

# SHAREHOLDERS TO STAKEHOLDERS

A SUSTAINABLE JOURNEY AND APPROACH  
THROUGH ECHO OVER LAST TWO DECADES



RESEARCH | ADVOCACY | ACTION | ENGAGEMENT | COLLABORATION



# OUR STAKEHOLDERS

COMMUNITY

ADVOCACY GROUPS

GOVERNMENT

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

AUDIT AGENCIES

NGOs

CHILDREN

PARENTS

TEACHERS

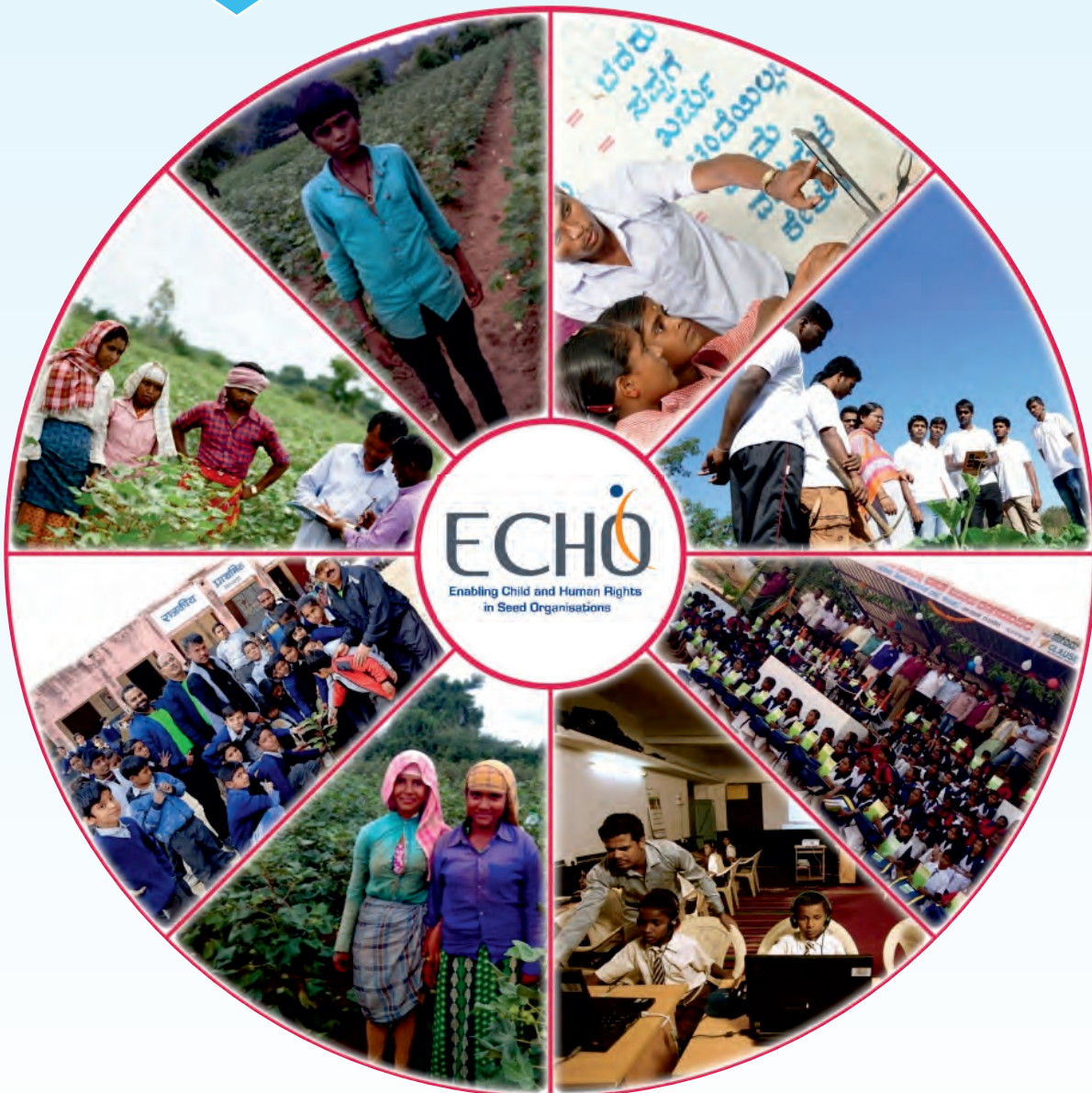
SEED COMPANIES

SEED COORDINATORS

LABOUR AGENTS

FARM LABOUR

FARMER



# EVOLUTION OF ECHO

Cotton seed production has been a domestic smallholder enterprise in India since decades. During 1980s the growth rate of textile production in the country peaked and consequently the demand for cotton and cotton seed started growing, witnessing the entry of big seed companies. Primarily focused on producing hybrid seed and maximizing revenues, though it has brought significant changes in the quantity and quality of cotton production in India besides additional employment, the sector has overlooked their impact on the rural society where they operated. Farmers contracted by such companies employed children in seed production farms with impunity. Meagre compensation to the farm labourers and health & safety issues also grew in prominence. As the negative externality of seed production became more pronounced, it attracted the attention of social researchers, investors, media, global stakeholders and government. Pressure started mounting on the seed companies to tackle the issues and to follow the triple bottom-line approach and this situation lead to united efforts of seed companies with other

stakeholders like NGOs, investors, social researchers, government etc.,

With this ideology, CLEG (Child Labour Elimination Group) an initiative of ASI (Association of Seed Industries) was taken shape way back in 2003, primarily focusing on child labour through combined efforts of seed companies and NGOs. Ever since inception of CCP from CLEG in 2005 as a platform for planning, reviewing and advocating relevant and suitable best practices for mitigating child labor issue in agriculture in general and seed supply chain in specific, CCP has been instrumental in bringing seed companies to work together towards a common and chronic issue of child labor and allied issues. Further, CCP is one of the most successful multi-stakeholder approaches globally and got accolades from government, social investors and national and international NGOs. Around two decades long journey of CCP helped the stakeholders to learn from the experience and develop critical understanding of the social and cultural aspects. This helped the member companies to create concrete solutions and ensure effective implementation. Thus, CCP team of seed



