



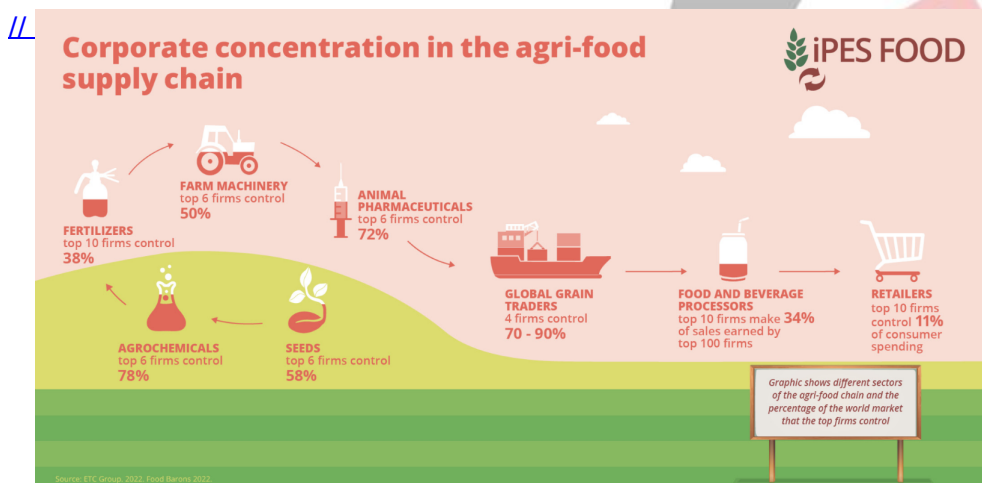
## Who's Tipping the Scales Report: IPES

For Prelims: [Food Governance](#), [Bluewashing](#), [CGIAR](#), [FAO](#), [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [UN](#).

For Mains: Who's Tipping the Scales Report: IPES.

### Why in News?

Recently, a report has been released by the **International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES)** titled “**Who’s tipping the scales**”, highlights how corporate capture of global [Food Governance](#) is increasingly taking place in more visible ways and raising concerns over **Bluewashing**.



### What is Bluewashing?

- Bluewashing is using **misinformation to deceive consumers into thinking that a company is more digitally ethical** and secure than it really is.
  - It is just like greenwashing but focused more on social and economic responsibility **rather than the environment**.
  - Greenwashing is a form of deceptive marketing in **which a company falsely claims that its products, policies, or programs are environmentally friendly or beneficial**, while doing little or nothing to actually assist the environment in practice.
- The term ‘bluewashing’ was first used to **refer to companies who signed the United Nations Global Compact** and its principles but did not make any actual policy reforms.
  - It is often done by companies making vague or unsubstantiated claims about their data privacy and security or making claims about the safety and security of [Artificial Intelligence](#).

## What are the Highlights of the Report?

- **Corporate Takeover of Food Governance:**
  - There has been a growing presence of firms in governance and spaces, staking claims to be legitimate actors.
  - Over recent decades, corporations **have succeeded in convincing governments that they must be central in any discussion** on the future of food systems.
  - Corporate partnerships provided a key source of funding for global food governance institutions and corporations with **greater influence over decision-making**.
- **Normalization of Corporate Role in Food Governance:**
  - The role of private corporations in food governance and decision-making has been normalized by **public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder roundtables** while public governance initiatives have become heavily dependent on private funding.
    - The [UN Food Systems Summit, 2021](#) was described as a watershed moment in highlighting the importance of corporate influence in public health governance.
- **Concerns Over Corporate Influence:**
  - Civil society organizations, food scholars, and social movements have expressed concern that the **increased involvement of corporations in food governance could lead to a weakening** of the public good and impact the rights of people and communities.
- **Visible and Invisible Corporate Influence:**
  - Corporations have influenced global food governance in visible and invisible ways.
  - Corporate influence could be seen in global food systems platforms such as the **Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition**, the Food and Land Use Coalition, and the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement.
  - Other less visible ways in which corporate influence was seen in food systems governance was how the **private sector enterprises provided political and institutional donations, shaped trading & investment rules** and research strategies, and other structural aspects of global food systems.
- **Causes of Increases Corporate Involvement:**
  - The Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with [Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#) and [Food Inflation](#), **aggravated the issue of corporate involvement**.
  - Following these crises, governments and multilateral agencies have been facing fund crunches.
- **Incidences of Corporate Involvement:**
  - The **CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research)** relied-on funding from **private firms and private philanthropic institutions** connected to the food industry.
  - The [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) which was the CGIAR's 2nd largest donor in 2020 contributed around USD 100 million, which was far more than what was contributed by **individual governments including that of the USA**.
  - The [FAO](#) was also found to have closely collaborated with corporations through **industry partnerships throughout its history**. However, the details regarding these contributions were not readily available.

## What are the Challenges Related to Excessive Corporate Involvement in Global Food Governance?

- **Limited Accountability:**
  - Private players in the food system **may not be accountable to the public or to regulatory bodies**, which can lead to inadequate monitoring of food safety, quality, and sustainability.
  - Private players may also prioritize their profits over the public good, leading to **conflicts of interest that can compromise food safety, quality, and sustainability**.
- **Hyper-nudging:**
  - Excessive corporate involvement can retrieve everyday transactions data (digital wallets to automated food services), which they can combine with information harvested online to **manipulate people's eating habits**.
- **Unequal Distribution of Benefits:**

- Private players may prioritize the interests of powerful actors, such as large-scale producers and retailers, **over small-scale farmers and consumers**, leading to unequal distribution of benefits from the food system.
- **Limited Transparency:**
  - Private players may not disclose important information about their practices, products, and policies, **making it difficult for stakeholders to assess the impacts** of their actions on food System.
- **Exacerbate Food Security:**
  - If the control of the Food System goes to **big data, technology and e-commerce platforms**, which may exacerbate food insecurity and further environmental degradation.
  - Artificial intelligence is re-engineering ecosystems, and robotic tractors and drones if rolled out **as fast as digital infrastructures allow**. Millions of rural dwellers **will be forced to migrate** to urban areas.

## What are the Recommendations?

- Create a robust conflict of **interest and grievance policies and new mechanisms grounded in Human Rights**, that allow people's organizations, social movements and other civil society actors to participate in food governance on their own terms.
- Build up autonomous processes and spaces for claims and proposals from people's organizations and social movements, especially those that build agency for marginalized communities.

**Source: DTE**

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