



## Seed festival , Daspalla, NIRMAN

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Agriculture is a part of the cultural heritage of Kondh people in Daspalla. A seed festival was organized by Nirman NGO in Bidapaju village of Daspalla Block, Kandhamal district Odisha in collaboration with the local Kondh community from 18 villages.

Climate change has impacted the local crops and livelihoods of local communities. Impacts are seen on changes in crop production, yields, emergence of new pests and diseases, changes in cropping patterns, distress migration and livelihoods of local Kondh communities. Kondhs have their sub-clans like Odia Kondh and Desia Kondh. 4 types of tribal languages are prevalent. Desia language is in high parlance. There are other socio-economic and cultural differences among the tribes.



The seed festival was inaugurated by the local women and invitees with the lighting of the lamp by local community leaders, women, Sarpanch and invitees. Women farmers were felicitated in the public platform for their outstanding work and contributions to practice and promote ecological agriculture in their local communities by Shri. Prashant Mohanty, Executive Director, Ms. Arunima Swain, State Co-ordinator, Nirman, local Sarpanch and Ms. Kumudini Mishra, Planning & Convergence department, Bhawanipatna. Certificates

of recognition of women as champions were distributed to innovative women farmers in the Block.



Around 1000 farmers participated actively in the seed festival. Local desi varieties (indigenous) of seeds were brought in Kalash (earthen pots) by women and displayed at an exhibition. The men also participated in the seed festival along with the children. Local drums were played and men led the folkdance. Children displayed the local dance. The festival was organized by Nirman NGO in co-ordination with the local communities and Millets Mission. Authorities from the Odisha Millets Mission also participated and graced the occasion along with intellectuals, independent researchers (Mr. Ravi Shankar Behera), Dr. Imran Ali, Co-ordinator Natural Farming, Odisha Chapter, practitioners (Shri Shishir Kanta Parija), NGOs (Mr. Ranjan Praharaj, Pradan) and journalists (Press Club, Mr. Satya Barik, The Hindu, Ms. Monalisa Patsani , Independent Journalist, Odisha Post and My Citilinks).

The seed festival was organized by Nirman to empower the local communities on have pride on their local foods, recipes, seeds and planting materials. These seeds and planting materials have stood the test of time over generations and are climate-resilient. The women explained the various traditional recipes prepared from the local food crops. Local recipes like - Chakuli, Kanji, Kheeri, Adisha pitha, Mudi, mixture, Muha, local Curries, Khota, Chuna macho (small fish), Sukhua (dry fish) etc. The women also explained the specific methods to store and preserve seeds. These local foods were also displayed at the exhibition.



Seeds of local varieties of paddy (Chandra, Raisul, Kuluchi, Barsarani, Dhalasathiya, Suhagini, Niali, Chausathi, Kala dhan, Swarna, Lalat, Jajati etc.), minor millets like Ragi (Muskul, Sika, Bodo Mandia, Taya, Sano Mandia, Kontamita, Dussera, Muskul, Sika, Kongora, KMR 204 etc.), Suan, Kangu, Kerwa, Kodo, Kosala, oilseeds (Mustard) and vegetables (Brinjal, Beans, Sem, Tomato, Pumpkin, Banana, Pahadia Barabati, Pahadia Biri, Pita Aloo, Chillies, Lemon, Coriander, Colocasia etc.), green leafy vegetables (saag – 15 varieties – Lal Kosala, White Kosala)), wild tubers, yams and other NFTPs (Satabari, Mulika Chero, Siali leaves, Gongei etc.) were displayed. The wild foods crops are particularly important to the local communities during the food scarce periods during the year. Women explained the specific characteristics and uses of these seeds and crops.



Local foods were cooked and distributed to all participants like Kheer and lemon water lemon water. Local rice, dalma, and local vegetable curry was served for lunch.



Farmers also exchanged the local seeds in the seed festival on the second day from each other for sowing in the next cropping season. Almost 200 types of local recipes from the food crops were displayed in the food festival about one month back, organized by Nirman in Bhubaneswar.

