

VRIHI COMMUNITY SEED BANK

Odisha, Rayagada District



*Rice field
Photo: Vrihi*

Vrihi Community Seed Bank was established in 1997 as a partner of the nationwide folk crop conservation movement. Situated in the village of Kerandiguda in Odisha, India, the seed bank was initiated by Dr. Debal Deb. Its mission focuses on preserving and promoting indigenous rice varieties to combat the biodiversity loss that has occurred due to the Green Revolution and provide farmers with access to this diversity.

Vrihi CSB is managed by Basudha ([Basudha – Center for Interdisciplinary Studies](#)) and has benefited more than 8000 farmers during the years of operation.

Currently, the seed bank conserves around 1,480 local rice varieties, along with other crop varieties, including three varieties of ginger, two varieties of sesame, and six varieties of okra. Seeds are provided to farmers with the agreement that they will return twice the amount after the harvest. This seed loan system ensures the ongoing cultivation and distribution of seeds, enhancing biodiversity and resilience in the face of climate change.

The seed bank was honored with the National Plant Genome Savior Award in 2009. The CSB provides training for farmers, with a special emphasis on the Characterization and Genetic Purity Maintenance of Landraces. 'Living Farms', an NGO engaged in sustainable agriculture programs in Rayagada and Koraput districts, has also supported the Vrihi CSB with conducting farmer training. The CSB does not receive any financial support from institutional sources, including government, corporate entities, or NGOs.

Vrihi is the country's largest non-governmental rice gene bank (with 1480 landraces as of date), which distributes seeds for free to indigenous farmers. All the CSBs in the district receive directly or indirectly (via other NGOs and farmers) a majority of the seeds in their accession.

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