



## Food and Nutrition Security Community



# Solution Exchange for the Food and Nutrition Security Community Consolidated Reply

## *Query: Developing Community Led and Managed 'Grain Banks' - Experiences*

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From [Utpal Moitra](#), Madhya Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project, DFID and Government of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal

Posted 4 May 2009

The Madhya Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project (MPRLP) [www.mprlp.in](http://www.mprlp.in) is being implemented in nine districts of MP. The project seeks to encourage the poverty-ridden rural families especially in tribal regions to lead a decisive fight against poverty.

One of the areas of work in MPRLP project is on 'grain banks', to address the challenges of food security. Experience suggests that management of grain banks is a complex process and that success depends on a number of factors including its management, participation of the members, history of group activities in the area, sourcing and storage etc.

The project would like to learn from such successful community led and managed initiatives. In this regard, we request members to enlighten us on the following:

- What evidence exists on impact, cost effectiveness, poverty, gender and social inclusion of grain banks?
- What are the success criterias / factors in establishing community led and managed grain banks in the context of group activities, community organization, participation, operation and management issues, commercial / financial viability and sustainability.
- Information and contact details of such successful models

The project will immensely benefit from members inputs and experiences to design and develop grain banks in addressing the food security issues in tribal regions of MP.

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## Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Raj Ganguly](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), New Delhi
2. [Maroti Upare](#), Independent Consultant, Mumbai

3. Kiran Kulkarni, Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.), Sangli, Maharashtra ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
4. [Shambhu Ghatak](#), Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS), New Delhi
5. [Ramit Basu](#), Government of India- United Nations Convergence Programme, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), New Delhi
6. Bhavani, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
7. [K V Peter](#), World Noni Research Foundations, Chennai
8. [Anjali Tripathy](#), Catholic Relief Services, Lucknow
9. [Nirmala Suman](#), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Lucknow
10. [Nira Ramachandran](#), Independent Consultant, New Delhi
11. [Dilnawaz Mahanti](#), International Labour Organization (ILO), New Delhi
12. [Radha Gopalan](#), Rishi Valley School, Madanapalle, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh
13. [Alka Pande](#), The Indian Express, Lucknow
14. [Ardhendu S Chatterjee](#), Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC), Kolkata
15. [Achyut Das](#), Agragamee, Kashipur, Orissa
16. [Ruchira Bhattamishra](#), Cornell University, United States of America
17. [Suresh Patel](#), CARMDAKSH, Bilaspur

*Further contributions are welcome!*

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## Summary of Responses

Grain Banks provide an opportunity for the local community to collectively save food grains and utilize it in time of need. The discussion looked into grain banks as a mechanism for ensuring food security of a region, shared various models in operation, and suggested strategies for its sustainability of which active community participation emerged as the crucial factor.

Grain Banks help address local **food insecurity**, particularly the problem of transient hunger during lean periods, and against starvation during natural calamity. The members borrow grains from the bank and return it with interest. More often, the community managed grain banks are comparatively faster to respond to local food shortage, than the centralized food security programs.

Grain banks can also act as **seed banks**, ensuring seed availability during growing seasons. This could help conserve local varieties and promote cultivation of nutrition rich local crops such as millets and pulses. [Deccan Development Society](#) conducted a millet campaign in [Andhra Pradesh](#) helping revive millet cultivation in the region. In [Bundelkhand region](#) farmers were supported with improved variety of seeds for chickpea and early variety of paddy. The integration of seed and grain bank concept helped farmers to use the seeds for next cropping cycle and meet their food requirements as well. The gene-seed-grain continuum can help promote

biodiversity conservation, promote indigenous crops and cropping patterns, and address food security for long-term sustainability.

Grain banks provide a valuable alternative for credit services by reducing the adversity of **poverty** stricken marginalized communities who usually borrow money from moneylenders to suffice their food needs. In the drought prone villages of [Maharashtra](#) grain banks helped empower village communities to address their food security and credit issues through indigenous solutions.

**Women** play a pivotal role in the operation and management of grain banks. The Grain Bank project for landless Dalit women was successful in improving overall quality of life in slums of [Sangli](#) Municipal Corporation. Since women have less access to markets, the grain banks help them in sourcing seeds for farming, without relying upon markets or external sources.

There are plenty of evidences of grain banks being **cost effective** as it relies more on local community initiatives and less on institutional initiatives. The cost effectiveness of such decentralized community managed grain banks is mainly due to – reduced transportation costs, low pilferages and leakage, local seed preservation techniques, low procurement costs etc.

The **success criteria** for the Grain Banks for its long-term sustainability are many, but the most important factor is community participation and their active involvement in management. The local Panchayat committees also need strong leadership and better coordination with the community members. Community needs to be acquainted with the required knowledge and skills essential for the smooth management of grain bank. The location of grain bank in a village has to be strategic especially in the regions hit by floods to facilitate accessibility. Provision of proper storage is another important aspect needing attention, as a lot of food grain gets lost due to improper storage. The type of grains is also a key factor for the success of grain banks and demands locally preferred grains of acceptable quality for transaction.

**Community ownership** of the grain bank is crucial to ensure its sustenance. The ACOPAM programme of ILO helped create conditions for establishing, controlling and expanding grain banks in the [Sahel region](#). The approach accorded great importance to taking into account the needs and characteristics of local communities and ensuring participation by all the actors involved in every phase of implementation.

One of the options for **sustaining grain banks** could be leveraging on the Panchayati Raj system that has a provision of '*anna kosh*' (grain fund). In addition, Self Help Groups (SHGs) can manage the grain banks under the supervision of the Gram Panchayat. [Aragamee](#) has set up Community Grain Banks in the tribal regions of [Orissa](#) and their model helped in tackling starvation and malnutrition during lean period. There are success stories of management of Grain banks by SHGs in [Orissa](#) supported by [NABARD](#). The Grain Bank programme of Batra panchayat in [Chhattisgarh](#) followed the cluster approach. Other grain bank models shared in the discussion include the successful implementation of 50 grain banks in Orai district of [Bundelkhand](#) region by Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sangthan. In West Bengal, DRCSC has supported many grain banks through a revolving fund that provides initial counterpart fund (in kind) to grain bank. The Food and Livelihood Security Project in [Jharkhand and Bihar](#) set up grain banks amongst cluster of villages where unused structure were renovated for construing grain banks.

There is need for a collaborative framework among the communities, Panchayats, NGOs, Government agencies, and UN organisations to strengthen Household Food Security Programme towards combating hunger and malnutrition. National programmes like [National Rural](#)

[Employment Guarantee Act](#) (NREGA) may prove useful to increase production of food crops and thus augment the food stocks at the panchayat level. Under the [Backward Regions Grant Fund](#) (BRGF) resources could be mobilised to build necessary infrastructure.

