

# ***NA TELANGANA NA VYAVASAYAM***

***Campaign for a peasant designed agricultural future of Telangana***

***June 1 – 15, 2017***



Bearing the beacons of hope, the Millet Sisters start their march to chase the darkness invading the lives of thousands of small and marginal farmers of Telangana. It is this time of the year when the inspiring songs and igniting slogans echo in the interiors of the Deccan. 'Na telangana Na Vyavasayam' shouts the young women of the DDS sanghams as they go around the villages in the Zaheerabad region to sensitize farmers on ecological agriculture practices ahead of the next sowing season of Kharif.

The campaign which started on June 2 2017 is set to reach farmers in 22 villages. In every village, as the sun sets, the women start their rally gathering farming men and women as they return from their farms. The campaign staging at the centre of the village grabs the attention of the young and the old while it becomes the platform for vibrant discussions on the trending issues and concerns of the farmers such as the changing agriculture policies, climate change, market influx, modernisation and its impact on the village livelihoods and health of the people.

As the title *Na telangana Na Vyavasayam* says, the campaign intends to discuss with the farmers in the region about the traditional farm practices inherent to Telangana's agriculture which has evolved as a result of farmers ingenious methods to cope with the adverse conditions and the tough environment of the region. The campaign aims at actively promoting the rich knowledge and the farming systems embedded with full of biodiversity and the indigenous millet crops which have secured the generation of

Telangana's farming communities with food, fodder, nutrition, livelihood and environment securities only until the invasion of monoculture into this region.

The multinational seed companies and the government is working hand in hand to actively promote cotton, soya and other mono crops in the region by attracting farmers with subsidies and crop failure compensations to these crops. As a result, the extent of Jowar, the main stay of the local populations have come down drastically. Adding to this, the prosperous Telangana have soon started assuming the status of suicide state. As years went by the figures only went high. The agriculture policies that never tried to borrow from the ancient solutions and the knowledge systems of the small farmers have only contributed to the crises.

For example in 2016, the state government of Telangana have pushed farmers to grow soya and other mono crops such as chilli as an alternative to cotton- result of which is in front of all of us. The examples of Adilabad farmers burning soya crops has put us to deep distress to which the government has never stood responsible for.

While this remains the state of many farmers across the state, DDS women farmers who have resisted to shift away from the traditional ecological farming systems stand as an



example to Telangana's real agriculture and a way to achieve *Bangaru Telangana*. The women who have secured their families and communities with multiple securities have started their march to sensitize the farmers in the region about the farming systems that can withstand the water scarcity and climate change while securing their families with food, fodder and nutrition securities that the cotton, soya, maize and such mono crop farmers can't secure themselves with.

Besides the farmer consultations, the villagers are also being showed films on the existing issues. This year the women of CMT have brought out a film on healthy forms of food and farming. The film which has the interview of the local doctors explain how the usage of chemical fertilizers have severely impacted the health of people leading to cancers among the villages. The film is being screened during the campaign so that it can influence farmers to look beyond money.