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Research Seminar Announcement

- Speaker: Esha Shah
- Date: Thursday 23 March 2006
- Time: 16:00 hours
- Topic: 'Global and Local Elites Join Hands: Development and Diffusion of Genetically Modified Bt Cotton Technology in Gujarat, India'
- Venue: UNU-MERIT, Maastricht
Conference Room 1
- Participation: All UNU- MERIT staff and students, and individuals from other universities, research institutes and organisations.
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Abstract

Thousands of farmers in India have been cultivating Bt cotton seeds at least three years before the patent protected Bt seeds of Monsanto were approved by the Indian government in 2001. The sheer existence and popularity of Bt cotton seeds posits a paradoxical problem: While the proponents and opponents are fiercely debating the potential risk of genetically modified crop technology for society and environment, farmers have quietly appropriated and massively diffused the genetically engineered knowledge on cotton seeds. The paper examines this paradox.

The paper makes a central argument that the involvement of local actors in generation and diffusion of GM technological knowledge does not ensure automatic democratization of use and management of resources. The case of adoption of Bt

technology shows that the local elites have political agency that joins hands with the global elites in perpetuating the hegemony of dominant technological paradigm.

The paper ultimately makes a point that the risk assessment and development of appropriate regulatory framework may not be sufficient to evaluate the appropriateness or social desirability of genetically engineered crop technology as they do not address issues such as social context of technological choice.

Speaker:

Esha Shah is a visiting fellow with the faculty of arts and culture, University of Maastricht. She is scheduled to join knowledge, technology and society group at Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex in September. Her research work examines currently dominant development model through critical assessment of role of science and technology in society.

For more information, please contact

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