

## Will India miss out on the emerging agricultural biotechnology revolution?

As soon as the government took the decision to release India's first genetically-modified (GM) food crop — Dhara Mustard Hybrid-11 (DMH-11) — for “environment release”, some activists approached the Supreme Court to ban it for various reasons. The Supreme Court has ordered the status quo to be maintained till the next hearing on the matter on November 17. The opposition to GM food crops is not new.

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It was expected that India would be at the forefront of the gene revolution and emerge as a major export hub to other Asian and African countries. What the IT revolution has done in computer science, the Bt revolution could have done in agriculture.

Unfortunately, our policy paralysis on GM technologies from 2003 to 2021, under pressure from activists and ideologues, has cost the farmers a lot. India is no longer at the forefront. But it is still better to be late than never to catch up vis a vis the gene revolution. Dissent is a good sign in any democratic society and forms an essential part of checks and balances. But once the safety tests are done and the scientific body (GEAC) has given the green signal, what is needed is political leadership to keep the decision-making science-based.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)