



LIVELIHOOD ENHANCEMENT THROUGH CONSERVATION,  
MULTIPLICATION AND MARKETING

# TRADITIONAL SEEDS WORKSHOP



FIRST TRIMESTER REPORT | DEC 7TH 2016

Organised By Kheti Virasat Mission  
With Support from NABARD

# Executive Summary



## Introduction

The Traditional Seed Workshop organised from Dec 2 - 4 is the first in a series of three, all of which aim to enhance agricultural livelihoods through conservation, multiplication and marketing of traditional seeds. With the participation of about 100 people, the workshop was able to deliver its objectives.

## Tasks Accomplished

PRILIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF SEED KEEPERS & VARIETIES OF SEEDS

TECHNICAL HANDS-ON TRAINING OF FARMERS FOR SEED PURITY MAINTENANCE

MAKING CLUSTERS & APPOINTMENT OF CO-ORDINATORS FOR FURTHER ACTION

PLANNING OF AND TRAINING ON CONDUCTING MEETINGS FOR DATA COLLECTION ON CROP VARIETIES, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DOCUMENTATION AND ALLIED TASKS

## Workshop Roadmap

#1

### Tasks Ahead

- Village Level Mapping of traditional seed varieties of various crops
- Mapping of traditional seed & knowledge keepers
- Sample collection of traditional seeds
- Characterisation of the identified seed varieties
- Mobilising enterprising farmers for seed production and in-situ conservation of seeds.

#2

Due in Feb

#3

2nd Dec | Day #1

# Seed Exhibition



The Workshop kicked off with a mesmerising exhibition of traditional seeds. A total of around 220 varieties of various crops, each with its own characteristic, were on display, most of them from Punjab.



**2nd Dec | Day #1**

## **Inaugural Session**



The session took flight with Umendra Dutt, Executive Director (KVM), setting the context for the importance of conserving and replicating indigenous seeds. Post that two members leading the Young Seed Keepers project explained the work undertaken by KVM for seed conservation. The Chief Invitees touched various issues in agriculture including genetic modification of seeds, seed sovereignty and declining water table.



“ Traditionally farmers were seed keepers and people in villages knew whose seeds were good and they would pre-buy seeds for the next season from those farmers. ”  
- Militheshwar Jha (AGM NABARD)  
Chief Invitee

“ When I was young, there used to be a debate at home whether to use synthetic chemicals or not. After succumbing to the pressure, my father kept aside one acre for self consumption. ”  
- Satnam Manik (Exec. Editor, Ajit)  
Chief Invitee



**2nd Dec | Day #1**

## **Seed Production**



Keshvan Murthy, who heads Desi Seed Producer Company Limited based in Bangalore, India's first seed company working directly with farmers to procure and supply seeds, took a full day technical session on "Organic production of Open Pollinated seeds , Extraction and storage"

Keshavan started from the very basics, explaining the types of seeds, the different kinds of pollination, the importance and relevance of reproducing open-pollinated seeds.



Different kinds of Isolation techniques for maintaining germ plasm purity vis-a-vis time isolation, distance isolation, bagging, caging, tunneling etc. were taught. Also seed extraction methods of various vegetables were explained in the technical session.

## 3rd Dec | Day #2

# Field Visit



Day 2 started off with a field visit to Master Organic Farmer Amarjeet Singh's farm to the diversity of seeds he has conserved and cultivated for decades.

All the participants' questions were patiently answered by Mr. Sharma.



After that all the participants were given hands-on training on isolation techniques such as caging and bagging, which included single plant isolation and flower isolation by Keshavan Murthy from Desi Seeds, Bangalore.

**3rd Dec | Day #2**

## **Seed Conservation**



Post the hands-on technical training Sanjay Patil, from BAIF Development Research Foundation, took over and drove home a crucial point that seeds can only be conserved on farm by farmers as the seeds constantly need to adapt to the soil and other environmental conditions and different ecotypes of same varieties exist due to different soil conditions. He mentioned that the germ plasm in gene bank is useless because it is not being adapted to the current soil-whether conditions which only the farmer can do. "Farmer is the real experimenter with a real world lab" he added.

**4th Dec | Day #3**

## **Planning & Conclusion**



On the last day of the workshop, Kamal Jeet from Kisan Sanchar, took a very engaging session on traditional knowledge systems and seed storage mechanisms. He mentioned really simple and easy to follow methods of seed storage drawn from his experience of working with farmers from across the country.

Post session 1, Sanjay Patil, from BAIF, showed some traditional seed saving methods. After that Mr. Patil led an engaging participatory knowledge extraction and planning exercise in which some of the forgotten seed varieties of Punjab were not only characterised but also names were recounted of the indigenous varieties. In the planning exercise Punjab was segregated into 6 clusters namely Majja, Malwa - Cotton Belt, Malwa Non-Cotton region, Duaba, Pawaad and Kandi. Farmers from respective regions were identified and appointed as coordinators of further exercises (mentioned in the executive summary).

The Workshop was formally ended with closing remarks from Umendra Dutt, Exec Director, KVM.