companies, NGOs and social researchers had constantly upgraded their tools to handle social issues in seed supply chain processes. As compared to 2 to 3 seed companies as members of CCP in 2004, now it has reached more than 15 for considering the criticality of issues they are facing and the felt need necessitated and emerged from ground level issues. The brainstorming is not just limited to child labor menace and it is beyond that, issues like minimum wages, farm safety are also brought to the table. The efforts of CCP thus got appreciations from bodies like FLA, ICN, Norges bank considering its ability to positively act upon the issues. The experience of CCP making many interested parties to look at it for readymade solutions.

Considering over two decades experience and need to further strengthen CCP, members during June, 2017 meeting felt the necessity to aim at providing a proper frame work and set up for smooth functioning of CCP through formation of ECHO.

The group has now transformed into ECHO forum for the seed industry that plans to bring cohesiveness and collective energy to the efforts against human rights violations in the hybrid seed supply chain. Thus, over last several years the industry and NGOs are closely working on various measure and have brought systematic changes with field bound monitoring mechanism to address child rights issues. The initiatives of the group have been successful in changing the mindset of rural community especially farmers, promoting a framework of guidelines to further bring down child labor by developing efficient Field Monitoring Systems, divisive Incentives & Sanctions Scheme, conceive ways and means to increase farmers' profitability and productivity, make available low-interest credit schemes to farmers, mobilize community awareness about child labor and 'Revitalize Education' by establishing bridge schools in association with the renowned NGOs, to rehabilitate children from hybrid cottonseed farms and stakeholder dialogue to continuously improve the program.