There are some **concerns** towards effective operation and management of grain banks, which if adequately addressed can ensure long-term sustainability of these interventions. The grains as a means of thrift and credit need a complex management system and at times SHGs or communities with inadequate capacities may not be able to handle it. The failure of crops due to vagaries of persistent droughts and floods and rapid decline in crop productivity at times causes failure of grain banks and as such designing CGB's in such areas needs careful planning to incorporate various options of stock replenishments. The importance of grain banks in some regions has declined due to varied reasons - adequate rice and wheat supply from Government schemes; Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS); increased wage work provides money to buy rice from the open market; Grain banks store only paddy but people need other foods such as pulses, cooking oil, spices, tubers, etc. Careful geographic targeting of grain banks is thus important for sustainability.

Grain banks have developed over time, moving from a simple food security tool to a more comprehensive self-help mechanism for the economic and social development of the rural community. Strategic planning and effective management, involving the local community is crucial for ensuring sustainability and success of Grain banks.

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## Comparative Experiences

### Orissa

**Savings in Kind, Thaumul Rampur Block, Kalahandi District** (from [Maroti Upare](#), *Independent Consultant, Mumbai*)

The project on Grain Banks enabled save in kind, raise resources against such savings, participate in food security systems and provide access to seeds. Implemented in 17 villages, it involved promotion of 25 SHGs and formation of 3 Grain Banks. Apart from savings in cash, monetization of the savings as loans to SHGs against their stock of grains was provided by NABARD. 29 SHGs have been promoted with a saving of 963 Kgs of grains saved. Read [more](#)

**Community takes Charge for their Grains** (from [Bhavani](#), *MSSRF, Chennai*)

Gram Vikas supports Grain Banks in over 200 villages. The day-to-day management of the grain banks rests with the community, which decides where and what to store, how to collect deposits and other norms for lending and repayment. The initial grain deposits are collected during harvest. In the lean months, the grain is distributed among the needy families, who make their case. There are strict norms on repayment, monitored by village committee/women's committee. Read [more](#)

**Community Harvest Surplus Serves as Collective Boon, Kashipur** (from [Achyut Das](#), *Aragamee, Kashipur*)

Across the State, Aragamme has encouraged tribal communities to start grain banks. These grain banks have been able to provide the villagers with security during the worst periods of food shortage, and also free themselves from the clutches of the moneylender. Aragamme's model of grain bank has gained wide recognition and is being taken up for replication by Government as well as other development agencies. Read [more](#)

### Maharashtra

**Grain Banks Improve Quality of Life, Sangli** (from Kiran Kulkarni, Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.), Sangli, Maharashtra, [response 1](#))

The Grain Bank project for landless Dalit women in slums of Sangli Municipal Corporation has been running successfully for the past three years. The women are able to get a daily wage of Rs.50 as against Rs.30 before. They always have enough food stock in their homes. Every year they themselves go to the market, negotiate rates of the grain and make best purchases and this now the women have decided to start a shop of their own.

**Grain Banks with a Difference, Atpadi Taluka, Sangli District** (from Kiran Kulkarni, Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.), Sangli, Maharashtra, [response 2](#))

The innovation fund model of micro finance in terms of grain helped initiate the model of Grain banks. The villagers borrow grain loan from Community Grain Bank, before monsoon and repay to the bank after harvest with 25% interest. This interest is further used as Revolving Fund to extend the Grain Bank seed capital (in form of grain) in other needy villages. At the end of 4 years of successive operation of interest repayment by 25% annually, the villagers can pay back 100% of the loan. At the same time they own the stock of grain in the Grain Bank. Read [more](#)

## Chhattisgarh

From [Shambhu Ghatak](#), Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS), New Delhi

**Ram Kothi - the Grain Bank, Teligondra Village**

Today, confronted with drought and a poor harvest, this bank is nothing short of a blessing for the villagers. Ram Kothi was set up as a grain bank 44 years ago using the surplus grain and donations collected during a festival. By selling the excess grain, the village is able to run a high school. A committee has been set up to oversee other projects run by the bank. Earlier, they only gave food grains. Now they also lend money. This is due to a lot of produce being stored. Read [more](#)

**Grain Banks Address Food Insecurity, Karjat block, Raigad District**

Food insecurity was a matter of grave concern amongst the tribal families leading to malnutrition and deaths from starvation. Between 1987 and 2005, the Academy of Development Science (ADS), responded to the problem by setting up more than 150 village Grain Banks to ensure availability of paddy (rice). Based on the success of this project, the Government of Maharashtra has set up Grain Banks in all tribal areas of the state. Read [more](#)

**Cluster Approach for Grain Banks, Batra Gram Panchayat** (from [Suresh Patel](#), CARMDAKSH, Bilaspur)

The central Government has supported Grain Bank programme of this village. The programme is for the tribal families living below poverty line. CARMDAKSH helped in strengthening its functioning of through cluster approach. This grain bank was started by 195 women of 13 groups with 40 quintal rice. Now 227 women of 16 groups are taking benefits from this.

## Jharkhand and Bihar

**Community Participation Key for Sustainability of Grain Banks** (from [Ramit Basu](#), Government of India- United Nations Convergence Programme, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), New Delhi)

One of the main activities of Food and Livelihood Security Project implemented by Gene Campaign was setting up of grain banks amongst cluster of villages. The project was a

community owned initiative wherein the village decided to use an unused structure and the project facilitated setting up the bank by renovating and putting in the necessary equipments, which costed a total of Rs. 70000/- . But there were issues regarding sustaining the initiative.

From [Bhavani](#), MSSRF, Chennai

## Andhra Pradesh

### Business Model for Grain Banks

A business model with 'rice credit line' as the building block was developed for a community managed grain bank involving the women. They decided on their own procedures for selecting households, system for lifting and distribution of the grain and distribution and collection of installments. In collaboration with the government rice was provided on credit each month and members repaid in cash against more rice on credit. Read [more](#)

### Grain Banks Provide Grains at Lower Price than Market Price, Medak District

Deccan Development Society helped dalit women in 75 villages to form women's Sanghams (associations) that decide their own crops, set up community grain banks that collect surplus produce and sell it at lower than market rates to below-poverty-level members who have no lands, or have not managed to grow enough food. The grain bank sells grains not good enough for seed in the open market and the money is again deposited in a regular bank. Read [more](#)

## Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

### Grain Banks Offer Food Security to the Marginalised, Bundelkand Region (from [Alka Pande](#), *The Indian Express*, Lucknow)

Parmarth has established Grain banks that are managed and governed by community members. The participating community members contribute 20-25 per cent of their annual produce to grain banks and take the grains during lean season. At present 43 grain banks are functional meeting needs of 645 people during two or three food distress months. The success has led to Parmarth advocating with government for larger replication of grain bank as a coping strategy. Read [more](#)

### New Cropping Systems helps Create Surplus for Grain Banks, Bundelkand (from [Anjali Tripathy](#), *Catholic Relief Services*, Lucknow)

