

Annual Report

2022 - 2023



**Deccan
Development
Society,
Telangana, India**

Deccan Development Society (DDS) has been working with 1500 women members in 40 villages of Five Mandals i.e. Zaheerabad, Jharasangham, Nyalkal, Mogudampalli and Raikode for four decades.

2022 brought many challenges and opportunities for sangham farmers. The irregularity of monsoons as a consequence of climate change have continued this year with delayed monsoons and excess rainfalls. While this has damaged quite a few crops like sorghum, foxtail millet and little millet, farmers began to sow genetic varieties according to the changed climate conditions. The varieties lost in these rains are backed up in community seed banks. As climate change cements itself every year, the importance of protecting and propagating women's traditional knowledge on crops, seeds and also foods, becomes more important.

Notable Media Citations in 2022:

- **NDTV India:** Chikapalli Anasuyamma, senior associate of DDS has been profiled as a 'changemaker of Telangana' by NDTV India, a top-rated national news channel, on a special program for her achievements in increasing green cover of villages. She was praised for her tireless efforts for over two decades to lead community plantations of nearly 2 million trees in 20 villages at a young age. You can view the programme [here](#).
- **BBC Radio:** Sangham Radio featured on 'World Wide Waves '22: The sounds of community radio', A special documentary produced by BBC Radio on the occasion of World Radio Day. Producers General Narasamma and Algole Narasamma shared their long journey and experiences working with the radio. You can listen to the episode [here](#).
- **India Today:** In their 47th Anniversary Special, India Today, the country's top weekly magazine, have come out with a 'Best of India' cover story featuring articles from eminent experts from diverse fields. Eminent Sociologist, Dr. Amita Baviskar, has featured DDS in her article 'The Good Fight' on social initiatives, that have worked towards building more equitable solutions. The article can be found [here](#).
- **FAO Report:** DDS has been featured in FAO report '[Bridging the gap between nutrition and agriculture in Telangana State, India](#)' as a key stakeholder NGO in telangana state in promoting 'nutrition-sensitive agriculture' and for achievements in working on issues of 'agriculture, rural development, health, nutrition, education and women empowerment.'
- **Prime time Feature on TV9 Telugu:** TV9 Telugu, a highly popular telugu news channel has made a special feature of Sangham women for their Sunday primetime show 'Anaganaga Oka Ooru'. The program featured biodiverse fields, market enterprise, seed storage and media centre of DDS and interviewed women farmers and filmmakers. You can view the programme [here](#).
- **Telangana State Govt Magazine:** The Mobile Biodiversity Festival of DDS has acquired a special focus in 'Telangana', a magazine edited and published by the Information and Public Relations Department of Telangana State government. There was a special article in context of International Year of Millets. The magazine can be viewed [here](#).

MOBILE BIODIVERSITY FESTIVAL PUSHES FORWARD IN ITS 22ND YEAR!



The Deccan Development Society proudly launched the 22nd edition of the iconic 'Mobile Biodiversity Festival' on February 1st, 2022 and traveled over two weeks across DDS operating villages in Zaheerabad, Kohir, Jharasangham and Modudampally Mandals of Sangareddy District, Telanagana.

The festival has been a grand spectacle in the villages it has travelled in, engaging all people from the village on traditional crops, seeds and agricultural practices. It has created a celebratory atmosphere with caravans, songs and dances. Along with this, our Sangham Farmers had interaction with hundreds of farmers in each village about the importance of millets, biodiversity and local seed varieties. The event also witnessed participation of local decision makers like Panchayat Sarpanches who complimented the efforts of DDS to promote good food and agricultural practices in their villages, and extended their support towards this agenda. The festival concluded in Machnoor Village on 15th February in a grand event with several dignified guests honored the message of the festival and felicitated DDS farmers following best practices.

The continuing tradition of Mobile Biodiversity Festival is a testament to the determination and spirit of resilience of our Sangham women to celebrate the agro-biodiversity on their fields and assert traditional crops, agriculture, food and customs.

You can read more [here](#).

