

NATIONAL CONCLAVE

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

October 27-29, 2025

Anil Agarwal Environment Training Institute, Nimli, Rajasthan





Conserving Millets and Indigenous Rice in Tribal Areas

Experiences of Dantewada (C.G.)

Akash Badave
Nirmaan Organization &
Bhoomgaadi



Dantewada

A remote district in South of Chhattisgarh

Total Villages: **227**

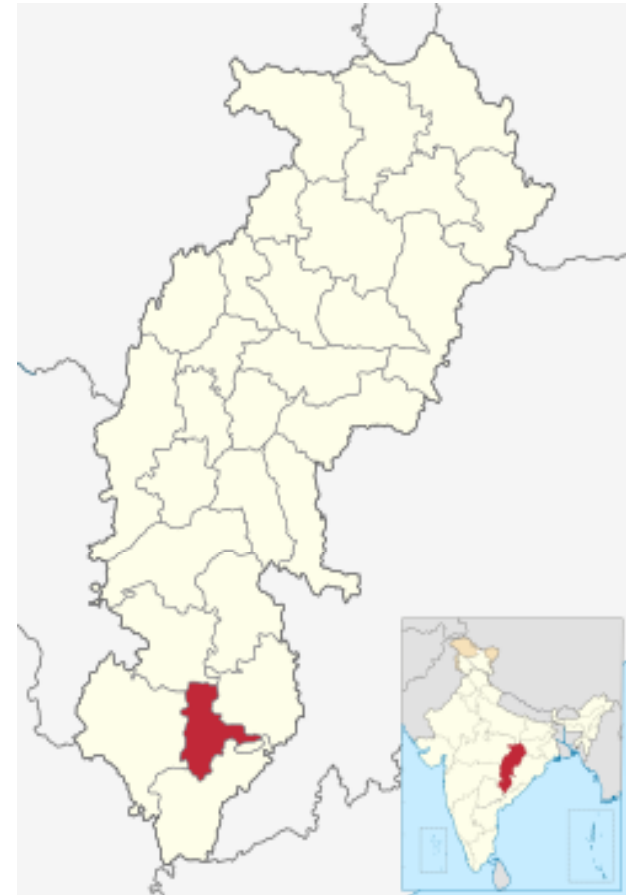
Total Land under Cultivation: **1,16,153 Ha.**

