

EVENT REPORT

KHARIF BEEJ UTSAV 2026

Traditional Seed Exchange Festival

11 JUNE 2026 - 20 JUNE 2026

“Seeds are not merely a source of food — they are the foundation of culture, self-respect, and community self-governance.”



Women farmers exchanging traditional seeds, Beej Utsav 2026



Organised by **Vaagdhara**

Beej Swaraj · Beej Bachao — Saving Seeds, Protecting Rights

1. Introduction

Seeds are not merely a means of agricultural production — they form the foundation of the relationship between life, culture, nature, and community. A small seed holds within it not just the possibility of a plant, but also safeguards the food security, biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and social heritage of generations to come. In tribal society, seeds have always been viewed with respect and a spirit of conservation. The worship, preservation, and mutual exchange of seeds have remained an important part of community life for centuries.

In the present era, climate change, declining biodiversity, rising input costs, and a market-driven agricultural system are creating numerous challenges for farmers. Growing dependence on external and hybrid seeds is gradually pushing many local and traditional seed varieties out of cultivation, even though indigenous seeds have evolved according to local climate, soil, and environment, and are vital for low-cost farming, nutritional security, and sustainable production.

In such times, the conservation of indigenous seeds has become not merely an agricultural matter but a question of farmer self-governance (Beej Swaraj), food security, cultural identity, and a self-reliant future. A community that keeps its own seeds safe retains the ability to make its own decisions about food, farming, and the future.

With this objective at the centre, Agriculture and Tribal Swaraj Organisations, with the support of Vaagdhara, organised Seed Festivals (Beej Utsav) across various regions ahead of the Kharif season of 2026. The purpose of these events was to connect communities with the concept of Beej Swaraj, conserve local and traditional seeds, and promote natural and climate-resilient farming.

Beej Utsav 2026 at a Glance

64 Villages Covered	3 States Involved
14 Blocks / Sub-Regions	48 Seed Varieties Exchanged
1,591 Women Who Shared Seeds	2,013 Women Who Received Seeds

2. The Concept and Need for Beej Swaraj (Seed Self-Governance)

Beej Swaraj does not simply mean keeping seeds safe — it means ensuring that farmers and communities retain the right to make decisions related to farming. When farmers preserve their own seeds, propagate them, and exchange them within the community, they reduce market-based dependence and move towards a self-reliant agricultural system.

Indigenous seeds develop in accordance with local conditions. They carry the ability to withstand changing weather, produce yield with fewer resources, and sustain local food culture. It is therefore essential to view seed conservation as connected to environmental protection, nutritional security, and the rural economy.

Through Beej Utsav 2026, the message conveyed was that “one's own local seed, one's own traditional farming, and one's own agricultural future” form the very foundation of self-reliant agriculture.

3. Key Objectives of Beej Utsav 2026

The Kharif Seed Festivals kept the following objectives at their centre:

- Conservation and propagation of local and traditional indigenous seeds.
- Connecting farmers with the concept of Beej Swaraj.
- Re-establishing climate-resilient indigenous seeds in cultivation.
- Strengthening the tradition of seed exchange among farmers.
- Enabling active participation of women and youth in the seed conservation campaign.
- Developing the concept of a community seed bank at the village level.
- Promoting natural farming, biodiversity conservation, and environmental protection.

4. Organisation Process and Community Participation



The Seed Festival was not a one-day event but an ongoing process that brought communities together at the village level. Members of Gram Swaraj Samuh, Saksham Samuh (women's collectives), Bal Swaraj Samuh (children's collectives), and Agriculture and Tribal Swaraj Organisations identified farmers and families who had preserved traditional seeds for years.

Farmers and women were encouraged to bring their home-preserved seeds to the festival. Women shared their traditional methods of seed cleaning, selection, preservation, and storage. Members of the Saksham Samuh carried the message of environmental protection to the community through farmer field schools and awareness activities.

The programmes began with awareness rallies accompanied by dhol, nagara, and other traditional instruments. Villagers spread awareness through slogans such as “Save Seeds, Save the Environment,” “Indigenous Seeds, a Farmer's Identity,” and “Seed Swaraj, Village Swaraj.”

The seed exhibitions displayed maize, kodo millet, kutki millet, ragi (finger millet), sorghum, pearl millet, black gram, green gram, pigeon pea, sesame, turmeric, ginger, groundnut, hemp/sunn, vegetables, and seeds of other local crops. Farmers discussed the characteristics, usefulness, and traditional conservation methods of these seeds.

