Biosafety Protocol.

Contrary to the three myths i.e. the myth of feeding the hunger, protecting the planet and food safety, that are being used to make genetic engineering the dominant technology used in the production and processing of food, our research and campaigns have highlighted the deepening crisis of hunger and starvation, debt and farmers suicides caused by high cost but unreliable GM and hybrid seeds.

In the field of food and agriculture, we have raised serious concerns about the ecological and health impacts of GMOs. Since 1991 we have been campaigning against the commercialization of GM crops and foods in India and have highlighted the dangerous effects of these crops and foods on our biodiversity, environment and health. We are seriously involved in enlightening the public at large on its harmful effects.

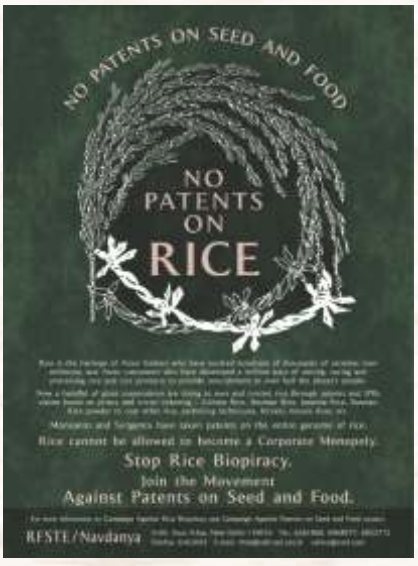
Since 1997, Navdanya is actively monitoring the GM related activities and development in India and conducted field surveys on the performance of Bt. cotton every year during the field trials as well as after its commercialization and proved companies and governments' claims deceitful and fallacious. Through The Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE), we have also filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court in 1999 against US seed giant MONSANTO and Indian authorities for the illegal and unauthorized introduction of GMOs in India through field trials of these crops, bypassing and violating environmental laws, without involving and informing the local authorities and the local public.

Navdanya has also been involved in and leading campaigns against GMOs on an international level. During the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial, Navdanya joined 740 other organizations in presenting their opposition to WTO's attempt to undermine the right of individual countries to take appropriate steps to protect their farmland, environment and consumers from the risks posed by GM foods and crops.

In India RFSTE and other concerned groups have demanded that the Government fulfill their obligation towards the Indian farmers, Indian consumers, our environment, our diversity and our very agriculture by imposing a 10 years moratorium immediately on the impending release of GMOs in this country. We therefore must act fast. Let's get together and demand for complete ban on GM seeds and foods in India.

Reclaiming the Intellectual and **BIOLOGICAL COMMONS**

The new IPR laws embodied in the TRIPs agreement of WTO have unleashed an epidemic of the piracy of nature's creativity and millennia of indigenous innovation. RFSTE/ Navdanya started the campaign against biopiracy with the Neem Campaign in 1994 and mobilized 1,00,000 signatures against neem patents and filed a legal opposition against the USDA and WR Grace patent on the fungicidal properties of neem (no. 436257 B1) in the European Patent Office (EPO) at Munich, Germany. Along with RFSTE, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) of Germany and Ms. Magda Alvoet, former Green Member of the European Parliament were party to the challenge. The patent on Neem was revoked in May 2000 and it was reconfirmed on 8th March 2005 when the EPO revoked in entirety the controversial patent, and adjudged that there was "no inventive step" involved in the fungicide patent, thus confirming the 'prior art' of the use of Neem.



In 1998, Navdanya started a campaign against Basmati biopiracy (Patent No. 5663484) of a US company RiceTec. On Aug 14th 2001 Navdanya achieved another victory against biopiracy and patent on life when the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) revoked a large section of the patent on Indian Basmati rice by the US corporations RiceTec Inc. These included (i) the generic title of the RiceTec patent No. 5663484, which earlier referred to Basmati rice lines; (ii) the sweeping and false claims of RiceTec having 'invented', traits of rice seeds and plants including plant height, grain length, aroma which are characteristics found in our traditional Basmati varieties and (iii) claims to general methods of breeding which was also piracy of traditional breeding done by farmers and our scientists (of the 20 original claims only three narrow ones survived).

