

## **Nature based alternatives for ecological restoration and sustainable livelihood**

### **“Minor millets” – a major source of nutrition**

#### **A model worked out by local women groups from Gariyabandh district of Chhattisgarh**

Sustainable agriculture as the source of livelihood for millions of poor and marginal farmers living in remote villages and forest fringes of our country is now a widely discussed subject. In the context of global warming and climate change, the issue is once again regained its importance in the wake of persistent drought, unseasonal rain and resulted flood situation that caused the destruction of agriculture and rural distress. Sustainable agriculture not only improve the quality of soil and positive impacts on the conservation of groundwater but also enriches our food and nutritional diversity.

The conservation, propagation of traditional millet varieties is an integral part of the entire efforts towards bringing sustainability in food and nutritional security. Traditional millet varieties (Kodu & Kutki) were the main ingredients of the dietary components of tribal community of central India in the past. These varieties has the potential to withstand any adverse climate conditions, especially drought resistant. National Institute of Women Child & Youth Development has been realized the ecological importance of “Kodu & Kutki” and putting the best efforts to conserve, propagate and adding value to these varieties in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. This attempt was its merits to revitalize local tradition and knowledge base of agriculture and livelihood.

In Gariaband district of Chhattisgarh, NIWCYD is implementing “holistic development project” supported by HDFC bank with the focus to promote rural livelihood through adopting ecologically sustainable interventions and innovative ideas. Making value added edible items of “Kodu & Kutki” is a small entrepreneurship model developed through the collective effort of women member among the beneficiary section of the project. When they used to eat “Kodu & Kutki” in the past, only a couple of items were in their menu list. Today, they are making a range of products not only for their own consumption but also earning an income for their livelihood.