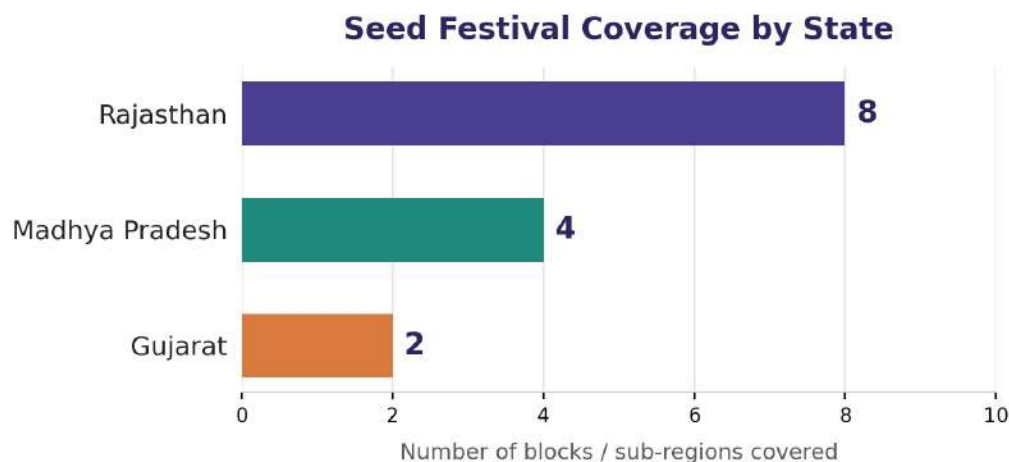


A traditional display of diverse indigenous seeds, laid out on leaf-plates for the seed exhibition

5. Region-wise Events and Community Participation

Seed festivals reached a wide geography across three states — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat — spanning 6 districts, 13 blocks, and 64 villages. The table and chart below summarise the coverage before the detailed regional narratives.

State	District(s)	Blocks Covered
Rajasthan	Banswara	Sajjangarh, Ghatol, Anandpuri, Kushalgarh, Gangartalai
Rajasthan	Dungarpur	Aspur, Sabla
Rajasthan	Pratapgarh	Peepalkhoont
Madhya Pradesh	Ratlam, Jhabua	Thandla, Petlawad, Bajna, Sailana
Gujarat	Dahod	Fatehpur, Jhalod



Number of blocks / sub-regions where seed festivals were held, by state

Implementation Unit-wise Coverage and Participation

Vaagdhara organised the festivals through four field implementation units, each covering a cluster of districts and blocks. The table below presents unit-wise participation figures.

Implementation Unit	Districts	Blocks Covered	Beej Utsav Held	Male	Female	Participant
Hiran	Banswara	Kushalgarh	14	364	456	820
Mangarh	Banswara & Dahod	Anandpuri, Gangadtalai, Jhalod, Fatehpura	18	487	558	1,045
Mahi	Pratapgarh, Dungarpur & Banswara	Aspur, Sabla, Pipalkhoont, Ghatol	20	623	672	1,295
Mahi M.P.	Ratlam, Jhabua	Sailana, Thandla, Petlawad, Bajna	12	437	441	878
Grand Total	6 Districts	13 Blocks	64	1,908	2,127	4,035

Rajasthan Region

Banswara Region — Sajjangarh, Ghatol, Anandpuri, Kushalgarh and Gangartalai

Farmers, women, and youth participated enthusiastically in the seed festivals held across various villages of the Banswara region. The programmes featured exhibitions of indigenous seeds of maize, paddy, black gram, cowpea, kodo millet, kutki millet, ragi, sesame, groundnut, pigeon pea, and vegetables.

Farmers were given information on seed selection, conservation, safe storage, and seed treatment. A demonstration of maize seed treatment explained the method of treating seeds with a mixture of cow urine, ash, cow-dung manure, and jaggery. Children and youth prepared seed balls to spread the message of environmental conservation. The community resolved to preserve local seeds and pass them on to future generations.

"Earlier, every household kept seeds of every crop safe. We never needed to buy seeds from the market. Indigenous seeds are connected to our farming, health, and culture, so it is essential that we

protect them."

— **Shri Thavarchand, Farmer**

Dungarpur — Aspur and Sabla

At the seed festivals held in the Dungarpur region, farmers and women displayed traditional seeds preserved in their homes. During the seed dialogue, the community noted that farming used to be more secure because of mixed cropping and local seeds.