A new cropping system that combines early ripening varieties of rice with chickpeas has been a big advantage where there is no irrigation and chick pea fetches good prices. In this project seed bank and grain bank concept was introduced among project communities. This had helped farmers to use the seeds for next cropping cycle and also at time of drought the grain bank had helped them to meet their food requirements. Read [more](#)

## West Bengal

### Grain Banks Empower Communities (from [Ardhendu S Chatterjee](#), *Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC)*, Kolkata)

DRCSC has supported many grain banks through a revolving fund. Communities are encouraged to use a stone or concrete slab at base of storage units to prevent rat damage. It was found that with a little training and periodic advice, communities are able to run their own grain banks, repay initial capital loan, and save lot of money and grain. Read [more](#)

## Madhya Pradesh

### Anna Kosh Helps in Ensuring Food Security, Betul District (from [T N Anuradha](#), *Research Associate*)

30 villages, covering 700 households. Self-help groups of women, farmers and youth buy grain from farmers in the village, sell as much as is required to recover their cost, and put the rest into a grain and seed bank (anna kosh). The grain and seeds are then loaned to people who need them. Read [more](#)

## International

### West Africa

**Community Grain Banks - A boon during famine, Burkina Faso** (from [Nira Ramachandran](#), *Independent Consultant, New Delhi*)

The region is often faced with severe food shortages. Since the 1980s when there were several years of famine, community grain banks have become popular throughout the country, providing a village-based solution to critical food shortages. Grain banks make food supplies available at the hardest times of the year at carefully controlled prices. ODE has supported the setting up of more than 100 grain banks. Now they control the markets, selling grains at high prices. Read [more](#)

**Decentralised Management of Grain Banks, Sahel Region** (from [Raj Ganguly](#), *FAO, New Delhi* and [Dilnawaz Mahanti](#), *International Labour Organization (ILO), New Delhi*)

The ACOPAM programme of ILO helped to create conditions for establishing, controlling and expanding grain banks. It strengthened cooperative organizations and associations that were managed by their members on the basis of their own needs. It accorded great importance to taking into account the needs and the characteristics of the local communities and ensuring the participation by all the actors involved in every phase of implementation. Read [more](#)

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## Related Resources

### *Recommended Documentation*

**Evaluation of ACOPAM Programme** (from [Raj Ganguly](#), *FAO, New Delhi* and [Dilnawaz Mahanti](#), *International Labour Organization (ILO), New Delhi*)

Evaluation Report; International Labour Organization (ILO); Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 2002  
Available at <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Documents/Reports-programmes-of-action-and-plans/Reports/2003/Annual-Report-2002---Evaluation-activities-of-the-Norwegian-Ministry-of-Foreign-Affairs/5.html?id=420289>

*Programme includes cereal banks as a decentralised system of food security organized and managed by farmers at local level*

**Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Agencies in Establishment of Grain Banks in Tribal Villages** (from [Kiran Kulkarni](#), *Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.), Sangli, Maharashtra*, [response 1](#))

Proposal; IRCED; Submitted to Government of Maharashtra  
Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/food/cr/res04050904.doc> (Document Size: 58 KB)

*Aims to solve indebtedness problem of tribal in Maharashtra and build their capacity through credit and savings programs for establishment of Grain Banks*

From [Shambhu Ghatak](#), *Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS), New Delhi*

**Assessing and Supporting the Evolution of Grain Banks as Part of Food Sovereignty**

Report; by Manjusha Khedkar; Academy of Development Science

Available at <http://www.sas2.net/documents/Proceedings/Manjusha.pdf> (PDF Size: 1.08 MB)  
*Suggest that the influence of Grain Banks must go beyond food security to include many other development activities of the village.*

### **Chhattisgarh Grain Bank Ensures Food Security**

Article; NDTV; Infochange; January 2003

Available at <http://infochangeindia.org/200303052404/Poverty/News/Chhattisgarh-grain-bank-ensures-food-security.html>

*Reports the bank distributes grain to the poor as and when they need it and all the farmers benefit irrespective of their stature.*

From [Bhavani](#), MSSRF, Chennai

### **Transforming the Lives of Tribals**

Article; by Author's title. Joe Madiath and R.V. Jaya Padma; Gram Vikas

Available at <http://www.gramvikas.org/PDF/published/Transforming%20Tribals%20Lives.pdf> (PDF Size:80 KB)

*Mentions the importance of grain banks that plays a catalytic role in elevating tribal communities from subsistence level of existence and gives confidence to aspire for better*

### **Addressing Drought in Hunger Areas - Towards a Grain Bank on AP**

Report; by K S Gopal; Centre for Environment Concerns; Hyderabad

Available at <http://www.cphp.uk.com/uploads/disseminations/R7828%20005%20Addressing%20Hunger%20in%20Drought%20Areas.pdf> (PDF Size: 1.5 MB)

*Reports on the innovative business model developed for grain banks managed by women under the Rice Credit Line Scheme*

### **Good food, Indian-style**

Article; by Keya Acharya; India Together; 19 March 2009

Available at <http://www.indiatogether.org/2009/mar/agr-ddsfood.htm>

*Narrates the success of adopting indigenous knowledge of agriculture and the way women have managed to manage and sustain the operations of a grain bank*

### **Poverty Eradication through Community Grain Banks** (from Kiran Kulkarni, Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.), Sangli, Maharashtra, [response 2](#))

Article; by Author's title. Name; Kiran Kulkarni; Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.); Sangli

Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/food/cr/res04050902.doc> (Document Size: 80 KB)

*Shares the demonstrated experience of poverty eradication at village level by implementing Grain Bank Programme*

### **Double Cropping Rice-fallow Systems of South Asia** (from [Anjali Tripathy](#), Catholic Relief Services, Lucknow)

Project Details; Centre for Arid Zones Studies (CAZS-NR); Research in Use

Available at <http://www.researchintouse.com/nrk/RIUinfo/PF/PSP35.htm>

*A new cropping system helps farmers grow two crops a year and the surplus is stored in Grain Banks managed by self help groups*

From [Nira Ramachandran](#), Independent Consultant, New Delhi

### **Community Grain Banks**

Article; by Pasteur Samuel Yameogo; Tearfund International Learning Zone; West Africa  
Available at <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/Footsteps+31-40/Footsteps+32/Community+Grain+Banks.htm>

*Demonstrates community grain bank are a solution to food security that helped the communities survive shortage during three rainy months of the year*

### **Details of Low Cost Grain Storage Bins being used in India**

Note; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Available at <http://www.fao.org/wairdocs/x5002e/X5002e02.htm>

*Provides details of various grain storage structure design and its construction that play a vital role in reducing or increasing the losses during storage*

### **Grain Banks Provide Food Security in Betul (from [T N Anuradha](#), Research Associate)**

Article; Poorest Area Civil Society Programme (PACS)