Total land title holders: **29,718**

Rural Households: **~ 49,000**

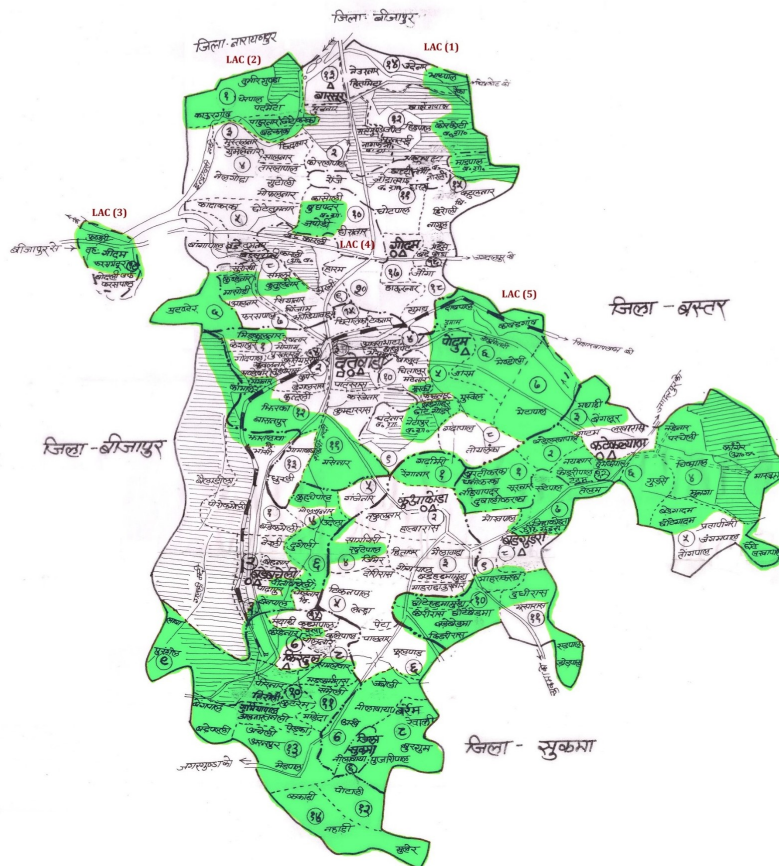
Tribal Population: **71%, 83% (Rural)**

Major Tribes: **Madia & Muria**





Organic Dantewada



- **110 Organic Villages under Large Area Certification**
- Out of the rest 117 villages
33 villages – no farmer uses chemicals
64 villages < 10 farmers use chemicals
20 villages > 10 farmers use chemicals
- **78,414 Ha Organic Land under LAC and PGS, A Largest Contiguous Organic Area in India**
- Currently Out of total **29,718** farmers, estimated around **1000 (3.5%)** use chemicals





- None of the government departments promote or distribute chemicals & private shops not given any licences since 2018
- Only around 3000 farmers take up KCC
- 17000+ Ha. under millets – largest area in south Chhattisgarh
- Out of 66,000 Ha. Of paddy – HYVs/Hybrids grown only on 3000 Ha – rest 95% area under indigenous seeds



Most of the farmers use native seeds in Dantewada with many valuable characters

Charasters	Variety
Resistance to water logging, pests & and diseases	Safri, Gada Khuta, Asam Chudi, Kalamali, Kormal, Jondhara, Hardighati
Resistance to drought, pests & and diseases	Sathka, Gudma, Lal Dhan, Marhan Chudi, Sindhur Singar
Medicinal Red Rice	Sathaka, Gudma, Meher
Red Rice	Kormal, Jondhara, Hardi Ghati
Low GI	Kalamali, Hardighati
Aromatic	Tulsi Ghati, Gangawaru, Kadamful, Basabhog, Jeeraful, Kalajira
Aromatic Rice with High Zinc and Iron	Javaful, Lokati Machi
Fine Table Rice	Devbhog, Babaibuta, Lal Hajari
Rice Suitable for Poha	Kalamali, Pandari Bako



Four-Pronged approach

I. Building self-awareness and transformation in thinking: Recognizing the issues – realizing the inherent the strength of traditional knowledge – Environmental Sustainability – through a continuous dialogue