Find some [pictures](#) from the festival and press coverage ([Telugu](#) and [English](#))

SANGHAM WOMEN RALLY ON WOMEN'S DAY



On March 8th 2022, the Deccan Development Society commemorated the International Women's Day with a celebratory rally and event by nearly 200 Sangham women farmers. The women raised slogans on the relationship between women, biodiversity, health, nutrition and ecology.

Women warriors who have offered their health and legal services at grassroots level were honored for their efforts. Dignitary guests included local officials, educationists and civil judges who appreciated DDS women for asserting themselves on local and international levels.

The event ended with DDS Legal Committee women members receiving certificates of recognition from the Mandal Legal Services Committee for their long-standing efforts for dispute resolution and right awareness in their village communities.



Find here some [pictures](#) and [press coverage](#) of the event.

SPECIAL HONOR TO OUR SEED KEEPER!



BegariLakshmamma, seed keeper and senior organic farmer was felicitated in a special event by Delhi Public School, Miyapur on April 24th 2022 to commemorate her long-standing initiatives in promoting ecological agriculture, women empowerment and biodiversity. She spoke to children on the need to take conscious actions for environmental conservation and how traditional knowledge can aid such action. She was honored among several dignitaries on the stage which included Justice Lavu Nageshwar Rao, Former Supreme Court Judge and Dr. Daggubati Purandeshwari, Former HRD Minister of India.

ANNUAL UNCULTIVATED GREENS FESTIVAL 2022 CELEBRATED SUCCESSFULLY!



On 27th August, Deccan Development Society organized the 'Annual Uncultivated Greens Festival' in Machnoor Village, Jharasangham Mandal. Nearly 100 people took part in the event including enthusiastic urban visitors, Sangham women farmers, agricultural scientists, health experts and media persons. Participants of the festival first visited two villages – Tekur and Potapally where they toured around biodiverse farms with around 15 crops and interacted with the women farmers. Sangham farmers engaged the visitors by showing 20 different orphan greens in their farms and explaining their properties, medicinal benefits, and detailing on how they can be cooked into delicious curries.



Participants of the event shared their experiences of field visit and expressed their happiness to be present in the festival. Mr. PV Satheesh, director of DDS expressed his gratitude towards visitors and farmers, and talked about how DDS has engaged with the indigenous knowledge of women to recognize the nutritional value of these greens. Mogulamma, a sangham farmer, spoke about how she and her family eat orphan greens every year and protect their health. Dr. Janaki Srinath, expert nutritionist spoke about the need to protect such biodiversity on farms to ensure diversity and balance in diets. Urban visitors talked to farmers to know more about what should be done to preserve uncultivated greens. The festival concluded with a special song on Uncultivated Greens sung by women farmers. A special greens recipe booklet was released during the event which you can find [here](#).

DDS HONORS GRASSROOTS HEALTH WORKERS



On August 13th, DDS organized a honorary felicitation ceremony from grassroots health workers by dignitary guests Mr Durga Prasad, Senior Civil Judge and Dr Vijaya Lakshmi, distinguished doctor from Pragati Nursing Home, Zahirabad. Senior DDS Health workers Paramma and Pushpalamma along with Pastapur ASHA workers Sulochana and Kavitha were felicitated with shawls and garlands. On the occasion, Shri Durga prasad expressed his appreciation for civil society organizations for their efforts in engaging with the most marginalized person in India's progress since 75 years of independence.

30 INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SCIENTISTS INTERACT WITH DDS FARMERS



On 16th September, 30 agricultural scientists from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Uganda visited Deccan Development Society project office as part of an exposure visit of an International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) workshop on 'Gender-responsive plant breeding and seed systems' being organized at International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) campus, Patancheru, Telangana. Short films on women seed keeper interviews, traditional seed keeping practices were screened. Following the screening, a Q&A session was organized between researchers and sangham farmers where the researchers expressed their appreciation to farmers on preserving and practicing such valuable traditional knowledge on agro-biodiversity and dryland farming. Veteran farmers like GangwarAnjamma, ChinnaChandramma, HumnapurLakshamma, MetlakuntaNarasamma etc spoke about their decades long experience on how women's sanghams

and bio-diverse cultivation of food crops strengthened each other, demonstrating the relationship between gender, ecology and biodiversity.