Even after many years of adhering to the United Nations convention on Child rights, employing child children in various industries is very much widespread in many countries. An estimated 158 million children aged five to 14 are engaged in child labor worldwide, often in dangerous conditions, according to the united nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This is almost one in six children in the world. India is no





exceptions. In India, child labor is unfortunately still widespread. Recent estimates by the government show that some 12.6 million children from the age of 5 to 14 are at work in India in various occupations. Children working in the agriculture sector constituted about two-thirds of the total child labor force in India, with some rural areas relying on children for as much as 75 per cent of the total labor force. The majority of child labors were working on farms and plantations, planting and harvesting crops, spraying crop protection production and tending livestock on rural farms.

Considering the complexity and persistence of the issue, there is a need to ensure constant stakeholder engagement at various levels of sensitization, field auditing and reinforcement. Farmers, children, parents of children, farm labour, labour agents, school teachers, government officials, NGOs, researchers, advocacy groups, seed companies, investors, seed industry associations, social audit agencies – all these stakeholders have an equal role to play in the process and at every step of each process.

Taking the views of all stakeholders and developing an engagement and convergence model is key for success of ECHO Forum being a multi stakeholder platform. ECHO believes in this since its evolution from CLEG to CCP to ECHO and encourages a process of constant learning from communities, farmers, NGOs, research bodies, seed companies to understand local dynamics and accordingly customize most acceptable, sustainable and replicable models of ethical compliance.

Below are few glimpses of different companies' initiatives on engaging with different stakeholders through ECHO platform in the process of implementing decent work place practices around child labour, minimum wages, occupational safety and supporting communities with basic social infrastructure around water, sanitation, education, health etc.,

# OUR CHAMPIONS AND DRIVERS



# CLEG (CHILD LABOUR ELIMINATION GROUP) DECENT WORK PROGRAM



**పని మాన్పిద్దాం  
వారి చదువుకునే  
హక్కును కాపాడుదాం**





# MONSANTO DECENT WORK PROGRAM



\* Monsanto became Bayer post acquisition by Bayer in 2018

# MONSANTO DECENT WORK PROGRAM



\* Monsanto became Bayer post acquisition by Bayer in 2018

# MONSANTO DECENT WORK PROGRAM



MONSANTO		ASSESSMENT SUMMARY Monsanto Human Rights Policy		Child Care Program Auditor's Report			
Date of Visit: <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday / Vacation		Time: _____		Name of CCP Auditor: _____			
FARM DETAILS		Visit No.: <input type="checkbox"/> 1st <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd		Child Labor Report No.: (Auditor Name/SL No.)			
Field No. _____		Farmer's Name _____		Old /New Farmer			
Area In Acres _____		Sowing Date _____		Village _____			
Stage of Crop/Activity <input type="checkbox"/> Crossed <input type="checkbox"/> Planted <input type="checkbox"/>		Mandal/Taluk _____					
ASSESSMENT INFORMATION							
1. LIST OF WORKERS INTERACTED WITH							
Name, gender, age of workers interacted with		1. _____		3. _____			
		2. _____		4. _____			
2. CHILD LABOR/MINORS							
List of workers confirmed as below 14/18 years of age for child labor/ minors-Name							
Gender (M/F)	Father's name	Village	Estimated age	Local (L.), Migrant (M) Family seen / School going	Remarks (including information on removal status of the child/minor)		
3. WORK FORCE AS GATHERED FROM OBSERVATION							
Total of (a+b+c) should equal (d)		Adult Male (i)	Adult Female (ii)	Confirmed (c14) male (iii) female (iv)	Suspected (around 14) male (v) female (vi)	Total (j) (v+vi)	Remarks (if any) (include details of suspect but not proven child workers & time limit given to farmer)
a) Family members of farmer							
b) Other local workers							
c) Migratory workers							
d) Total workers Present							
Auditor's Signature _____		Farmer's Signature _____		Remarks _____			
Signature/Name of joint inspection team member _____							
Follow-up Visit Details of Child Labor							
Type of Visit	Proposed date of Visit (Within 10 days after the field visit)	Actual date of visit Time of visit	Remarks	Signature (Auditor / women mobiliser)			
Field Visit for checking Child Labor (Confirmed/Suspect) Removal Status			Removed / Not Removed / Age Proof document Submitted				
School visit			School going / Irregular attendance/per month how many days absent / Child labor rehabilitation				
Parents visit			Convinced/Disagreed				
Checked/Verified by CCP Co-ordinator _____							