Women shared traditional methods of seed conservation, explaining that seeds are kept safe using neem leaves, ash, and other local resources.

"Seeds are not only for the field — they are the identity of our home and our tradition. Women have looked after them for generations, so the new generation must also learn this knowledge."

— **Smt. Mangli Bai**

Pratapgarh — Peepalkhoont

At the seed festivals held in the Peepalkhoont region, the tribal community placed special emphasis on the conservation of traditional crops and local seeds. Farmers noted that local seeds are proving more useful amid changing weather patterns, as they have developed according to the region's climate.

The programme also included discussions on natural farming, organic manure, seed treatment, and the importance of soil health.

"Our old seeds are our identity. If we do not save them, the coming generations will be cut off from both their farming and their culture."

— **Indra, member of the Saksham Samuh**

Madhya Pradesh Region — Thandla, Petlawad, Bajna and Sailana (Ratlam & Jhabua Districts)

Seed festivals were also organised across various regions of Madhya Pradesh. In Thandla, Petlawad, Bajna, and Sailana, farmers were given information on indigenous seed conservation, natural farming, soil health, and seed treatment.

In the villages of the Petlawad region, an awareness rally was taken out with traditional instruments. Farmers displayed their preserved seeds at the indigenous seed exhibition and exchanged them with one another.

During the seed festival in the Bajna region, special discussions were held on the relationship between water, soil, and seed. Farmers were told that healthy soil and safe water sources are the foundation of sustainable farming.

"In earlier times, farmers had their own right over seeds. A farmer would save seeds according to need and exchange them with other farmers. Indigenous seeds are suited to our soil and climate, so we must conserve them and promote natural farming."

— **Shri Lalu Bhai, Farmer**

Gujarat Region — Fatehpur and Jhalod (Dahod District)

Kharif seed festivals were also held in the Fatehpur and Jhalod regions of Gujarat. Farmers displayed their traditional seeds and promoted local seeds through seed exchange.

The programmes connected youth and children with environmental conservation activities. Farmers were informed about the importance of natural farming, biodiversity conservation, and the use of local resources.

"Today we need to learn the names and uses of our old seeds, because this is the true identity of our agriculture and our culture."

— **Manoj, Youth Participant**



Women gather around a display of traditional seeds during a seed festival

6. Seed Exhibition and Seed Exchange

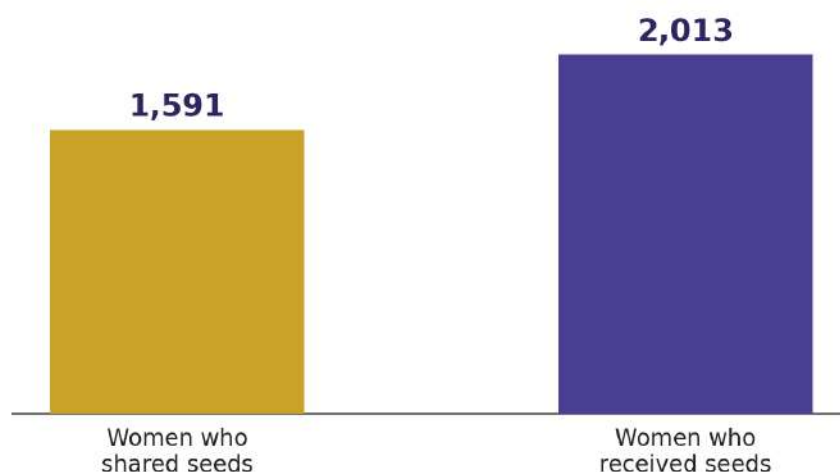
The indigenous seed exhibition was the central attraction of the programmes held across all regions. Seeds preserved for years by farmers and women — including maize, kodo millet, kutki millet, ragi, black gram, green gram, sesame, pigeon pea, turmeric, and vegetable seeds — were displayed.

The process of seed exchange strengthened cooperation, trust, and self-reliance among farmers. It was not merely an exchange of seeds, but also a sharing of agricultural knowledge and tradition.



Women exchange indigenous seeds hand to hand, strengthening the community's tradition of seed-sharing

Seed Exchange Among Women — 48 Seed Varieties Shared



Scale of the seed exchange: women who shared seeds vs. women who received them

7. Key Achievements and Impact

Through seed festivals organised across 64 villages, the following outcomes were achieved:

- Increased awareness of indigenous and traditional seed conservation.
- Revival of the tradition of seed exchange among farmers.
- Strengthened role of women and families in the conservation effort.
- Promotion of natural farming and climate-resilient agriculture.
- Strengthening of the community seed bank concept at the village level; a total of 1,591 women exchanged 48 varieties of seeds with a further 2,013 women.