SANGHAM WOMEN SHINE AT MAHILA KISAN DIWAS AT MANAGE, HYDERABAD



On October 15th, 50 women farmers from DDS participated in celebrations of 'Mahila Kisan Diwas' held at MANAGE, Hyderabad with the theme 'Millets: Empowering Women and Providing Nutritional Security'. The event was launched virtually by Union Agriculture Minister Shri. Narendra Singh Tomar and was attended by dignitaries including P.Chandra Sekhar, Director General of MANAGE, B.Dayakar Rao, CEO of Nutrihub, ICAR-IIMR along with representatives from state and union departments of agriculture, universities, agri-entrepreneurs etc.

Sangham farmers sang a welcome song on millets for the event and engaged with expert talks on millet cultivation and value chain. K.Mogulamma, sangham karyakarta of Potpalle Village participated in a panel discussion 'Empowering Nutritional Security through Millets.' She shared her experiences as a millet farmer on the stage and how she relies on the crops she cultivates for the health and well-being of her family unlike other farmers that cannot afford expensive foods for acquiring necessary nutrition. The discussion can be viewed [here](#).



NUTRITIONAL CAMPAIGNS BRING OUT ABUNDANT MILLET RECIPES!



DDS has organized these 'Nutritional Awareness Campaigns' in 6 villages: Jadimalkapur, Pastapur, Potpalle, Shamshallapur, Bidakanne and Reijinthal. Nearly 120 women participated in these campaigns across these villages. Sangham women first cooked more than 50 varieties of traditional & modern dishes and explained in detail about the cooking process, when they eat it and why they eat it. Some elderly women also explained various health benefits of different traditional dishes. The campaigns saw many varieties of rotis, Ms. Hemalatha, Subject Matter Specialist in Home Science from Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), then talked in detail about the nutritional content and best cooking practices for optimal nutrition she has identified, and also suggested some healthier practices additionally.



The campaigns facilitated a great opportunity for cross-learning and knowledge exchange. The food festival environment also created an environment of joy and celebration of the crops that they grow. Kamamma, senior sangham member from Bidakanne shared her joy that "In our times, we used to eat these foods to save ourselves from starvation. Now our children have more money than us but they buy foods that give them diseases. We are glad this festival has been organized to recognize that these are not drought foods but are very rich with their qualities".

MILLET SISTERS MEET AGAIN TO DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE.

The All India Millet Sisters met in December 2022 for a two-day convention at DDS-Krishi Vigyan Kendra Campus at Didigi Village near Zahirabad. More than 40 millet sisters from 14 organizations in 8 states came together to discuss the theme 'Millets & Climate Change'. The convention began with honoring inspiring millet sisters from each organization for their efforts in conserving and promoting millet cultivation.



On the first day, partners from different states shared their presentations and experiences with how millet farming has been affected by climate change and how millet sisters used biodiversity as strategy to overcome its uncertainty. Ponnuthai from Women's Collective, Tamil Nadu said in her presentation "Climate Change means that the natural disasters we used to see once in 30 years, our next generations will see every 2 years. In that case, our current reliance on few crops for food security will be under severe threat. Crop diversity is the only way forward." Similarly, Azo from North East Network, Nagaland stressed on the importance of solidarity networks that "Seed Exchange systems and Seed Banks are the need of hour for millet sisters to withstand climate change. We can face this crisis only together."



On Day 2, the first panel discussed the topic 'Can millets provide food & nutrition security in times of Climate Change'. Dr T.Sucharita from PJSTAU, Hyderabad and Dr.Sangappa from IIMR, Hyderabad also joined to stress the nutrition offered by millets in harshest of conditions. Next panel discussed relationships between Women, Millets and Climate Change. Mogulamma from DDS said "Millet farming is primarily women's agriculture as it ensures we have the control on everything from seeds to food unlike monocrops where only output is money that goes to men." Mrs Mary Vattamattam from Timbaktu Collective, Ananthapuram also joined the discussion.