MONSANTO												Monsanto Child Care Program Audit Sheet		Sl. No. _____ Date: _____			
Sl. No.	Field No.	Area	Gender	Age	Parent's Name	Address	Education	Employment	Removal Status	Family Size	Income	Ill. Report	Ill. Date	Ill. Hospital	Ill. Doctor	Ill. Report	Ill. Date
1																	
2																	
3																	
4																	
5																	
6																	
7																	

Farmer Family Labor details							
Farmer Name: _____				Address: _____			
Village: _____				Mandal: _____			
Sl. No.	Field No.	Gender	Age	No. of children	Child Name	Class	School going Yes/No
1							
2							
3							
4							

MONSANTO CCP (CHILD CARE PROGRAM) TRAINING/AWARENESS/MEETING RECORD			
Training Record No (Name/SL.No) - _____		Village: _____	
Date of Training: _____		Number of participants: _____	
Nature of participants: _____			
Topics discussed: _____			
Name of trainer: _____			
Signatures/thumb impression of participants:			
Name	Title	Signature	

WEEKLY AUDIT REPORT											
Sl. No.	Field No.	Area	Gender	Age	Parent's Name	Address	Education	Employment	Removal Status	Family Size	Income
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											

\* Monsanto became Bayer post acquisition by Bayer in 2018

# MONSANTO DECENT WORK PROGRAM



\* Monsanto became Bayer post acquisition by Bayer in 2018

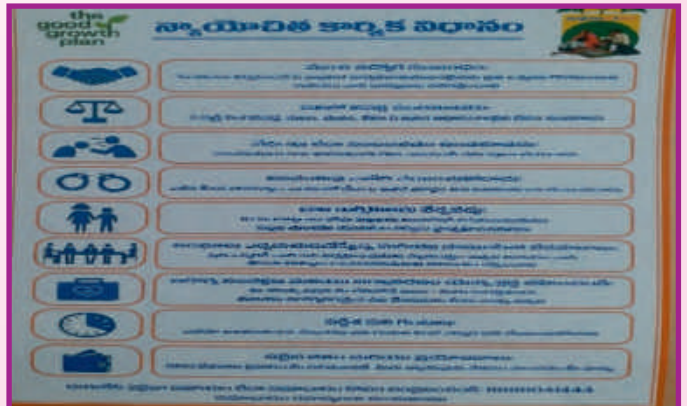
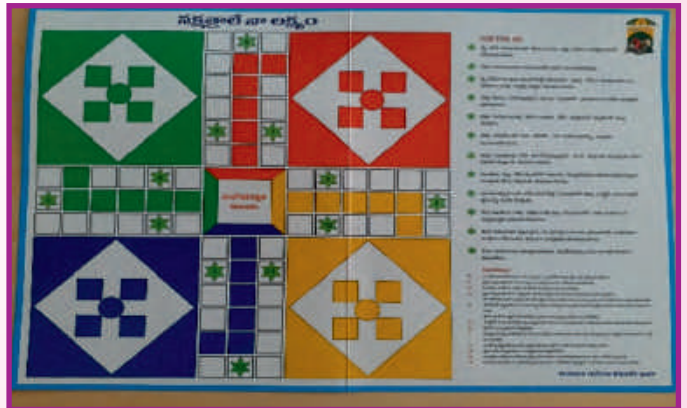
# BAYER DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# BAYER DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# SYNGENTA DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# SYNGENTA DECENT WORK PROGRAM





