

## 6,000 farmers from South India roped in to create seed bank

Rice and seeds on display at an organic mela. | Photo Credit: [S. THANTHONI](#)

At a time when the natural farming method is gaining popularity across the State, at least 6,000 farmers from across South India have been roped in to create a seed bank to preserve 200 Indian paddy seed varieties through the natural farming.

Based in Tarakaturu village in Krishna district, M. Vijaya Ram had been collecting the seed varieties from different parts of the country to cultivate them in the natural farming method at his two fields at Tarakaturu and Peda Muttevi villages in Krishna district since 2012.

“I have distributed the seed of the 200 paddy varieties to the nearly 6,000 farmers, who have pledged to join me to develop the seed bank,” Mr. Vijaya Ram told *The Hindu*. In the natural farming, ‘Jeevamrutam’ is used instead of fertilizers and pesticides. The ‘Jeevamrutam’ is a liquid prepared by mixing cow dung and jaggery with water and cow urine.

### Fibre value

Cultivation of the few Indian seed varieties — Navara, Narayana Kamini, Bahuroopi, Ratnachodi and Khulakar — has yielded an incredible result in terms of quality of grain and survival rate of the seed in the agriculture seasons, rabi and kharif.

“The Navara variety rice has recently been tested by the Hyderabad-based nutrition experts who found above 40% of fibre value in it. We want to develop the seed bank that will have scientific data of all the varieties,” added Mr. Vijaya Ram. He and his team provide any of the 200 seed varieties to those who cherish to preserve some quantity of the seed for future.

“The seed bank does not boast about the quantity of yield. But the quality of the seed and nutritious values in it are better compared to those in the paddy varieties that are cultivated with fertilizers and pesticides,” Mr. Vijaya Ram said.

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