Last panel was on India's Millet Policy in the context of IYM'23. Saraswati from AP said "For IYM, we hear that fancy millet feasts are being hosted. What we need is strong action for these nutritious grains to reach the poorest & marginalized through PDS, ICDS and mid day meals." The convention ended with a collective charter of demands that urged for policy makers to understand that **biodiversity, women and traditional knowledge are cornerstones of millet cultivation** and these values must be present in millet promotion initiatives that are being planned. A report on the proceedings on the convention along with the charter of demands will soon be made available on DDS and MINI websites.



Some more events DDS has participated in 2022:

- **Voices of Women's Farmers:**

In March 2022, DDS farmers M. Chandramma and B. Lakshamma participated in a webinar titled 'Voice of Women Farmers: Resistance and Alternatives Across India', where they spoke about the gendered nature of biodiverse agriculture and stressed about the agenda of 'Millet Rights are Women's Rights.' You can access the discussion [here](#).

- **Webinar on "Local Food Festivals":**

On 21st June, DDS Director, Mr PV Satheesh participated in an online discussion titled 'Celebrating Local Food' organized by Local Futures and Vikalp Sangam on how Local Communities celebrate their traditional foods. He talked about the innovative 'Patha Pantala Jaathara' or the 'Mobile Biodiversity Festival' and its success in celebrating the local agri-food systems on a grand scale for the past two decades. A short clip from the movie on 'Mobile Biodiversity Festival' was presented. He remarked that Food consumption is a cultural act and celebrating local foods is an important way to communicate traditional agrobiodiversity at a local level. The discussion can be accessed [here](#).

- **Worldviews Sangham at Timbaktu Collective, Anantapur:**

In November 2022, K.Mogulamma and G.Narsamma participated in the Indigenous and Community Worldviews Vikalp Sangam (Alternatives Confluence), a gathering of Adivasi, pastoral, farmer and other communities, and civil society organizations organized by Kalpvriksh at Timbaktu Collective, Anantapur District. The 3 day confluence brought together nearly 30 participants from various marginalized local communities to discuss various challenges faced by them and their strategies to collectivize and address them.



- **Conference on Food Security and International Law organized by SAIELN (South Asia International Economic Law Network):**

In November 2022, DDS Director, Mr PV Satheesh participated as a panel member in a hybrid event organized by SAIELN (South Asia International Economic Law Network) in Kochi, Kerala. He participated as a civil society representative in the panel discussion titled 'Civil Society Perspectives on Food Security: Taking policies from Glassfronts to Grassroots'. He spoke about the harms that Indian Food Security policies have caused by being uniform, centralized and led by elite groups on small farmers and women in drylands. He spoke about DDS's experience of designing programmes on food and nutrition with local communities participation and leadership and how they significantly differed from prevailing policy ideas.

1. Millet and Organic Mogudampally:

As part of this objective, DDS supported 100 farmers for 100 acres in 3 villages: Jadimalkapur, Mannapur and Jamgarbouli Thanda. This on-farm support was used to support timely agricultural operations like manuring, sowing and weeding.

2. Resolve for Self-Abundant Communities:

After data collection, cleaning and analysis, Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) has submitted the study to DDS. The study aimed to measure the system yield (apart from only crop yield) of DDS millet farmers following a package of practices (SSS) and to look at the economics of millet-based agriculture systems. A key finding of the study was that biodiverse millet farmers income is relatively diversified compared to monocrop farmers but do not receive assured support unlike cotton or sugarcane farmers who receive support through governments and markets. The study also made strong push for policy interventions to support millet farmers at both field and extension level. A brief of the study will be shortly drafted along with its policy recommendations for wider dissemination. The complete study can be found [here](#).

3. Health Meetings with Karyakartas:

There were four Workshops conducted in 2022 in April, August, October and November. In April, the workshop was on diseases related to livestock and how to care for them. In August, the workshop was on uncultivated greens and their nutritive uses. In October, the workshops were talked about health related issues in adolescent girls. In November, a gynaecologist from Zahirabad attended the workshop to raise awareness about detecting early illness.

4. Biodiversity Festival:

The 22nd Mobile Biodiversity Festival took place in February 2022 for two weeks. Due to pandemic restrictions in January, the Festival was postponed and shortened. However, the festival found a way to become more personalized by going through every street of villages and covering all households. It saw enthusiastic participation from farmers, children, villagers, local sarpanchs who vowed to increase adoption of biodiverse millets in their farms. The closing ceremony also was attended important district level officials who pledged their support to move towards pro-millet policies.

