

# 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 since 2012, the seed bank was initiated by Dr. Debal Deb and was originally located in West Bengal. Its mission is 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 the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies through the Basudha Farm ([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 species, 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. Alternatively, they may share this amount of seed with other farmers. This seed loan system ensures the ongoing cultivation and distribution of seeds.

Vrihi was honored with the National Plant Genome Savior Award in 2009.

In collaboration with 'Living Farms', an NGO engaged in sustainable agriculture in Rayagada and Koraput districts, the CSB provides training for farmers, with a special emphasis on the characterization and genetic purity maintenance of varieties. The CSB does not receive any financial support from institutional sources but has received donations from individual supporters.

Vrihi is the country's largest non-governmental rice gene bank (with 1480 landraces as of date), which distributes seeds for free to farmers. Other CSBs surrounding Vrihi have received the bulk of their varieties directly or indirectly (via other NGOs and farmers) from Vrihi. Vrihi has also helped to stock up other CSBs in the country.

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