

Introductions:

Millet Network of India (MINI)

Millet Network of India (MINI) is an all India alliance of 145 institutions and individuals consisting of farmers, scientists, nutritionists, policy makers, civil society groups and food activists representing over 17 states of India. The network has organized several national consultations and has articulated that millet



farming is not just about production of crops but is a brilliant concept that realizes biodiversity, ecological production systems as well as food sovereignty to farming populations

Deccan Development Society (DDS)

Deccan Development Society (DDS) is a two and half decade's old grassroots organization primarily working with over 5000 dalit women farmers from the semi arid belts of Medak District in Andhra Pradesh. At the heart of DDS activities is the fundamental principle of access and control which leads to the autonomy of local communities. This autonomy manifests in community food and seed sovereignty, autonomous healthcare systems, autonomous market and autonomous community media. DDS is the founder convenor of a number of networks which include AP Alliance for Food Sovereignty, AP Coalition in Defence of Diversity, South Against Genetic Engineering, Alliance Food Sovereignty South Asia, Alliance for Democratisation of Agricultural Research in South Asia.

P V Satheesh, Director, Deccan Development Society

P V Satheesh has been working for the last 25 years with about 5000 dalit women farmers on the issues of food and seed sovereignty, autonomous community controlled market and media, autonomous local healthcare systems, relevant education and similar issues. He is known internationally for his work on food sovereignty, fight against genetic engineering and community media. He is the convenor of a number of

national and international networks such as Millet Network of India, South Against Genetic Engineering [SAGE], AP Alliance for Food Sovereignty [APAFS], Alliance South Asia Food Sovereignty [AFSA] and Alliance for Democratization of Agricultural Research in South Asia [ADARSA]. Till recently he was the Chair of the international organization GRAIN. He is also a development filmmaker and writer and has dozens of films and books against his name. He also has decades of experience in participatory research.

Ms Masanagari Narsamma, Community Film Maker, DDS Community Media Trust, Pastapur Village, Zaherabad, Medak District of Andhra Pradesh

Chinna Narsamma is a dalit woman from Pastapur village in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh and belongs to a marginal farming family. She spent her childhood as an agricultural and construction labourer and therefore had no opportunity to go to a school. She has remained non literate. She learnt filmmaking in 1997 and has become a pioneer in grassroots filmmaking in India. The Community Media Trust she has founded with her friends, all of who are dalits, farmers and non literate is the first of its kind in India.

Her wide knowledge of farming, seeds and peasant issues gives her a very special advantage as a peasant filmmaker. From this position she has made very significant films in India and abroad on the issue of Genetic Engineering in Agriculture, food and seed sovereignty that has taken her to countries such as South Africa, Mali, Indonesia and Thailand. As a peasant, woman and filmmaker she has also traveled to countries in South and North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. She is probably the only rural woman filmmaker who has dialogued through her films on issues of farming with peasants in many parts of the world.

Many of the films made by Narsamma and her friends in the Community Media Trust is circulated all around the World in development, policy and academic circles.

Ms Moligeri Chandamma, Women Farmer and Traditional Seed Conserver, Bidakanne Village, Jharasangam Mandal, Medak District of Andhra Pradesh

Chandamma is a dalit, woman, widowed and comes from a low income family typical of the less than \$2 a day. But she has struggled valiantly against all odds to become an icon of her community. Pursuing ecological agriculture, she has moved from a landless status to the ownership of 15 acres of farm which is a model for biodiversity, food production and ecological farming. She is also a seed keeper for her community and maintains a seed bank that preserves over 100 seeds in a dynamic mode. Chandamma is a non literate woman but this has not stopped her from traveling to many parts of the world talking to fellow peasants, scientists and policy makers on her farming and her vision of biodiversity.

Vatturi Srinivas, National Coordinator, Millet Network of India (MINI)

Vatturi Srinivas is a environment and development professional, currently associated with Deccan Development Society (DDS), is the National Coordinator for Millet Network of India (MINI), convened and coordinated by DDS.

Mr Srinivas has worked extensively on issues of Agricultural Ecology, Community Managed Natural Resource System, Participatory Research Methodologies and Traditional Food and Farming Systems. He has carried out participation action research with farmers on Economics of Ecological Agriculture, on Community Conservation of Seed Diversity and Millet Food and Farming Systems across different regions in India.

Over the last decade he is concentrating on working with millet growing communities, especially marginalised women to establish their control over natural resources, genetic resources, market and media.