5. All India Millet Sisters Network:

In 2022, The All India Millet Sisters Network picked up new energy to mobilize on grassroots and larger levels. Partners from 8 states organized Nutritional Awareness Campaign at a village level and also their local biodiversity festivals which brought together women farmers with local policy makers and press. Millet sisters submitted their charter of demands to many key state officers who assured their cooperation in the upcoming millet year. The network also continued to provide on-farm support to farmers in the monsoon crop season for critical agricultural operations. In December, nearly 60 millet sisters came together for the National Convention on the theme 'Millets & Climate Change.'

6. Policy and Advocacy:

New IEC Materials were produced during the year in form of pamphlets, posters and booklets. In March, 200 women farmers rallied in Zaheerabad and conducted a meeting about women, agriculture and millets. In August, DDS felicitated grassroots health workers and acknowledged their contributions towards monitoring and maintaining community health. In September, 150 members participated in the Annual Uncultivated Greens Festival organized by DDS. In October, 50 DDS farmers participated in conference held on occasion of Mahila Kisan Diwas (Women Farmers Day) organized by MANAGE, which is the government's premier agricultural extension research institution. DDS also participated in several workshops and meetings both physically and virtually.

KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA (FARMERS TRAINING INSTITUTE)

Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs) are also known as Farm Science Centre KVK, which are a part of National Agricultural Research System (NARS), evaluates and demonstrates location-specific agricultural technology. They are serving as a Knowledge and Resource Center, supporting various sectors and improving the district's agricultural economy.

The KVK of Medak district was sanctioned to Deccan Development Society by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 1991 and began operations in 1992 in Medak district, now known as Sangareddy District of Telangana State. DDS Krishi Vigyan Kendra (DDS KVK) strongly emphasizes sustainability as the cornerstone of agriculture in India. As a vast agrarian country committed to ensuring food and nutritional security, DDS KVK places sustainable agriculture at the forefront of all its programs. The vision of DDS Krishi Vigyan Kendra (DDS KVK) has been crafted in alignment with the organizational ethos and philosophy of the host institution. It seamlessly integrates the ideals of DDS with the mandates of ICAR to foster a farmer-centered participatory approach encompassing major crops and technological interventions tailored to the needs of Sangareddy district in Telangana State, India.

The KVK campus hosts over 200 plant species, including fruit, fodder, and wild trees. Additionally, the farm serves as a seed hub for 60 to 80 local food crop varieties, sourced from Dalit women farmers. The KVK has contributed significantly by way of transferring technologies related to organic dryland agriculture through Farm Testing (OFTs), Frontline Demonstrations (FLDs), training and extension activities, etc. The farmers, farm women and rural youth in the Sangareddy district (erstwhile Medak) have benefited from the KVK activities and trainings since its inception.

Several assessments were conducted by the DDS KVK this year includes evaluating new high-yielding varieties such as foxtail millet (SIA-3222), sugarcane (VSI-12121), red gram (TDRG-59), red bhindi (Khasi Lalima - VROR 157), and onion (Bhima Super). Additionally, organic crop management practices for papaya, organic management of pinworm in tomato, and biological control of wilt in Bengal gram were studied. Eco-friendly management of birds in sorghum, supplementation with low-calorie multi-millet atta for diabetic patients, and assessing protective clothing kits for harvesting various crops were also examined. Furthermore, the impact of long handle weeders and cotton harvesting bags on improving work efficiency, particularly for farm women, was assessed. During the year 2022-23, KVK has positively impacted 74,002 beneficiaries, including farmers, farm women, and rural youth, through a range of extension activities in agriculture and allied areas.

Specifically, 2,369 farmers and farm women, as well as 293 rural youth, were trained on topics such as crop diversification, cropping systems, integrated crop management, integrated farming systems, production of organic inputs, and various other agricultural technologies and testing of soil for 2518 famers across nine mandals of the district.



Training Programme on Organic manures and Bio Inputs- Preparation and uses.



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