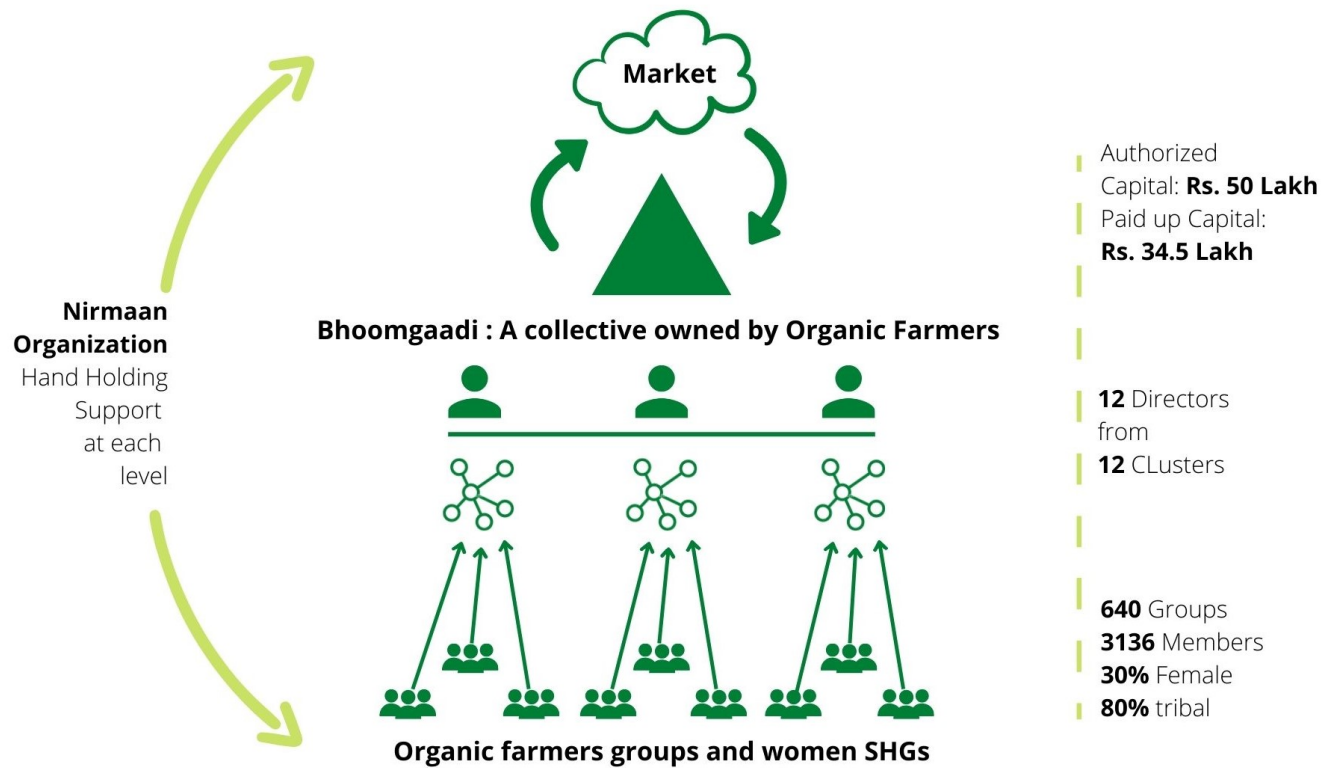
II. Developing human capital through trainings and capacity building: Skills to conserve traditional knowledge and learn new Innovative techniques– long term and sustained investment

III. Creating a social capital by building community institutions: Reviving old institutions and creating new ones to include modern approach – the right mix that promotes and encourages collective action

IV. Developing a seeds-to-market eco-system that provides essential support and services

Adopting systems thinking –interventions at each level and bringing in convergence of government programs and departments