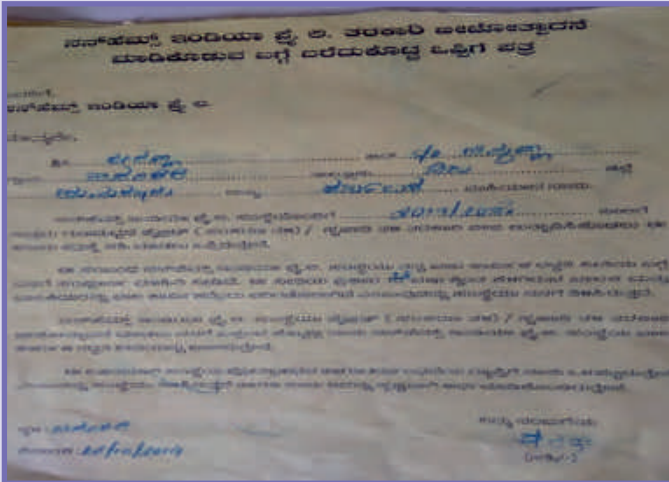
# SYNGENTA DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# MAHYCO DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# BASF DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# BASF DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# NUZIVEEDU SEEDS DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# HM CLAUSE DECENT WORK PROGRAM



# EAST-WEST SEEDS DECENT WORK PROGRAM









About

# **ENABLING CHILD AND HUMAN RIGHTS WITH SEED ORGANIZATIONS (ECHO)**

Enabling Child and Human Rights with Seed Organizations (ECHO) is a multi-stakeholder forum established as a joint initiative of the seed industry and Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs). The key objective is to identify issues and promote ethical seed production supply chain practices and enable decent workplace standards in the hybrid seed industry.

ECHO took shape through the cooperation of the Seed organizations, has evolved over a period of time. Initially, the forum was called the Child Labour Elimination Group (CLEG) that was formed in collaboration with the Association of Seed Industries (ASI) around 2003 and subsequently named Child Care Program (CCP). The forum took a more formalized structure as the Enabling Child and Human Rights with Seed Organizations (ECHO) in December 2019.

Today, ECHO promotes child rights and decent work with the support of social research organizations, seed industry members, and other voluntary organizations. ECHO members include public and private seed companies and representatives from voluntary and professional organizations.





## The premise of **ECHO**

For decades, deep-rooted socioeconomic problems like child labor and minimum wages, have been prevalent in the hybrid seed production industry across the country.

Several NGOs and research professionals have, over time, presented their studies on child labor and minimum wages in hybrid seed production at various fora advocating the need for effective solutions.

To establish common standards across industries, a formal forum was created that would come up with approaches in joint consultation and address various social compliance issues.


The ECHO forum was established after two years of deliberations with a clearly defined mission and to chalk out possible solutions.

ECHO will engage with stakeholders to create awareness, develop an auditing mechanism to review the work of the companies towards human rights in their supply chain. ECHO will also enable farmers by facilitating sustainable solutions on child rights and other decent work issues.

The forum consists of national and multinational seed companies, NGOs, and research institutes as its members.

## **MISSION**

Sustainable seed production supply chain through the protection of human rights and ensuring decent workplace standards.






## PURPOSE:

- ❖ Liaise with regional, international organizations concerned with risks associated with supply chain management and government organizations to develop uniform, decent work standards for the seed industry.
- ❖ Conduct relevant need-based research and systematic audits for decent work standards and compliance in the supply chains of the companies.
- ❖ Explore opportunities for collaboration among member companies to drive common programs, around decent work standards and Corporate Social Responsibility programs across geographies and intensive production pockets.
- ❖ Develop a system of certification around decent work standards.
- ❖ Reinforce and recognize best practices besides a reward and recognition program for best-performing companies.
- ❖ Act as a knowledge base on global standards, federal laws, and recent amendments on relevant legislation.
- ❖ Develop position papers to provide input for the development and/or change of rules and regulations for seed industries.

## OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ ECHO will maintain and sustain a regional forum for industry and formulate industry positions (policies) and recommendations on supply chain issues to improve seed sector performance in attaining Sustainable Development Goal 8.
  - ❖ Represent the interests of ECHO members at regional and international levels.
  - ❖ Encourage the establishment of state-level regional fora and support their development.
  - ❖ Facilitate and contribute to the harmonization of regulatory procedures towards International standards.
- 



# **ECHO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

**Suhas Joshi, Bayer, President**

**Pramod Kulkarni, Syngenta, Vice President**

**UVL Ananda, East-West Seed India, Vice President**

**Dr. Davuluri Venkateswarlu, Glocal Research, General Secretary**

**Satish Hegde, UPL Advanta, Joint Secretary**

**Rama Rao, HM. Clause, Joint Secretary**

**Saikat De, BASF Vegetable Seeds, Treasurer**

## **Enabling Child and Human Rights with Seed Organizations**

(Registered under Telangana Societies Registration Act, Reg. No:1581 of 2019)

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[www.linkedin.com/company/echo-forum](http://www.linkedin.com/company/echo-forum)





**WAGES OF INEQUALITY**  
Wage Discrimination and Underpayment  
in Hybrid Seed Production in India




Conducted by Global Research  
Dr. Devavuri Venkateswara  
and Mr. Jacob Kalle  
December 2012

Study commissioned by  
Fair Labor Association (FLA)  
India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN)

**The Price of Less Child Labour and Higher Wages**  
DO SEED COMPANIES IN INDIA ENABLE THEIR FARMERS  
PAYMENT OF LEGAL MINIMUM WAGES?

Assessing the Link between Farm Wages and Proportion of Seed in ICN Cottonseed  
Production in Andhra Pradesh, India



Devavuri Venkateswara\*  
June 2014

Study Commissioned by  
INDIA COMMITTEE OF NETHERLANDS (ICN)

**THE PRICE OF CHILDHOOD**  
ON THE LINK BETWEEN PRICES PAID TO FARMERS AND THE USE OF CHILD  
LABOUR IN COTTONSEED PRODUCTION IN ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

Devavuri Venkateswara and Lucie de Corte  
October 2005

Study commissioned by  
INDIA COMMITTEE OF THE NETHERLANDS  
INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FUND  
EINE WELT Netz NRW




**SOILED SEEDS**  
CHILD LABOUR AND UNDERPAYMENT OF WOMEN  
IN VEGETABLE SEED PRODUCTION IN INDIA

Devavuri Venkateswara  
November 2015

INDIA COMMITTEE OF THE NETHERLANDS (ICN)

**Seeds of child labour**



**SIGNS OF HOPE**

Child and Adult Labour  
in Cottonseed  
Production in India

Devavuri Venkateswara, June 2010

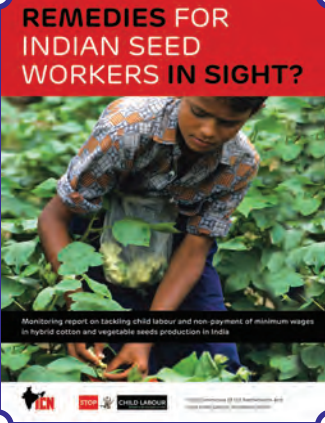
Study commissioned by  
International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF)  
India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN)  
Stop Child Labour Coalition (SCLC) & The Seed Project, India

**SEEDS OF CHANGE**  
Report of an assessment by Bayer and Monsanto on the Elimination  
of Child Labour on Farm Produce Hybrid Cottonseed in India

Devavuri Venkateswara\*  
June 2007

Study jointly commissioned by:  
OECD WATCH  
DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE (DWH)  
INDIA COMMITTEE OF THE NETHERLANDS (ICN)  
SIBIE WELT/NETZ/NEUZEITUNG  
INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FUND (ILRF)

**REMEDIES FOR  
INDIAN SEED  
WORKERS IN SIGHT?**



Monitoring report on tackling child labour and non-payment of minimum wages  
in hybrid cotton and vegetable seeds production in India

ICN

**A Tale of Two Companies**  
The difference between  
action and inaction  
in combating child labour

**No Child Labour - Better Wages**

Report of investigation of child labour on wages and working conditions of  
cotton farmers in the ICN cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh, India