The next major victory against biopiracy for Navdanya came in October 2004 when the European Patent Office in Munich revoked Monsanto's patent on the Indian variety of wheat "Nap Hal". This was the third consecutive victory on the IPR front after Neem and Basmati, making it the third consecutive victory. This was made possible under the Campaign against Patent on Life as well as against Biopiracy respectively. MONSANTO, the biggest seed corporation, was assigned a patent (EP 0445929 B1) on wheat on 21 May 2003 by the European Patent Office in Munich under the simple title "plants". On January 27th 2004 Research Foundation for Science Technology and Ecology (RFSTE) along with Greenpeace and Bharat Krishak Samaj (BKS) filed a petition at the European Patent Office (EPO), Munich, challenging the patent rights given to Monsanto on Indian Landrace of wheat, Nap Hal. The patent was revoked in October 2004 and it once again established the fact that the patents on biodiversity, indigenous knowledge and resources are based on biopiracy and there is an urgent need to ban all patents on life and living organisms including biodiversity, genes and cell lines.

Through citizen actions, we have won three-biopiracy battles and have thus contributed to the defense of farmers' rights, indigenous knowledge and biodiversity. Navdanya's focus on collective, cumulative innovation embodied in indigenous knowledge has created a worldwide movement for the defence of the intellectual rights of communities.

BIJA SATYAGRAHA:

Farmer's rights and seed freedom

Since 1991, Navdanya has organized farmers through the Bija Satyagraha Movement to keep seed in farmer's hand and to not cooperate with IPR Laws that make seed a corporate monopoly and make seed saving and seed sharing a crime. In 1993, half a million farmers participated in a historic Bija Satyagraha rally at Bangalore's Cuban's Park. This was the first international protest against WTO.

In March 1999, Navdanya reasserted the Bija Satyagraha Movement with over 2500 groups to defend farmers' rights and seed freedom in the face of biopiracy and seed monopolies. Satyagraha, or the fight for truth was woven into India's freedom struggle.

Bija Satyagraha is

- a grass-roots campaign on patent issues,
- an assertion to people's rights to biodiversity and
- a determination not to co-operate with IPR systems

that make seed saving and seed exchange a crime

Navdanya spearheaded the movement to protect the farmer's rights of seed saving and exchange. Navdanya organized several seminars, yatras, signature campaigns to create awareness amongst the farmers and also to sensitize the policy makers and politicians of the country. In September 2000, over 400 farmers from all over the world came together at the unique Beej Panchayat (People's Seed Tribunal) to give evidence of the crisis of seed and agriculture in the wake of globalization, that is pushing small farmers to suicide. Today the Bija Satyagraha has spread through large number of communities and groups all the country.

Responding to the deepening crisis, RFSTE and Navdanya took the initiative to organize a Bija Yatra (Seed March) in the year 2000 with the focus on Seed Rights, Seed Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture. Navdanya's Bija Yatras have created awareness through seed fairs, seed exchange programs and initiation of new community seed banks.

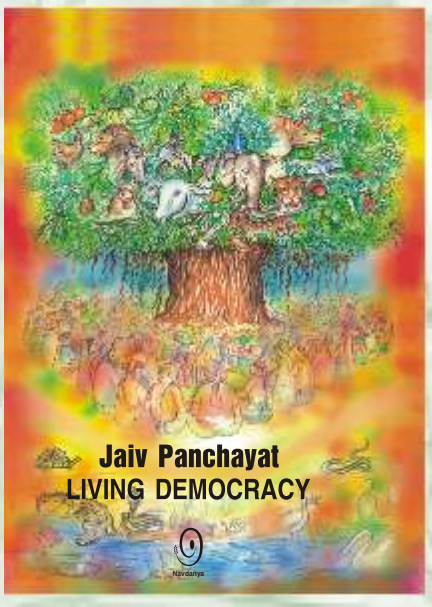
Under the Bija Satyagraha campaign, Navdanya / RFSTE along with other several organizations, as part of this campaign, achieved a major victory when seed giant Syngenta tried to grab Dr. Richharia's precious collection of over 22,972 rice germplasms. The biotech giant had signed a MoU with the Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in oder to have access to the priceless collection of rice diversity.

We have been organizing Bija Panchayat, in different parts of the country against the existing IPRs laws, i.e. Patent Act, Seed Act, the PVP Act and Biodiversity Act, to articulate the people's voice so that the whole discussion and policy on the seed is not determined by the corporate sector and interests driver by profit motives. Navdanya, RFSTE and West Bengal Institute of Juridical Sciences drafted an alternative IPR law, which provides sovereign rights to the nation over its genetic resources and give recognitions to the local community over its biodiversity.

To counter the globalised IPR system to be implemented at the national level, Navdanya conceptualized the idea of Common Property Rights in Knowledge as early as in 1993 to counter the private IPRs system and to prevent biopiracy. RFSTE/ Navdanya drafted model laws, which were then used and further developed by the Third World Network and the Organization of African Unity for creating sui generis options based on community rights to TRIPs.

