

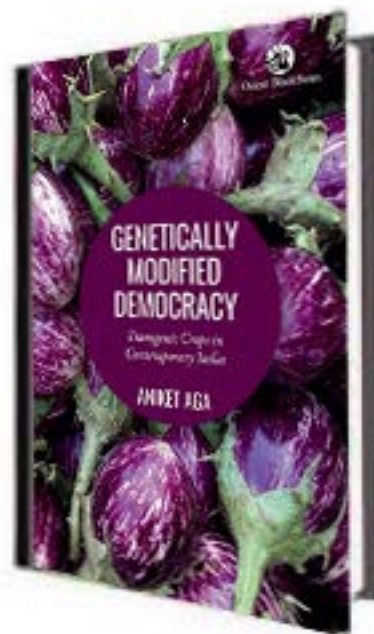
Calling out the genes

Aniket Aga on the debate around genetically modified crops and the dynamics of technological change

Devinder Sharma

Proponents of genetically modified crops see them as crucial to ending food insecurity, but critics say the policy is pushing farmers deeper into ecological and economic distress, and creating monopolies. India leads the world in terms of the intensity of democratic engagement with transgenic crops, and anthropologist Aniket Aga probes the debate around the commercial release of transgenic food crops in his new book *Genetically Modified Democracy: Transgenic Crops in Contemporary India*.

The country has already witnessed severe agrarian distress and over three lakh farmers have died by suicide in the last two decades. In his review, Devinder Sharma writes that the book is an excellent treatise on the GM debate, and the way it has influenced democracy. In India, agrarian distress emanates from public policy gaffes, and to believe that technological innovations alone



Genetically Modified Democracy: Transgenic Crops in Contemporary India

Aniket Aga

Orient BlackSwan

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can provide the answers may perhaps be too short-sighted. 'The same holds true for gene-edited crops which are being sold again with the same promise – as a solution to the global problem of hunger and farming,' says the author.

Read the review in full online.

The writer is a researcher and food policy expert.