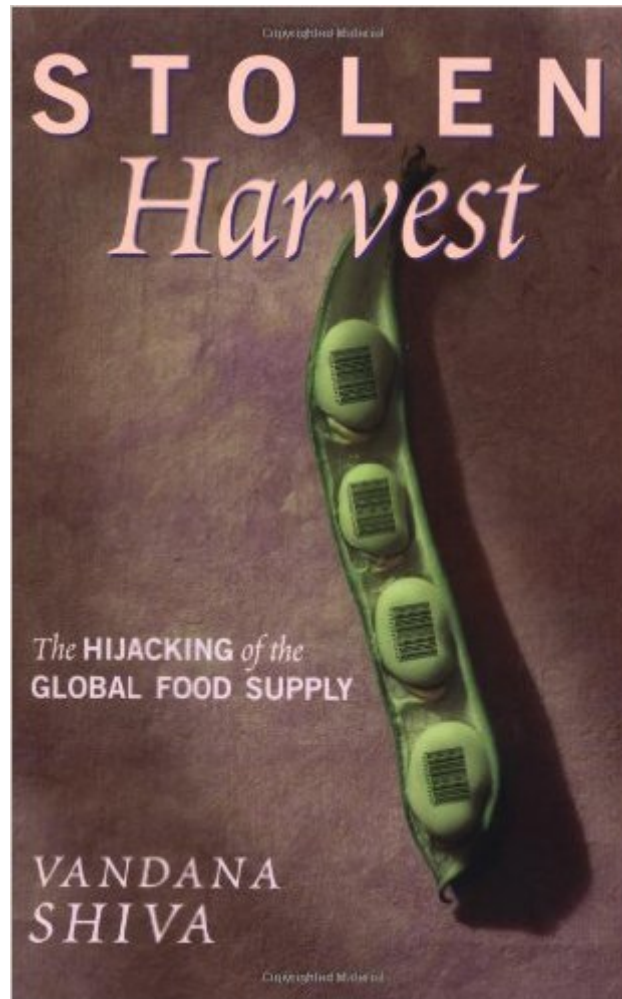


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Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking Of The Global Food Supply



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

In this remarkable book, Vandana Shiva effectively contrasts corporate command-and-control methods of food production with the small farmer economy that predominates in the third world (especially in her native India). In contrast to what many here in the U.S. might perceive as the conventional wisdom, Shiva makes a strong argument that local, small scale agriculture is superior to the agribusiness model for a number of reasons. First, Shiva points out that many of the productivity gains attributable to the Green Revolution were achieved by dramatically increased inputs of fertilizer, seed and water. When one compares units of input with units of output, however, native practices produce higher yields -- especially when one takes into account the multiple uses derived from a single product. For example, mustard oil is a vital product used by many of India's poor for cooking, seasoning, medicine and other uses. But it has been banned by the Indian government (under highly suspicious circumstances) in order to allow imports of soybean oil products. While giant corporations benefit from expanded sales, native industries have been destroyed, contributing to poverty and malnourishment. Shiva discusses the commercial fishing and

aquaculture (shrimp farming) practices that inevitably result in environmental destruction and reduced catches. She compares this short-sighted approach with traditional Indian fishing techniques that have successfully sustained themselves for generations while protecting important ecosystems such as mangrove forests. Shiva discusses corporate patenting of seeds, which insidiously transforms the cooperative ethic of seed sharing into a criminal offense.

Vandana Shiva is a physicist by training and an environmental activist who has done massive work in preservation of traditional cultures and farming techniques. In an age of multinational corporations taking over of traditional cultures, their lands, their means of livelihood, this book is an eye opener to the range of exploitation done by these corporations on the name of free markets and liberalization. One gets a sense of being robbed by these corporations the people's commons and deprivation of nature's ability to regenerate and flourish. There are several ways these corporations plunder the environment and the lives of the poor. Vandana first takes up the case of seed security in third world countries. Corporation like Monsanto try to get patents for breeding techniques that have been in existence for centuries in these cultures. These corporations try to usurp the traditional practices and aim at dependency of the farming communities on their seeds that are genetically modified. Traditionally different varieties of seeds are exchanged between farmers but the corporations with the help of the WTO offend such practices as crime to the free trade policies. This causes dependency of farmers on genetically engineered seeds and also use of herbicides and pesticides made by the same corporations heavily. The latest seeds sold by Monsanto cannot be reusable and can only be used once. They are genetically modified and not reusable. The corporate greed to make money has no boundaries and the exploitations of nature's resources and livelihood of the poor has no limits. The corporate supports monoculture of farming like soybeans which are dumped from United States to third world countries. The poor who depend on local industry and local farming are displaced of livelihood.

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