In 2005, Navdanya with its partners undertook Bija Satyagraha campaigns to declare non-cooperation with the new Patent Laws, which allows patent on life and the proposed Seed Act, which would criminalize farmers.

In response to the varied attacks on farmer's livelihoods, Navdanya organized Bija Yatras through Maharastra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in 2006, and through Bihar, Jharkhand, M.P., U.P. and Rajasthan in 2008, to promote an agriculture of hope that uses heritage seeds and farmers' agro-ecological knowledge. Farmers of these regions have been locked into a dependence on corporate seeds to supply cash crops to world markets, which has led to the collapse of farm incomes due to inability to compete with the agriculture of the rich countries that receive up to 400 billion dollars in subsidies.



JAIV PANCHAYAT

Living Democracy

Ecological agriculture is not possible unless biodiversity is in the commons, and is free from the threat of extinction posed by technologies like genetic engineering. Hence, on 5th June 1999, on the World Environment Day, Navdanya launched Jaiv Panchayat - the Living Democracy Movement- to fight against the biopiracy and IPR monopolies on life forms.

The "Jaiv Panchayat" is the Biodiversity Panchayat. It is living democracy – both in being the democracy of all life, and democracy in everyday life. It consists of the entire gram sabha (gram ke sab log) women, children and minority communities and not merely those who are on the electoral rolls of the village. This form of the Panchayat renders the community the decision-maker on all matters pertaining to biodiversity and its conservation. In doing so, the Jaiv Panchayat lays down the parameters within which the elected Panchayat body can take action vis-à-vis biodiversity.

You too can help bring to life a Jaiv Panchayat and make real the idea of a living democracy - a democracy for life in all its diversity.

Things you can do

- Organise all the people of your village into a Jaiv Panchayat and help the people understand that their Jaiv Panchayat will be a decision making body on all matters pertaining to the conservation, management, and protection of all biological resources of that area.
- Organise meetings / awareness campaigns with the Jaiv Panchayat, and discuss the diverse kinds of biological wealth available and used in your area
- Make a formal declaration that all the biological resources belong only to the community.
- Prepare a community biodiversity register (CBR) to prevent erosion of biological resources and knowledge.
- A few active members (Jaiv Rakshaks) from amongst the Gram Sabha can take the responsibility of maintaining and updating the register periodically.

The first Jaiv Panchayat was brought to life by a gathering of about 1000 villagers of Agastyamuni village in district Rudraprayag, Garhwal, Uttaranchal on 5th June, 1999- the World Environment Day. The Jaiv Panchayat campaign launched by Navdanya is a part of the much broader movement called Bija Satyagraha. As a part of the movement over 4000 village communities have affirmed their rights to their biodiversity and have taken a pledge to conserve, rejuvenate and protect their biodiversity. There are more than 85 Jaiv Panchayats in Garhwal alone, where people have asserted their inalienable and common rights to their natural resources. In many of the Jaiv Panchayats, the elected leaders are also the leaders of the Movement. Many of them have declared their villages GM-free zones as well.

Jaiv Panchayat records the biodiversity of the village in their own Community Biodiversity Register (CBR) to protect and reclaim the biological and intellectual commons. It has rejuvenated indigenous knowledge and promoted its propagation from grandmother to grandchildren.

Mandakini Milan Declaration

5th June 1999

Agastyamuni, Distt. Rudraprayag, Garhwal, Uttaranchal

Today, on 5th June 1999, on the auspicious occasion of World Environment Day, we the people of Agastyamuni, take the solemn pledge that we will continue to protect our plants, trees, animals, cattle, and our entire diverse biological wealth, as a revered gift and our ancestral heritage.

This pledge assumes more significance as it is being taken in Agastyamuni, the sacred land of Rishi Agastya, who through his dedication and research stabilized the mighty Himalayan Mountain (therefore the name Agastya - the stabilizing force). Both humanity and nature have greatly benefited from the diligent research of Maharishi Agastya, Maharishi Jagdamni, Rishi Atri, Mata Anusuiya and other saints. Their work has contributed to the conservation and sustainable use of all kinds of medicinal plants and floral wealth and other precious biodiversity of these mountains. The research has been further enriched by Maharishi Charak and other saints and health practitioners who compiled the volumes of Samhita and Nighantu detailing the uses and properties of our biological resources. These volumes were bestowed to the community for well-being and continue to live through the Ayurveda.