Available at <http://www.empowerpoor.com/statestoriesdetail.asp?report=627&state=Madhya%20Pradesh>

*Mentions that many PACS Programme partners have brought in greater food security and helped break the vicious debt cycle by creating village grain banks.*

## **Recommended Organizations and Programmes**

### **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Mumbai (from [Maroti Upare](#), Independent Consultant, New Delhi)**

2nd Floor, 'D' Wing, C-24, 'G' Block, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai, Maharashtra 400051; Tel: 91-22-26525068; Fax: 91-22-26530050 [contact@nabard.org](mailto:contact@nabard.org);  
[http://www.nabard.org/microfinance/mf\\_projects.asp](http://www.nabard.org/microfinance/mf_projects.asp)

*Provides support in the predominantly tribal areas for construction and establishment of grain banks involving SHGs*

From [Shambhu Ghatak](#), Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS), New Delhi

### **Navdanya, New Delhi**

A-60 Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016; Tel: 91-11-26532124, 26968077; [navslow@yahoo.co.in](mailto:navslow@yahoo.co.in)  
<http://www.navdanya.org/news/4dec07.htm>

*Runs seed banks in various parts of the Country, the seed reproduces and multiplies. Farmers use seed both as a grain as well as for the next year's crop.*

### **Gene Campaign, New Delhi**

J-235/A, Lane W-15C, Sainik Farms, New Delhi-110062; Tel: 91-11-29556248; Fax: 91-11-29555961; [mail@genecampaign.org](mailto:mail@genecampaign.org); <http://www.genecampaign.org/Sub%20pages/www-ID4.htm>

*Works on germplasm conservation through the setting up of Gene-Seed Banks for the multiplication of traditional varieties to develop viable seed source for farmers*

### **Agragamee, Kashipur (from [Bhavani](#), MSSRF, Chennai and [Dilnawaz Mahanti](#), International Labour Organization (ILO), New Delhi)**

At/P.O-Kashipur, Dist.-Rayagada, Orissa-765015; Tel: 91-6865-285174; Fax: 91-6865-285174  
[info@agragee.org](mailto:info@agragee.org); [http://www.agragee.org/foodsecurity\\_mgmt.htm](http://www.agragee.org/foodsecurity_mgmt.htm)

*Helped establish grain banks in 700 villages, with the wholehearted support from the community, of which grain banks in 500 villages are functioning successfully*

From [Bhavani](#), MSSRF, Chennai

**Antodaya, Kalahandi District**

At/PO: Kaniguma, via: Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi District, Orissa-766001; Tel: 91-6670-32038, 34012; Fax: 91-6670-32038; [antodaya\\_kld@hotmail.com](mailto:antodaya_kld@hotmail.com);  
<http://www.interconnection.org/antodaya/economic.html>

*Has promoted village level organizations (VLOs) to manage Grain Banks in the village*

**Gram Vikas, Ganjam**

Mohuda Village, Berhampur, Ganjam, Orissa-760002; Tel: 91-680-2261866 to 2261869 ; Fax: 91-680-2261862 [gramvikas@gmail.com](mailto:gramvikas@gmail.com); <http://www.gramvikas.org/>

*Has supported in establishment of grain banks in over 200 villages in Orissa and empowered community towards its management and operation*

**Deccan Development Society (DDS), Hyderabad**

101, Kishan Residency, 1-11-242/1, Street No. 5, Shyamlal Buildings Area, Begumpet, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh-500016; Tel: 91-40-27764577, 91-40-27764744; Fax: 91-40-27764722 [ddshyderabad@gmail.com](mailto:ddshyderabad@gmail.com); <http://www.ddsindia.com/www/default.asp>

*Runs Community Grain Fund programme to rejuvenate marginalised lands in villages and through this offers a new coarse grain based PDS which is community -managed*

**M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Chennai**

3rd Cross Street, Institutional Area, Taramani, Chennai, Tamilnadu-600113; Tel: 91-44-22542698, 22541229; Fax: 91-44-22541319 [hsrc@mssrf.res.in](mailto:hsrc@mssrf.res.in);  
<http://www.mssrf.org/fs/index.htm>

*Apart from the extensive work on setting up grain banks, has developed a training manual on setting up Community Gene-Seed-Grain Banks based on pilot projects*

**Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan, Orai, District Jalaun, Uttar Pradesh** (from [Alka Pande](#), *The Indian Express, Lucknow*)

Mona House, Churkhi Road, Orai, District Jalaun, Uttar Pradesh-285001; Tel: 91-5162-258412; Fax: Fax No. [info@parmarth.org.in](mailto:info@parmarth.org.in); [http://www.parmarthindia.org/addressing/right\\_food.html](http://www.parmarthindia.org/addressing/right_food.html);  
Contact Dr. Anil Singh. Director; Tel: 91-9415064472; [parmarthorai@sancharnet.in](mailto:parmarthorai@sancharnet.in)

*Works towards addressing food insecurity of the poor and marginalised communities through formation and strengthening of grain banks*

**Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC), Kolkata** (from [Ardhendu S Chatterjee](#))

58A, Dharmotola Road, Bosepukur, Kasba, Kolkata 700042, West Bengal; Tel: 91-33-2442731, 24411646; Fax: 91-033 2442 7563; [drcsc@alliancekolkata.com](mailto:drcsc@alliancekolkata.com);  
<http://www.drcsc.org/projects.html>

*Has supported establishment of many grain banks through a revolving fund that provides initial counterpart fund (in kind) to grain bank*

**Recommended Portals and Information Bases**

(from [Ardhendu S Chatterjee](#), Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC), Kolkata)

**Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), Ministry of Panchayati Raj**  
<http://www.brgf.gov.in/>

*Provides programme design details implemented by Panchayati Raj Institutions from planning to implementation, considers food and nutrition security aspects.*

**National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005, Ministry of Rural Development**  
<http://www.nrega.nic.in/>

*Provides livelihoods security for households in rural areas of the country, suggested as an avenue for augmenting grain banks for improved food security*

### ***Related Consolidated Replies***

**Designing of Grain Banks for Enhanced Food Security, from Sejal Dand, Anandi, Gujarat (Examples; Experiences). Food and Nutrition Security Community,**  
Issued 4 January 2006. Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/food/cr/cr-se-food-04010601.pdf> (PDF, Size: 120 KB)

*Practical examples for designing community-managed grain banks, including a variety of models and approaches.*

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### **Responses in Full**

**[Raj Ganguly](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), New Delhi**

Grain banks have developed over time, moving from a simple food security tool to a more comprehensive self-help mechanism for the economic and social development of the rural world. Grain banks can be sustainable as a village community activity if certain conditions are met. First, the populations concerned have to be willing to own the activity. Then, efficient organization is called for proper training of members. This presupposes transparent management. For these conditions to be met, populations have to be helped to acquire the knowledge and skills essential to the smooth running of the grain bank.