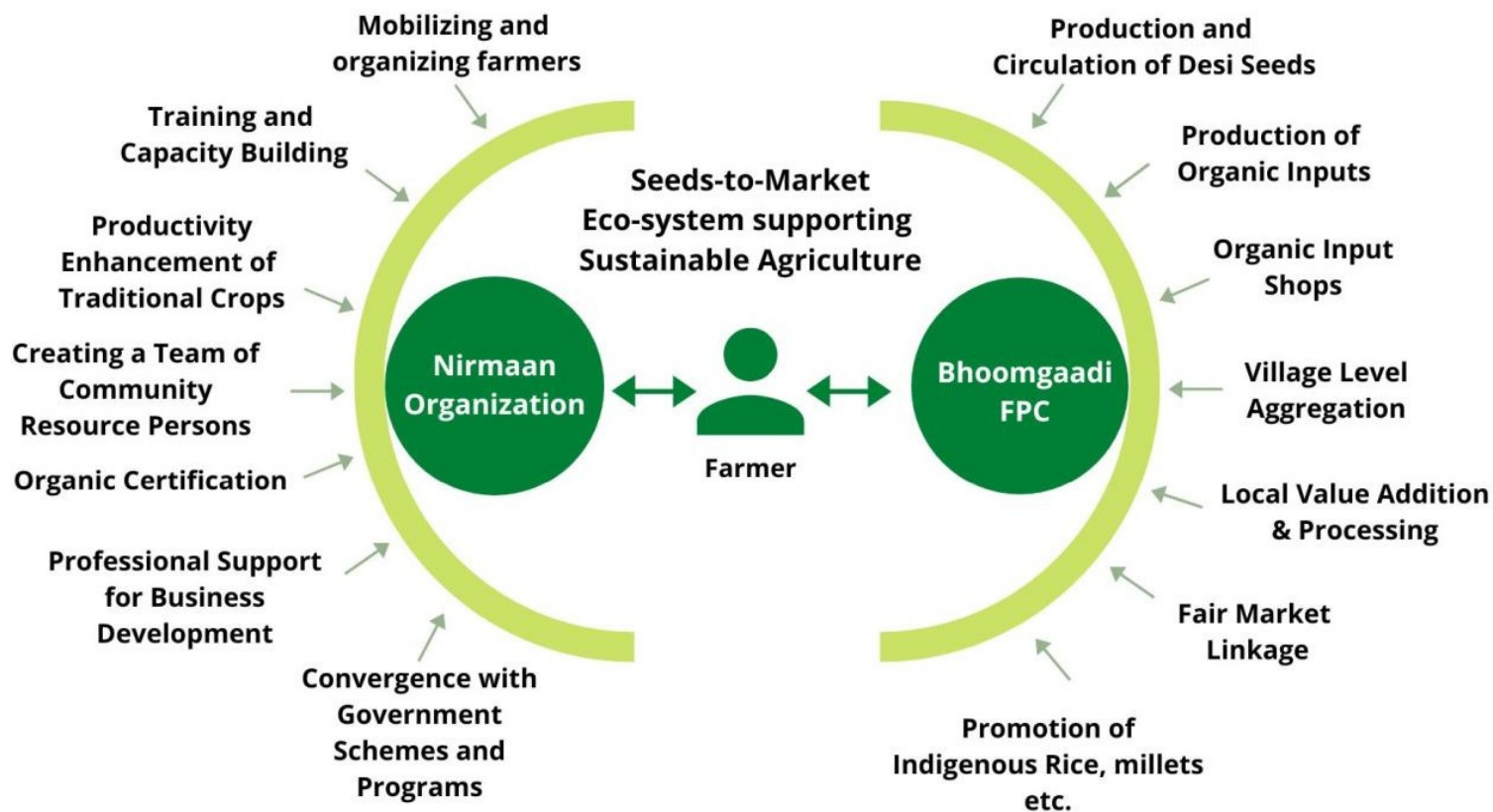
Multi Commodity Approach

Market linkage that incentivizes growing diversity & indigenous crops

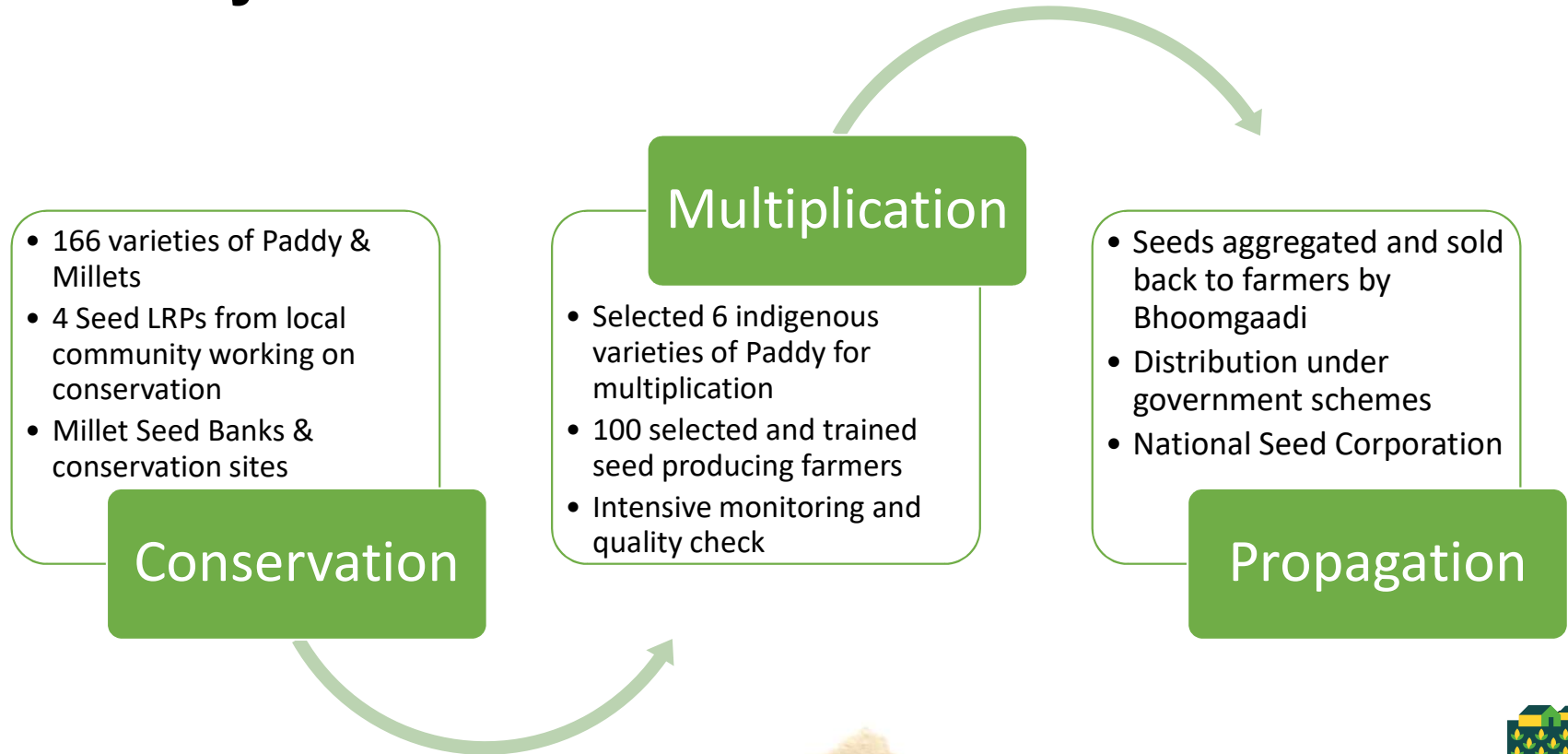
Localized production and circulation of inputs

Quality seed production of traditional varieties





Diversity of Seeds



Diversity in production

- Nudging diversity through conscious crop planning by Jaivik Karyakartas
- Enhancing productivity of indigenous paddy – through extension, handholding
- SRI, Improved PoPs for Broadcasting
- Felicitating farmers achieving high productivity of indigenous paddy
- Reviving Diversity on the uplands



Incentivising Diversity through Markets



- Bhoomgaadi acts as a platform that procures 30+ types of produce from farmers
- Has been able to create market demand for 10+ indigenous varieties of paddy
- Aggregation of 280 MT organic produce from 100+ villages
- Extensive aggregation of Millets amid market slump



Diversity in Consumption

- Pilot effort on millets in Anganbadis (1062) – Mandra Bhat
- Distribution of Millet Mixies on pilot basis (400)
- Café Aadim – a platform to promote indigenous food
- Traditional recipe competitions (255 SHGs)
- Inclusion of local organic rice in PDS



Reflections and Challenges

- Bio-diversity angle needs to be incorporated in Systemic thinking – Samaj – Bazar – Sarkar need to work together on this
- Market based incentivization works to a limited extent – conservation of larger diversity of seeds needs separate and dedicated efforts
- Managing diversity by FPOs – has its own challenges
- Government driven market distortion – detrimental impact on diversity – we need alternative decentralized mechanisms
- Areas under Pulses and oilseeds very low
- Universalization of millets
- Diversity in the field does not necessarily ensure diversity in consumption – findings of DQQ – need to work on food habits