From our forefathers we have inherited the right to protect the biodiversity of our Himalayan region and also the corresponding duty to utilize these biological resources for the good of all people. Therefore we pledge, by way of this Declaration, that we shall not let any destructive elements unjustly exploit and monopolies these precious resources through illegal means. So that in our communities and countries we can truly establish a living people's democracy wherein each and every individual can associate herself/himself with the conservation, sustainable and just use of these biological resources in her/his everyday practical living. This tradition of sharing shall be kept alive through the *Jaiv Panchayat* - the living democracy. The Jaiv Panchayat will decide on all matters pertaining to biodiversity. Through such decentralized democratic decision-making we will make real the democracy for life.

Cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, lions, tigers, and in fact all animals, birds, plants, trees, precious medicinal plants and manure, water, soil, seeds are our biological resources and we shall not let any outsider exercise any control over them through patents or destroy it through genetic engineering.

As a community, we shall together be the guardians of our biological heritage.

EARTH DEMOCRACY

From Life destroying to life preserving cultures

Seed Sovereignty (Beej Swaraj), Food Sovereignty (Anna Swaraj), Water Sovereignty (Jal Swaraj) and Land Sovereignty (Bhu Swaraj).

We need once more to feel at home on the earth and with each other. We need a new paradigm to respond to the fragmentation caused by various forms of fundamentalism. We need a new movement, which allows us to move from the dominant and pervasive culture of violence, destruction and death to a culture of non-violence, creative peace and life. That is why in India, Navdanya started the Earth democracy movement, which provides an alternative worldview in which humans are embedded in the Earth Family, we are connected to each other through love, compassion, not hatred and violence and ecological responsibility and economic justice replaces greed, consumerism and competition as objectives of human life.

Former Indian Prime Minister **V. P. Singh** was a firm believer in earth democracy and was a leader in the Bhuj Swaraj movement.

Following Gandhiji's inspiration from the Salt Satyagraha we declared the launch of 'Bija Satyagraha' against Seed Laws and Patent Laws that seek to make sharing and saving of seed a crime by making seed the "Property" of companies like Monsanto, forcing us to pay royalties for what is our collective heritage. The Bija Swaraj campaign, launched by Navdanya, demands that Indian laws do not legalise patents on seed and food, and TRIPs is reviewed to exclude patents on seed and food. Under Bija Swaraj, we pledge to protect sovereignty to save our seeds and grow our food freely without MNCs domination and control. We have received the precious gift of biodiversity and seeds from nature and our ancestors and we pledge to protect our rich biological heritage and fundamental freedom to save and exchange seeds.

At the Anna Panchayat (Public Tribunal on Hunger) in May 2001, Navdanya launched its campaign on food rights and food sovereignty (Anna Swaraj) for a genuinely decentralized democratic and sustainable food system. The entry of companies like Cargill into direct procurements, transportation and processing is leading to the closure of small local and larger agro-processing units that provide livelihoods to lakhs of people. We demand that food be accepted as a Fundamental Human Right and is produced and distributed in a democratic manner.

Pressured by the World Bank, W.T.O. and corporate interests, the Indian government has been trying to sign away water rights to giant MNCs like Coca Cola and Vivendi, ignoring concerns for people's needs, sustainability and democratic access to water. In the year 2000, Navdanya launched the Jal Swaraj Movement to protect our water from privatization and commodification and to promote traditional water harvesting systems and equitable access to water. RFSTE and Citizens Front for Water Democracy (a coalition of more than 100 groups) have successfully stopped the World Bank scheme of privatizing Delhi's water supply to Suez, effectively stealing Ganga water from farmers. We have also stopped Coca Cola's thievery of Kerala's ground water, creating profits by hoarding from and polluting the water that belonged to the commons. We are also collaborating with farmer groups from Bundelkhand and Uttarankhand to fight against the River Linking Projects like Ken-Betwa and Sharda-Yamuna, which are nothing but theft of our water and water heritage.

Bhu Swaraj is the foundation for economic and food security. Nevertheless, India's economic growth has violently dispossessed millions from their land and fundamental rights, as massive land grabs are perpetuated by the state and corporations. We oppose this corporate hijack because land is a sacred trust for human sustenance and cannot be used as a commodity with no concern for the lives of people. Strongly believing that land must belong to those who till it and nurse it and for whom it is a source of sustenance, we immediately call for measures to ensure land sovereignty.