8. Media Coverage

The Kharif Beej Utsav 2026 campaign drew attention from the regional press, which covered the festivals held in Jambukudi (Sailana block) and Chanderi (Kushalgarh block) villages, highlighting the community's efforts towards indigenous seed conservation, biodiversity, and self-reliance.

“Kharif Seed Festival promotes biodiversity, self-reliance” — FP News Service, Sailana

Coverage of the seed festival organised in Jambukudi village, Sailana block, under Vaagdhara's guidance, reporting on the awareness rally, seed treatment demonstrations, seed exchange, and community pledges towards conserving indigenous seeds.



Press coverage of the Sailana seed festival, featuring the event photograph and the published news report

MP Headlines — Jambukudi Village Seed Festival Report (Hindi)

A detailed Hindi-language report on the Jambukudi seed festival, covering the awareness rally, seed exhibition, seed treatment demonstration, and statements from the Block Facilitator and Youth Enterprise Coordinator on indigenous seed conservation and self-reliant farming.



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ग्राम जांबुकुड़ी में खरीफ बीज उत्सव 2026 का आयोजन

देशी बीजों की पहचान, पर्यावरण संरक्षण का अभियान

“बीज स्वराज की ओर कदम, जैव विविधता और आत्मनिर्भरता का संगम”

सामाजिक संस्था के मार्गदर्शन में वैज्ञानिक शक्ति के ग्राम जांबुकुड़ी में खरीफ बीज उत्सव 2026 का आयोजन “बीज बचाओ, पर्यावरण बचाओ” थीम के साथ किया गया। कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य परम्परागत देशी बीजों के संरक्षण, जैव विविधता को बढ़ावा देने तथा किसानों को बीज स्वराज के प्रति जागरूक करना था।

कार्यक्रम के दौरान जलकल्ला रैली, बीज उत्सव, बीज आदान-प्रदान, सीढ़ी सैन निर्माण, बीज प्रदर्शनी एवं बीज संवाह सभा जैसी गतिविधियाँ का आयोजन किया गया। रैली के माध्यम से ग्रामीणों को देशी बीजों के महत्व, पर्यावरण संरक्षण तथा जागरूक पारितोष के प्रभावों के प्रति जागरूक किया गया।

श्रीकांक्षिता साहजिकतां विभिन्न देशों ने अपने संवेदन में कहा कि देशी बीज हमारी सांस्कृतिक धरोहर हैं। इनका संरक्षण केवल खेती तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि यह अपने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए सुरक्षा, पोषणयुक्त और पर्यावरण अनुकूल भोज्य सुनिश्चित करने का माध्यम है। उन्होंने किसानों से अपने परम्परागत बीजों को संभालने एवं समुदाय स्तर पर बीज आदान-प्रदान को परम्परा को मजबूत करने का आह्वान किया।

युवा उद्यम सार्वजनिक महिला युवावादा ने बताया कि बड़ी बाजार निर्भरता के कारण किसान हर वर्ष बीज खरीदने को मजबूर हो रहे हैं। ऐसे में देशी एवं जलवायु-सहज बीज किसानों की आत्मनिर्भरता को मजबूत करने के साथ-साथ खेती की लागत कम करने में भी सहायक हैं। उन्होंने युवाओं और समुदाय के सदस्यों को बीज संरक्षण एवं पर्यावरण संरक्षण की पारम्परिक पद्धतियों से जुड़ने के लिए प्रेरित किया।




कार्यक्रम के दौरान बीजोत्सव, मिट्टी सीढ़ी का निर्माण, बीज उत्सव, सीढ़ी सैन निर्माण, बीज प्रदर्शनी एवं बीज संवाह सभा जैसी गतिविधियाँ का आयोजन किया गया। रैली के माध्यम से ग्रामीणों को देशी बीजों के महत्व, पर्यावरण संरक्षण तथा जागरूक पारितोष के प्रभावों के प्रति जागरूक किया गया।

बीज संवाह सभा के दौरान समुदाय के अधिक किसानों एवं ग्रामीणों ने परम्परागत बीज संरक्षण की विधियों, जलवायु परिवर्तन की चुनौतियों तथा उनके सामर्थ्य समाधानों पर अपने अनुभव साझा किए। साथ ही किसानों ने देशी बीजों के संरक्षण एवं संवाह का सामूहिक संकल्प लिया।

