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## Sankranti Mobile biodiversity mela @Medak

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The Deccan development Society , the torch bearer of bio diversity movement in Telangana triggers a sustainable campaign during the Sankranti season to spread more awareness for protection of the region's vast dwindling natural resources , in the face of a full throated thrust for infrastructure development in the name of development .



The 16th edition of annual Mobile Biodiversity Festival was flagged off and Inauguration was held at Hoselli village, Nyalkal Mandal, Medak District in Telangana on Wednesday. The month long festival is aimed at creating awareness among the general public about the forgotten millet crops that are disease resistant and nutrient rich. The DDS with its headquarters at Pastapur , closer to Zaheerabad has become the mascot and Icon of the campaign for green revolution ,manure less cropping and to transform the region into a seed bowl .

Its leader P V Satheesh, has been championing the cause of bio diversity and anti-GM crops successfully for last two decades . Every year he showcased the bio diversity of the region with a mela and also procession

of bullock carts to bring focus back to germ and pesticide free farming and fight the entry of BT crops .

Several bullock carts studded with traditional seeds, carrying the message of agricultural biodiversity and its importance to farmers will travel from village to village covering over 55 villages. This festival which encompasses environmental spirituality and cultural celebration is marked by a set of specially designed bullock carts carrying seeds of local crops goes round the villages, along with folk singers and dancers and other local performers. Through every village it passes, public meetings are held to discuss the importance of biodiversity and local seed varieties.



While Collector Medak Mr. Rahul Bojja launched the festival, Dr. G. Umopathy, Senior Scientist, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Andreas Riekeberg, Coordinator, Campaign for Seed-Sovereignty, Germany; Ms Bhanumathi Natarajan, Member, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Norway; Ms. Christiane Gerstetter, Environmentalist, Germany and Dr. Rukmini Rao, Director, DDS were present.

The first Biodiversity Festival of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) was held in year the 1999. Greatly buoyed by the response it received, the Festival was made mobile since 2001. The festival generated an unprecedented energy and an enlightened awareness on biodiversity in all the villages of semi arid region of Medak district.

The Deccan Development Society is a key player and constituent of the national Technical and Policy Core Group for the Ministry of Environment & Forests in the massive National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan carried out all over India in the years 2001. Credit goes to Satheesh and his team of women campaigners who

were trained in information gathering -print and visual - and display in simple language and style for sake of illiterate of Telangana districts.

*By Radhakrishna gutta*