Diverse Women for Diversity

Ecofeminism is the philosophy of Diverse Women for Diversity - an international movement started in the mid -90s with RFSTE/Navdanya as founding members. Diverse Women seeks to defend diversity, peace and democracy from the growing threats of monoculture, war, totalitarianism and fundamentalism.

Women of different regions have organised as Diverse Women to provide an alternative voice at the World Food Summit in Rome (1996) WTO meetings in Seattle in 1999, the World Bank meetings in Prague in 2000, the Convention on Biological Diversity in Bratislava (1998) and Nairobi (2000) and Rio+10 at Johannesburg (2002).

Women leaders who have founded the movement have provided alternatives to a global economy dominated by capitalist patriarchy and have pioneered the resistance to genetic engineering at the scientific and movement level.

In India, DWD articulates its commitment to diversity and non-violent technology through the National Alliance for Women's Food Rights, which has spearheaded the movement against genetic engineering by taking up issues such as dumping of GE soya, destruction of the domestic mustard oil industry, and policies that lead to the destruction of natural sources of vitamin A to make way for genetically-engineered rice and mustard.

The Diverse Women for Diversity organised the Third International Women and Water Conference held at Navdanya's Bija Vidyapeeth from the 25th to the 28th of February 2005. The Conference witnessed the confluence of 75 women representatives from 15 nations.

The women representatives took a pledge to work together, to form a network, communicate with each other and to wage a war against water barons. They also vowed to honour and revive the spiritual

connection with water, to take responsibility towards stewardship of water, to work towards the equitable access to and sustainable use of water and to raise awareness through education.

Recognizing that for thousands of years women have produced their own food and guaranteed food security for their children and whole communities, DWD has organized 17 Mahila Ann Swarajs throughout India to honor and strengthen this work. These groups are women-led food processing groups that create food sovereignty by protecting livelihoods and preserving culture and women's knowledge and skills.

DWD's Statement of Concern

We women, in all our vibrant and fabulous diversity, have witnessed the increasing aggression against the human spirit, human mind, and human body and the continued invasion of and assault upon the Earth and all her diverse species. And we are enraged.

We demand of governments, international organisations, transnational corporations and individual men who share our rage, that they address the crisis that has been caused by the creation of monocultures and reduction, enclosure, and extinction of biological and cultural diversity.

We insist that those who would address the crisis listen to and take leadership from women, indigenous peoples, farmers, and all who have raised these concerns at the local level. We ask them to heed those whose wisdom, stewardship, knowledge and commitment has already been demonstrated by the preservation of the diversity we celebrate today.

Bija Vidyapeeth

Education for Earth Citizenship

Dr. Vandana Shiva

In a world dominated by greed and competition, speed and restlessness, pollution and ecological destruction, war and violence, RFSTE/NAVDANYA's educational initiative Bija Vidyapeeth at the Navdanya Organic Farm, offers a unique opportunity to explore and practise the art and science of sustainability based on the principles of sustainability and diversity, in the peaceful, pollution-free setting of Navdanya's organic farm in Doon Valley.

Tewolde Egziabher

Satish Kumar

The Bija Vidyapeeth offers insights into the tenets of sustainability and deep democracy through interactions with the foremost intellectuals of our times and sustainable communities in an ambience that reinvigorates our vital link with nature, promotes contemplation, enquiry and dynamic action.

Ela Gandhi

The rich biodiversity of the farm provides the context for education in earth democracy in which participants learn from nature, and from each other, while they study, live, clean, cook and eat together. Most of the food served at Bija Vidyapeeth comes from the farm itself.

Samdhong Rinpoche

While interacting with leading thinkers and intellectual's participants also get an opportunity to live as a community and engage in the practice of sustainability. All participants learn cooking, gardening, composting, yoga, the practice of music and theatre. Where essential to the course, participants also interact with communities through field trips.

Oscar Olivera

Frances Moore Lappé

At Bija Vidyapeeth you will learn from and dialogue with the likes of **Satish Kumar**, editor of Resurgence, **Vandana Shiva**, author of *Monoculture of mind*, **Fritjof Capra**, author of *Tao of Physics*, the **Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche**, Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-exile, **Arundathi Roy**, author of *God of Small Things*, **Frances Moore Lappé**, author of *Diet for a Small Planet*. Past course titles have included, **Grandmother's Universtiy: Women's Traditional Knowledge in Food and Health - Swaraj: Gandhi, Globalization and Self Organization** and the **Gourmand Course on Monsoon Delights** with a Mango festival.

Arundhati Roy

Navdanya

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