कार्यक्रम में ग्राम स्वराज समूह, सहज समूह, ग्राम स्वराज समूह सहित समुदाय के सदस्यों ने सक्रिय भागीदारी निभाई। कार्यक्रम में सामुदायिक सहजकर्ता सोहेला पासी, मनेज डामर, दिव्या शर्मा, अमृत ग्राम परिषद, कांतिपाल गहलोत, तथा समस्त ग्रामीणजन उपस्थित रहे।

“कार्यक्रम का समापन इस संदेश के साथ किया गया कि “बीजों की विविधता ही खाद्य सुरक्षा, पर्यावरण संरक्षण और किसान आत्मनिर्भरता की आधारशिला है।”

बीज बचाओ – पर्यावरण बचाओ – समुदाय को स्वराज बनाओ।

Newspaper coverage of the Jambukudi seed festival by MP Headlines

Marudhar Kesari — Chanderi Village Seed Festival Report (Hindi)

Coverage of the seed festival held in Chanderi village, Kushalgarh block, Banswara, reporting a display of 35 varieties of indigenous seeds and participation of around 150 women and men from the village and surrounding areas, alongside Vaagdhara team members and local representatives.

चंदेरी गांव में खरीफ बीज उत्सव का आयोजन, 35 प्रकार के देशी बीजों की प्रदर्शनी से बढ़ी जागरूकता

महेश्वर विशेष

कुरुक्षेत्र (अरुण जोशी) ब्यूरो चीफ बंसवाड़ा। परंपरागत बीजों के महत्व और देशी बीजों के संरक्षण को लेकर कुरुक्षेत्र चर्चित के चंदेरी गांव में आज खरीफ बीज उत्सव का आयोजन किया गया। ग्राम स्वराज संकटन, कृषि एवं आदिवासी स्वराज संकटन और समुदाय के सदस्यों ने संयुक्त रूप से इस कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया। अग्रजों ने बताया कि इस उत्सव का मुख्य उद्देश्य किसानों को सांस्कृतिक खेती के दृष्टिकोण से अवगत करना और कम लागत, कम पानी में तैयार होने वाली देशी किस्मों को पुनः अनाज के लिए प्रेरित करना है। देशी बीज स्थानीय जलवायु के अनुकूल होते हैं और पोषण की दृष्टि से भी श्रेष्ठ हैं। उत्सव में 35 प्रकार के परंपरागत देशी बीजों की प्रदर्शनी लगाई गई। किसानों को मक्का, ज्वार, बाजरा,



दलहन एवं तिलहन की स्थानीय किस्मों की जानकारी दी गई। मिट्टी परीक्षण और बीज उत्सव के लाइन हेमो आयोजित किए गए। दोस्त मित्र ने बताया कि घर पर ही बीज उत्सव की उत्कृष्ट विधि से चुलाई के समय छोपी खाद को आवश्यकता नहीं पड़ती और पैदावार बेहतर होती है। चंदेरी एवं आसपास के गांवों से आए 150 महिला-पुरुषों ने रैली निकालकर देशी बीजों के संरक्षण का संदेश दिया। कार्यक्रम में सत्य चेतना नवोदयिया, वाई पंच, कृषि एवं आदिवासी स्वराज संकटन की सदस्य जेमली वाई सहित वागधारा संस्था से दीपक कुमार, प्रकाश कटारा, पास्केली कटारा एवं कलसिह डामर उपस्थित रहे। देशी बीज हमारी कृषि निराला है। इनके बचाव ही हम अपने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए खाद्य सुरक्षा और आत्मनिर्भरता सुनिश्चित कर सकते हैं। ये जानकारी दिनेश चंद हिंदर ने दी।

9. The Way Forward and Conclusion

The experience of Beej Utsav 2026 made clear that the conservation of indigenous seeds is not a matter confined to agriculture alone — it is a wide-reaching movement connected to culture, environment, food security, and self-reliance.

In the time ahead, efforts will be strengthened to identify seed-conserving farmers at the village level, establish community seed banks, document local seeds, and build a stronger seed-exchange network among farmers.

By combining the traditional knowledge of women with the energy of youth, seed conservation will be carried forward as a community movement. Amid the challenges of climate change, indigenous seeds can become an important foundation for sustainable farming and environmental protection.

Kharif Beej Utsav 2026 was not merely a programme — it was a campaign by the community to re-establish its agricultural heritage, culture, and self-governance.

AS FEATURED IN THE REGIONAL PRESS