The ACOPAM programme (<http://www-ilo-mirror.cornell.edu/public/english/employment/ent/coop/acopam.htm>) (ILO programme on organizational and cooperative support to local development initiatives in the Sahel) was a technical cooperation programme that helped to create the conditions for establishing, controlling and expanding grain banks in the countries of intervention as well as in the Sahel region as a whole. ACOPAM aimed at promoting and strengthening cooperative organizations and associations that were managed by their members on the basis of their own needs.

The ACOPAM approach accorded great importance to taking into account the needs and the characteristics of the local communities and ensuring the participation by all the actors involved in every phase of implementation. This approach rests on learning by doing at the local level, testing and gradually adding to the approach over a certain period, producing tools and furnishing advice so that experience can be shared where conditions are similar. The standard inputs of the programmes consisted of training the leadership of the beneficiary organizations and their members in management methods and participation in development.

This training manual for trainers is one of the teaching aids for the "Management training course for running grain banks" (<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/docs/F1734331776/grain%20banks%20text.pdf>) that was designed by ACOPAM as a result of the experiment carried over some 15 years.

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**[Maroti Upare](#), Independent Consultant, Mumbai**

Grain bank is a community activity. There are success stories of management of Grain banks by SHGs in Orissa reported by NABARD ([http://www.nabard.org/microfinance/mf\\_projects.asp](http://www.nabard.org/microfinance/mf_projects.asp)). The

members in need of grain takes from Grain Bank and return double which facilitate to maintain the stock. This is most cost effective management and provides best food security. Such type of activity can be tried in M.P.

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**Kiran Kulkarni, Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.), Sangli, Maharashtra (response 1)**

I am sending herewith the proposal (<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/food/cr/res04050904.doc>) submitted to Government of Maharashtra based on which Government Resolution (GR) was passed to implement the Grain Bank programme in the tribal areas of the state. If MP authority wants proposal this can be used or if need be I can send the fresh proposal to them.

Last 3 years we are running Grain Bank project for landless Dalit women residing in slums of Sangli Municipal Corporation. The project is very successful. They are now able to get a daily wage of Rs.50 as against Rs.30 in earlier days. Their alcohol drinking male partners are not beating them for money. They always have enough food stock in their homes which their husbands cannot sell. Every year they themselves go to the market, negotiate for the rates of the grain and make best purchases. This year these women have decided to start a shop of their own.

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**Shambhu Ghatak , Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS), New Delhi**

Grain banks can help the communities residing in tribal belts during the times of distress and emergency like droughts and famines by ensuring food security, without immediate aid coming from the government, NGOs, INGOs or donor agencies.

Grain banks can particularly help women who are often neglected during famines and drought due to gender norms. Women can, however, play a pivotal role by saving seeds throughout the year and contributing it to grain banks. Since women rely a lot on common property resources (CPRs) like forests, water, natural resources etc, and they have less access to markets (kindly differentiate here between markets and *haats*), so seed saved in the grain banks can help them in farming, without relying upon markets or external sources.

Grain banks can act as seed banks as well as gene banks too. Seeds saved can be used for sowing in the upcoming seasons. Often, we have heard of gene piracy done by MNCs and companies. The traditional and local varieties of seeds can be thus be saved in the grain banks, which have their own unique properties. Grain banks can reduce the menace of money lending done by local money lenders, where high rate of interests are charged. Loans taken for consumption would go down if grain banks crop up.

### **Cost effectiveness**

There exists plenty of evidences that grain banks can be cost effective as it relies more on the local initiative and less on institutional initiative. The chances of leakage is low since the community look after the grain banks. A kind of peer monitoring exists. Local seed preservation techniques brings down cost and induces further innovation. However, the importance of grain banks in some regions has declined because of certain reasons: (a) People nowadays get adequate rice and wheat from Government schemes despite the flaws existing in public distribution system (PDS), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS); b) Wage work has increased so people have money to buy rice from the open market; and c) Grain banks store only paddy but people need other foods such as pulses, cooking oil, spices, tubers, etc.

This is the case, which happened in the Raigad. District of Maharashtra, India (<http://www.sas2.net/documents/Proceedings/Manjusha.pdf>). One must know that the model is successful where local Panchayat Committees are stronger, better coordinated, and where grain banks are better managed. Grain banks should be diverse enough to meet the varied needs of people.

In order to know about the success stories pertaining to grain bank, kindly contact Navdanya and Gene Campaign (both operating near Delhi). To know more about grain banks, kindly have a look at the following success story available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/food/cr/res04050903.doc>. Another success story from Chhattisgarh where grains bank ensures food security can be accessed at <http://infochangeindia.org/200303052404/Poverty/News/Chhattisgarh-grain-bank-ensures-food-security.html>

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**Ramit Basu, Government of India- United Nations Convergence Programme, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), New Delhi**

Its quite a relevant query in the times of food insecurity and high malnutrition levels across the country. I was associated with the Food and Livelihood Security Project which was implemented by Gene Campaign in Jharkhand and Bihar. One of the main activities were setting up of grain banks amongst cluster of villages. We were able to do two in our intervention areas in Ranchi and one in Hazaribagh. The Birsa Agriculture University located in Ranchi extended a lot of help to us.

The project was a community owned initiative wherein the village decided to use an unused structure and we facilitated setting up the bank by renovating and putting in the necessary equipments, which was not more than a total of Rs. 70000/- in the year of 2004-05.

The issue is of sustainability and this is where the role of Gram Panchayats come in. We should understand that under the Panchayati Raj system, there is a provision of '*anna kosh*' (grain fund) which should be maintained by the panchayat apart from the three other kosh.

This anna kosh has not received due attention and we all know the condition of the Public Distribution System. It would be a good idea to activate the anna kosh by incentivising all Gram Panchayats to build grain banks and the infrastructure/general administration/social welfare standing committee of the Gram Panchayat can be incharge of the same. Also successful SHGs can be made responsible to manage the grain banks under the supervision of the Gram Panchayat.

Revival and maintenance of the Grain bank system should be based on promoting indigenous crops and cropping patterns which would act as a buffer for the local communities there. If we think of convergence here then where on one hand, NREGA can be of use to boost productivity of food crops and hence augment the food stock of the panchayat, funds available under BRGF should be used to build necessary infrastructure. Community contribution and a strict regimen of topping up or pay back of borrowed foodgrains from the grain bank is a must to ensure that it works well.

The grain bank should also be located at a strategic location especially in regions which are hit by floods so that immediate relief can be met out to the needy. I am sure the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and the National Food Security Mission will also stress on increasing agricultural productivity and creating mechanisms which leads to food security at all times.

