

NOTE

Beyond Kalmadi and Raja

Bharat Dogra writes :

Scams such as Commonwealth and 2G Spectrum have dominated the newspaper headlines in recent times. No doubt action should be taken with a sense of urgency in the case of such huge scams and media should give the necessary attention to this.

However, if one examines, various issues from the perspective of what in the long run will cause the most durable damage to life-giving systems, then it is the recent developments in the areas of agriculture and energy which deserve the most serious attention. In the case of energy, the ambitious plans for nuclear energy now being pushed may come back to haunt as in very scary and damaging situations. In the area of agriculture, the kind of corporatisation of agriculture under way in several parts of the country and the opportunities of fast and subsidised spread being offered to highly suspect companies with the most damaging technologies will prove very disastrous in the long run. Some of these companies with their agenda of dominating world agriculture with GM crops are preparing the ground for very rapid spread once a critical stage is reached.

Also the overall agenda appears more and more to be anti-small-farmer. This agenda includes large-scale displacement, neglect of land reforms, allowing dubious companies to spread highly suspect technologies which ruin soil micro-organisms and destroy the basic conditions of good farming. After independence, India started a programme for helping more landless people to become farmers. Now there seems to be a hurry to reverse it and turn more farmers into landless people.

As long as these basic distortions of government policies are not changed, hunger and poverty cannot be reduced on a long-term sustainable basis. As a result of policies which destroy agro-ecology and small-scale farming, food security in the longer term is more threatened than ever before. □□□