

Kumbalangi Declaration on Sustaining Rice



Painting: Dhyanraj Keezhara

In the Second International Year of Rice, 2004, we, the participants representing 57 organisations, primarily from rice growing states of India, working on sustainable ways of farming, environment, policy, consumer rights, farm labour having come together on a discussion on rice as part of our culture, as a basis for food security, and as a community heritage and having deliberated on the traditional practices of rice cultivation, problems facing its sustenance and the various initiatives in sustaining rice hereby recognize that

1. Genetically modified rice and lab-hybrid rice have no role in ensuring food security and sustaining rice in the country. On the contrary these are known to threaten the food sovereignty of the farmer community.
2. The green revolution has resulted in the destruction of agriculture and rural communities and has miserably failed in providing sufficient safe food and dignity of life.
3. Given the declining yields and harmful effects on human beings, plants, animals and environment health and the heavy losses to farmers, the dependence on chemical inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides should be phased out. Moreover, it is now proven beyond doubt that to ensure safe food and to sustain rice, pesticides are not required.
4. The way forward is to work collectively on traditional, ecological and sustainable agricultural practices.
5. That such an approach has the potential to feed the country with sufficient and safe food.
6. That the food sufficiency of small and marginal farmer families is an important priority for us.
7. That farmers, women and tribals particularly with their traditional and proven indigenous wisdom and knowledge need visibility and recognition in agricultural decision making, research and extension work.
8. That livelihood and food sovereignty are essential for ensuring access to food.
9. That such an approach has the potential to address the food insecurity of landless labourers, indigenous communities, artisans, self-employed workers, small and marginal farmers.
10. That the traditional wealth of knowledge and practices are not properly documented and understood in the terrains of agriculture in the country.
11. That the traditional spaces of sharing and owning both experiences and resources without the influences of international trade, globalization and liberalization policies and market forces need to be protected.
12. That food sovereignty of the communities is at many a time met through the commons. The right to the common should belong to the community.
13. That there must be informed, conscious, collective action to sustain rice beyond the international year.

Hence, we declare

1. That the way forward is to adopt, protect, sustain and promote traditional, ecological agriculture, community wisdom and local specific practices and methods.
2. That chemical inputs and pesticide use in rice cultivation be banned.
3. That incentives and supports be provided to support organic and traditional systems of farming.
4. That the introduction of genetically modified organisms and lab-hybrid varieties be banned.
5. That the germplasm of rice collected from farmers of this country in the last 40-50 years and preserved in the research institutes of the country and international should be given back to the communities and the information about this precious wealth should be put in the public domain.
6. That any forms of legislation at any levels intended to patent/monopolise life forms, products, processes, traditional knowledge and practices should not be allowed.
7. That agriculture should be excluded from all present and future trade agreements.
8. That we shall work collectively to sustain rice.

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Save our Rice Campaign in India is facilitated by Thanal, Thiruvananthapuram and IIRD, Aurangabad
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