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**Bhavani, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai**

Our experience with initiating community foodgrain banks in tribal areas in Orissa and Tamil Nadu, has been that they are a useful entry point to address the problem of transient hunger during lean periods. The intervention cannot however be a standalone activity. While putting in place a mechanism of decentralized storage and management of foodgrains, one has to address the livelihood security of the community, in order to ensure sustainability of the intervention. This can be a mix of land-based on farm and non-farm enterprise activities. Land-based support entails working with farmers to adopt better agriculture practices to improve productivity. Capacity building and training in both grain bank management is a crucial plank in the whole exercise and considerable investment of time has to be made on this.

Provision for proper storage is another major aspect as a lot of foodgrain gets lost due to improper storage. Although, the grain bank scheme of the government, which was earlier under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and is now under the purview of the Ministry of Food and Public Distribution, still unfortunately there is no sufficient allocation for storage. Facilitating access to Government entitlements for food and nutrition should also be a part of the exercise.

In general, women have been found to be more involved in the operation and management of the initiative, although the grain bank committee has representation of both men and women. We have tried to initiate seed bank of local seeds also wherever there is a grain bank, to promote conservation of the same and their availability. Storage of locally grown grains like millets and pulses are also encouraged to promote their consumption.

Ownership of the grain bank by the community as already mentioned by others is crucial to ensure its sustenance. Should there be some incentive to the group that manages the bank, like payment in kind, is a question. Homogeneity of the community helps ensure access to all. There have been instances, where the villagers themselves decide on waiver of loan given to a destitute or needy who is unable to repay.

The entry point of addressing transient hunger through the grain bank should perhaps ideally move on to address the nutrition health of the community, through greater awareness, access to entitlements and community food security systems based on local grains, tubers, vegetables and fruits.

Several NGOs across the country have been working on promoting grain banks to address the problem of hunger – example, Agragamee, Antyodaya, Gram Vikas in Orissa, CEC, DDS in Andhra, ADS in Maharashtra, Gramin Vikas Trust in MP, Rajasthan.

NIRD Hyderabad had convened a meeting in early 2007 for cross-sharing of experiences. The Madhya Pradesh Government had also put in place a '*Anna Kosh*' scheme in 2002 to promote grain banks across the state. MSSRF has prepared a training manual based on our experience and will be happy to share the same. The manual is available in English, Oriya and Tamil at present.

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**Kiran Kulkarni, Institute of Rural Credit and Entrepreneurship Development (I.R.C.E.D.), Sangli, Maharashtra (response 2)**

I am happy to share the experience of the evolution and mechanics of a grain bank movement in the villages of drought prone area of Atpadi taluka in District Sangli, Maharashtra State (<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/food/cr/res04050902.doc>). It is also the demonstrated experience that poverty can be eradicated at village level by implementing Grain Bank Programme. A Grain Bank provides an excellent opportunity to the community to save foodgrains

collectively and utilise it in time of need. The design is such that it adapts to rural cultural modes and empowers village communities to address their food security and credit issues through indigenous solutions.

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**[K V Peter](#), World Noni Research Foundations, Chennai**

The grassroots level ward grain bank is a ration shop under the public distribution system in consumer centric regions. The present ration shop is auctioned to a dealer who has the necessary store space to keep grains, sugar, kerosene etc. Being a state subject the ration distribution is done by the Department of consumer affairs. The concept of grain banks and its utility can be optimised if an effort is made to study ration shops in well run states like Kerala.

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**[Anjali Tripathy](#), Catholic Relief Services, Lucknow**

Reading all the experience shared by the respectable members, I am prompted to share Catholic Relief Services (CRS) experiences in field of mobilising grain banks to ensure food security for community members in program areas.

CRS has implemented the RRC (rain-fed rabi cropping) project supported by DFID.

In this project farmers of Bundelkhand region were supported with improved variety of seeds for chickpea and also early variety of paddy. The paddy variety chosen was such that it uses less water and farmer can take their crop in little less time than regular variety.

In this project seed bank and grain bank concept was introduced among project communities. This had helped farmers to use the seeds for next cropping cycle and also at time of drought the grain bank had helped them to meet their food requirements.

These banks were managed and monitored by farmer groups and SHG members. Farmers have even used the seed saved in these banks to provide seed to other farmers in the community who were initially not part of the project. This was one of the methods to replicate the project concept. This project was started with handful of farmers which increased to 8000 farmers who got the benefit.

This has helped some of the community members to increase their household income although it cannot be claimed as a very significant increase. Also this project helped some farmers to avoid migration.

Here I must reiterate that although this is not a very big step towards food security but the project learning shows that technologies/method/concepts, which suits the local community requirements help to get excellent results.

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**[Nirmala Suman](#), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Lucknow**

While working on the concept of grain bank, we have to keep in mind that there are many varieties of local crops which are gradually being lost. These crops were sustainable models in an eco-niche and catered to local needs ensuring food security all the year round. One such crop is "Marua" (type of Millet) which is being cultivated in Madhubani region of Bihar. During a field visit in 2007, I found that the crop was doubly beneficial. First and foremost, it had a high nutritional value, the crop also needed very little water, so could be grown in non-irrigated land and lastly, after harvesting, the plant body was left to rot in the field which acted as bio fertilizer. After

harvesting Marua in the month of June, farmers sowed paddy and had a good crop. According to local farmers, a crop of paddy sown after Marua gave better yield.

However, most of the farmers started shifting from this local crop of Marua in favour of cash crops like vegetables. However, these crops needed more water, fertilizer and pesticides (since most in-demand vegetable varieties were hybrid seeds). So when floods devastated the crops, farmers had to sustain huge losses. To grow such cash crops most of them had taken loans at high interest rates and thus could not withstand the devastation during disasters.

This experience made people more aware about sustainable agriculture. There is also a need to include such crop varieties in the food basket for grain banks.

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**[Nira Ramachandran](#), Independent Consultant, New Delhi**

Here are some references which may be of use to you in the grain bank project.

**Community grain bank management experiences from Burkina Faso, West Africa**

<http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/Footsteps+31-40/Footsteps+32/Community+Grain+Banks.htm>

**Manual on grain bank management training course**

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/docs/F1734331776/grain%20banks%20text.pdf>

**Details of low cost grain storage bins being used in India**

<http://www.fao.org/wairdocs/x5002e/X5002e02.htm>

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**[Bhavani](#), M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai (*response 2*)**

I agree with the case made by Ms Nirmala Suman. In fact, the advantage of a decentralized community managed mechanism like the grain bank is that it allows for local level procurement and storage of locally grown staples that are traditionally preferred by the community. It is also desirable to have seed banks parallel to the grain banks, to ensure seed availability. The gene-seed-grain continuum though a mechanism of community managed food security can help promote biodiversity conservation and long-term sustainability.

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**[Dilnawaz Mahanti](#), International Labour Organization (ILO), New Delhi**

I would like to felicitate MPRLP for taking this positive step towards improving food security, community organization and consequent empowerment in fighting rural and tribal poverty, through village grain banks.

