

Rebirth of Indian Cotton

What is the issue?

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Indian farmers started to return towards the traditional cotton cultivation from the Bt-cotton.

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What is the reason for the return?

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- Bt-cotton's gradual lost resistance against the devastating bollworm insects.

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- It has failed to resist new pests like whiteflies.

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- Indian cotton, can withstand most of these pests, besides some common diseases.

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- Technology developers and seed companies have failed to diversify pest-repellent traits in BT-cotton.

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- Farmers cannot follow the recommended precautions in cultivating Bt-cotton.

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What are the advantages of Indian cotton over Bt-Cotton?

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- It has evolved indigenously and better acclimatised to local agro-ecological conditions

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- It needs lower amounts of inputs like fertilisers and pesticides and is, on the whole, less costly to cultivate.

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- It is early maturing and can be harvested before pests like bollworms and whiteflies become active.
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- It is amenable to closer planting to accommodate more plants in a field, it is an easy way to raise crop yields and net profits.
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- Due to the small staple length and absorbent nature of its fibre, it is in demand for surgical and medical use.
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What are the other issues in Indian cotton cultivation?

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- There is no diversity in the cotton cultivation carried out in India.
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- Lack of diversity has led to the development of immunity among pests.
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- The GM cotton occupying nearly 95 per cent of the crop area.
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- Seed approval protocols discouraged public sector research bodies from entering this field.
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- With respect to this few companies are becoming the monopoly in the selling the seeds.
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Source: Business Standard

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