ICN

**CHILD LABOUR AND TRANS-NATIONAL SEED COMPANIES IN  
HYBRID COTTONSEED PRODUCTION IN ANDHRA PRADESH**

Devavuri Venkateswara\*

Study commissioned by  
INDIA COMMITTEE OF NETHERLANDS (ICN)  
THE NETHERLANDS

**CHILD LABOUR IN HYBRID COTTONSEED PRODUCTION IN  
ANDHRA PRADESH: SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS**

Devavuri Venkateswara\*

September 2011

Study commissioned by  
INDIA COMMITTEE OF THE NETHERLANDS (ICN)  
THE NETHERLANDS

**CHILD LABOUR IN HYBRID COTTONSEED PRODUCTION IN  
GUJARAT AND KARNATAKA**  
By Dr. Devavuri Venkateswara

**Introduction**  
Hybrid cottonseed is one of the most sought-after products in India. India is the third  
largest producer of hybrid cottonseed in the world. In 2010, the world's third largest hybrid seed  
producer, the Government of India Cotton Research Station established at Guntur in the  
state of Andhra Pradesh, in a region of less hybrid seed production, reported that the  
state has been largely free of child labour. Approximately 22 million acres of land in India are used  
for cottonseed production, of which 60 million acres (45% of total cotton seed) is  
currently covered under hybrid cottonseed. The country also serves the production of  
seeds for the largest area under cotton production in the world, accounting for 27% of the  
world's total cotton area and 32% of total cotton production. Heavy 50% of the  
hybrid cottonseed produced in India is used for internal consumption, while the  
remaining is exported mainly to South East Asian Countries.

The issue of child labour in hybrid cottonseed production in India recently received a lot  
of attention by national and international media.


The specificity of hybrid cottonseed production in India is that it is largely labour  
intensive and involves a great deal of manual work. Close cultivation which is the  
most labor-intensive production process for nearly 90% of total labour requirement  
and 80% of cultivation costs is carried through conventional methods of hand  
weeding and ginning. Though hybrid seeds are used in cotton crop in most of  
the states in India hybrid cottonseed production is concentrated in the states namely  
Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. These five states  
account for more than 90% of the area under cottonseed production in the country.  
During 2002-04, more than 10,000 acres were under cottonseed production in the country,  
of which Gujarat accounted for 20,000 acres, Andhra Pradesh 10,000 acres and  
Karnataka 4,000 acres. Andhra Pradesh was the largest cottonseed producing state in  
the country and among Gujarat followed its production and then the state.

The main production of hybrid cottonseed in India has produced a great improvement in  
the use of hired labor on its farms and cotton processing units. Andhra Pradesh recently  
reported complete freedom due to the conversion of hybrid seed into  
an active campaign against child labour, initiated by local child rights groups is currently  
going on in the state. The large national and international seed companies have  
been forced to take steps to eliminate child labour.

The present study is commissioned by **Safe Children of the Netherlands**  
for the purpose of monitoring and reporting on child labour in hybrid cottonseed  
production in Gujarat and Karnataka.


**Child Bondage Continues  
in Indian Cotton Supply Chain**

More than 400,000 children in India involved in  
hybrid cottonseed cultivation



Devavuri Venkateswara\*  
September 2007

**COTTON'S FORGOTTEN CHILDREN**  
CHILD LABOUR AND BELOW MINIMUM WAGES  
IN HYBRID COTTONSEED PRODUCTION IN INDIA



By Dr. Devavuri Venkateswara  
JULY 2016

INDIA COMMITTEE OF THE NETHERLANDS (ICN)

STOP CHILD LABOUR COALITION

**Growing Up in the  
Danger Fields**



Child and Adult Labour  
in Vegetable Seed  
Production in India

International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF)  
India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN)  
Stop Child Labour Coalition (SCLC) & The Seed Project, India

**ACTION ORIENTED  
RESEARCH & ADVOCACY TO  
TRIGGER UNITED ACTIONS OF  
SEED INDUSTRY TO REACH  
A MEANINGFUL DESTINATION**