On the ILO's ACOPAM Programme in the Sahel region of Africa, the Module on Managing a Grain Bank - Internal Organization, is the first of a series of four modules, the rest being on: Logistics, Accountancy and Season Statement. Further information on these can be had from the Cooperative Branch of ILO ([COOP@ilo.org](mailto:COOP@ilo.org)). Needless to say, these would require suitable adaptation to suit the local situation and needs.

Nearer home, some successful models would include those promoted by Agramee, an NGO working towards self reliance of tribals in Orissa, and well known for its work on community managed village grain banks. The NGO has facilitated about 700 village grain banks covering Kashipur Block of Rayagada District and Dasmantpur Block of Koraput District in Orissa, of which

500 are apparently functioning successfully. For further information visit their website: [www.agragamee.org](http://www.agragamee.org)

My best wishes to the MPRLP in this worthwhile endeavour.

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**[Radha Gopalan](#), Rishi Valley School, Madanapalle, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh**

Since the intent of setting up Grain Banks is to address the issue of food security, local (traditional) crops such as millets and pulses must be an integral part of the grain banks. We are working with the local community in a few villages in Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh and have found that traditional varieties of millets and pulses (which are also far more wholesome and nutritious than white, polished rice) have been taken out of the food basket. Discussions with village elders reveals that due to several schemes such as cheap rice and demand for cash crops the present generation of local farmers do not want to grow the millets and pulses. As you all are aware that this leads to a loss of crucial nutrients (proteins, minerals, trace elements etc.), thus compromising health along with compromising soil quality and water resources.

The other aspect is of course the loss of crop diversity through loss of these native seeds from the agroecosystem.

It is imperative therefore that any efforts at improving food security through grain banks must be linked strongly to seed banks and promoting local grain varieties.

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**[Alka Pande](#), The Indian Express, Lucknow**

There is a successful model of grain banks in the drought hit Bundelkhand area of Uttar Pradesh. For last six years, an organisation Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sangthan is running over 50 grain banks in Orai district.

The aim for setting up these grains banks was to give food security to the people of the villages. These grain banks are solely run by community participation in Madhogarh, Rampura and Nandigaon villages of Orai district.

Each family is asked to donate the grain as per its capacity to build the bank. Once the collection is done Parmarth too contributes matching support, which is either the same or more. Village committees having mostly women members are constituted. The committees hold regular meetings, reviews and do the selection of the beneficiaries, which is poorest of the poor.

The interesting part is that no money is charged from the beneficiary but he is supposed to pay back in the form of grain – original amount with 25 per cent more to it. If the beneficiary is not in a position to pay back, the grain bank is replenished by other donors who have bigger quantities to give.

The Director of Parmarth Anil Singh can be contacted on phone number 919415 064 472 or on e-mail [parmarthorai@sancharnet.in](mailto:parmarthorai@sancharnet.in)

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**[Ardhendu S Chatterjee](#), Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRSC), Kolkata**

The reason why many people give up growing millets, legumes etc is because of supply of cheap rice, often as short termed gimmick.

No support price for millets, no PDS based on local grains are some of the reasons. Deccan Development Society near Patancheru in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh, has experience in this area and has been running a millet campaign

State institutions, often with funds from International aid agencies are promoting water and input intensive cash crops, private traders also encourage crops such as Tobacco and Cotton.

Our organisation has been promoting grain banks as part of Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management towards improved Food and Livelihood Security programme.

In West Bengal main foodgrain is Paddy. We have supported many grain banks through a revolving fund that provides initial counterpart fund (in kind) to grain bank, the storage structure is usually made of straw rope. We encourage communities to use a stone or concrete slab at base to prevent rat damage.

We have found that with little training and periodic advice, poor communities are able to run their own grain banks, repay initial capital loan, and save lot of money that they would have to pay as interest if they borrowed grain from local money (and grain) lenders

In dry zones of Bengal, we have promoted mixed cropping of Sorghum/Maize /pearl millet with Pigeon pea, sesame, cowpea/black gram etc and this extends growing season, enhances productivity and income. Where farmers groups were formed and rainwater harvesting was possible (sometimes with NREGA funds) results were much better.

Creating live food banks in backyard with roots and tuber crops, is another way to have some food reserve, if you need more information please visit DRCSC website [www.drcsc.org](http://www.drcsc.org) or write to the Secretary, DRCSC for training support etc.

Hope you find the information useful.

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**[Achyut Das](#), Agramee, Kashipur, Orissa**

Thanks for raising the issue of the Community Grain Banks (CGBs) in se-food network I find the responses quite interesting though much from the field experience is awaited. The CGBs are not an academic proposition.

Bhavani of MSSRF has already indicated that a book is available on Community Grain Banks which has a chapter on Agramee. We have done considerable work on Community Grain Banks in the entire tribal regions of Orissa and many NGOs have tried to replicate the model we have demonstrated. In Chhatishgarh, the IFAD supported project had also tried the CGBs in the Tribal Development Projects. To know more about our approach I am giving the link [www.agramee.org/gbank.htm](http://www.agramee.org/gbank.htm). We exactly know why and how a CGB can succeed or fail. With authority, we can say that the starvation and malnutrition in tribal areas during lean period (June to September) can be fought if there is a successful management of the CGBs,

Because of starvation and malnutrition deaths in various tribal regions of the country in 2001, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India had formulated an ambitious project to have Community Grain Banks in more than 1lakh tribal villages. There were some discussions at the national level. Even ILO had organised a workshop on Grain Banks. The Government's concept and practice of Community Grain Banks (CGBs), the scale of operation, the top-down delivery system, the sustainability are to be examined and a critique is to be developed. I can say this much that the spirit of Community Grain Bank lies in the spirit of Community Mobilisation for self-sustaining and self-managed processes. It will be a miracle if truck-loads of rice on 100% subsidy

basis are brought to the villages to artificially form a successful and sustainable Community Grain Banks. If such government supported community grain banks are successful anywhere in the country, they should be thoroughly studied and should be projected as replicable models.

I admit that our Community Grain Banks (CGBs) are not 100% success. Dr. Ruchira Bhattamishra of Cornell University, US has undertaken an extensive research on our Community Grain Banks and has come out with elaborate analysis in the context of Food and nutritional securities in remote tribal pockets. The impact of CGB is so powerful that it affects the moneylenders substantially. This invariably leads to an evil design by the powerful forces in the villages to break this Grain Banks. If there are not enough awareness and management skills, the countervailing forces are likely to succeed in destroying the CGB. Storage is a big problem and low cost grain storage technology should be tried out extensively improving upon the indigenous technologies available in tribal areas. I think the Grain Storage Research Institute, Hyderabad has come with several models and applications. The grains as a means of thrift and credit need a complex management system and our SHGs may not be able to handle it. The failure of crops due to vagaries of persistent droughts and floods and rapid decline in productivity are also responsible for failure of grain banks. The types of grains are key factors for the success and failures of the CGBs. Tribals prefer local lower millets like Ragi (finger millets), fox-tail millets etc. and give less preference to paddy/rice, maize etc., which have tremendous storage problems due to natural shelf-life.

The Community Grain Banks after due lessons of success and failures are to be taken a step forward for scaling-up. Once upon a time Agramee and MSSRF were planning to undertake a project called Panchayat Level Community Food Banks. It has been an idea in which the communities of the entire Panchayats will have a mega Community Grain Bank and keep all their grains and transact all round the year. Like federating SHGs, we had visualised such a process for the entire Panchayat. May be Bhavani will add a few things on the proposed Panchayat Level Food Banks. It is worth trying.

We consider that in tribal areas, the CGBs are the first step towards self-sustaining development. If a village is able to sustain the CGB, it can sustain any other development initiative. This is the crux of our experience.

There is need for a collaborative framework among the communities, Panchayats, NGOs, Government Agencies, INGOs and UN organisations like UNICEF, ILO, UNDP etc. to strengthen the process. The Household Food Security Programme of UNICEF in Koraput and Kalahandi districts of Orissa in early 90s to combat starvation is a pointer in this direction.

If there is any further question and clarification required, please do write to me.

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**Ruchira Bhattamishra, Cornell University, United States of America**

I would like to thank Achyut Das, Agramee for including me in this discussion on se-food network. In response to some of the questions raised by Utpal Moitra, I share below my findings from my research on community grain banks (CGBs), which I conducted in Rayagada and Koraput districts, Orissa, where Agramee has been active in establishing and supporting CGBs and other programs for over two decades. As Achyut Das mentioned, a large proportion of these CGBs have ceased to function after establishment. In order to understand what factors were important in explaining whether a grain bank continued to function or not, I analyzed grain bank- and village-level data from operational as well as non-operational grain banks in Koraput district. I found that relative to grain bank features, village-level factors are more important in determining whether and how long these CGBs continue to function. This indicates the importance of careful geographic targeting for improving sustainability.

In terms of evidence on the impact of CGBs, I found from my research in Rayagada that while grain banks did not appear to improve health outcomes, they reduced the incidence of borrowing from informal moneylenders. Thus, CGBs appear to provide a valuable alternative for credit services. The lack of impact on health outcomes examined emphasizes the importance of understanding processes for the design of effective food security programs. Food security is a multi-faceted issue, and simply establishing grain banks which provide credit during crisis, without other complementary health, sanitation and awareness programs may not be effective.

Regarding the cost-effectiveness of grain banks, due to the unavailability of data I have not yet been able to implement a cost-benefit analysis of grain banks. However, this is a very important criterion and should be given careful consideration in deciding whether a program is worth implementing or not, even if it is shown to have a beneficial impact. Given that CGBs are located within member communities, transportation costs would be low or non-existent. But then storage becomes a very important issue, and as Achyut Das mentioned, in almost all the villages I surveyed, building an effective storage facility was mentioned as a priority.

In addition, given that CGBs are managed locally, relative to centralized food security programs, they have the advantage of being able to respond to food shortage needs rapidly. This is particularly important in regions that are prone to droughts, but droughts also pose a central problem for the sustainability of CGBs. Designing CGBs in drought-prone areas requires one to take into consideration how CGBs stocks can be replenished after drought years.

While experiences obtained in the field are, without doubt, critical for designing effective and sustainable CGBs, I urge Utpal Moitra and others involved in planning the implementation of CGBs on a medium- or large-scale that they also collaborate with researchers from the start. This would make it possible to collect data before such a program is underway, which is important for setting the context and the circumstances of the community in the absence of the program. This is essential for obtaining robust estimates of the impact of the program, which would not only bring attention to the issue within the food security network in India, but would also provide beneficial information to the global food security network, enable evidence-based debate on what works and what doesnot, and enable the design of more effective programs for the future.

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#### **Suresh Patel, CARMDAKSH, Bilaspur**

The gram panchayat 'Batra' is situated 14 Km from the Block – Pali, and 85 Km from district headquarter Korba. There are 20 'mohallas' which come under this revenue village 'Batra' gram panchayat. This panchayat is spread in around 10 Km area.

The Grain Bank programme of this village is of Central Government. The programme given by the Block from 01.10.06, is for the tribal families of 'women group', living below poverty line. The block officials told that this programme is for only 40 families.

With the help of the institution 'Karmdaksh', a group of 40 families was made from 13 groups through cluster approach and rice was received from the block. Then the members of 13 groups conducted a cluster meeting and took the rice according to the requirement of their members.

While starting this grain bank following rules were made –

1. Three officials were elected in the society – President, Cashier and Secretary
2. Interest – 10 Kg of rice for 100 Kg rice on annual basis.
3. Cleaned rice should be brought while returning.
4. The interest should be deposited every month.
5. Any member requiring rice should apply to cluster through the group.

There are 22 women groups in Batra panchayat. This grain bank was started by 195 women of 13 groups with 40 quintal rice. Now 227 women of 16 groups are taking benefits from this.

The meeting for this grain bank has been scheduled on 25<sup>th</sup> of every month. The transaction and discussion is done on this day. To keep the rice through cluster there is a need for a room. For this the women of the group discussed with the local MLA of the region and the home minister and also requested the collector and Block CEO, but without any success. However, to build a house they could get 3 decimal land from the panchayat. To build the house the group decided to take a deposit of Rs. 1000 per member, in the cluster. And till date Rs. 4900 has been deposited.

Sl. No.	Group name	Name of 'Mohalla'	Total members	Tribal	Others
1	Annapurna	Batra	17	17	00
2	Durga	Batra	12	12	00
3	Nayaanjor	Awaspara	11	11	00
4	Purnima	Dhodipara	15	15	00
5	Saraswati	Dhodipara	14	14	00
6	Godwana	Mudabhatha	15	15	00
7	Mahalaxmi	Jhorkipara	13	11	02
8	Sankar	Kumhipani	13	00	13
9	Ram	Kumhipani	14	06	08
10	Bajrang	Kumhipani	19	00	19
11	Ma Santoshi	Nagrahi	12	12	00
12	Lakhni Devi	Bhadrapara	20	18	02
13	Jagruti	Bhadrapara	20	04	16
14	Sakhi Saheli	Lahrapara	10	08	02
15	Vikas	Lahrapara	10	09	01
16	Kalyani	Dhodipara	12	10	02
Total			227	162	65

***Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!***

*If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Food and Nutrition Security Community in India at [se-food@solutionexchange-un.net.in](mailto:se-food@solutionexchange-un.net.in) with the subject heading "Re: [se-food] Query: Developing Community Led and Managed Grain Banks - Experiences. Additional Reply."*

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