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biodiversity

ANTHROPOLOGY SNIPPET-181

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Tribals come together to protect soil biodiversity



Villagers take a pledge to preserve farmland, water and indigenous seeds

Tribals in the villages of southern Rajasthan, who utilised their indigenous agricultural practices to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic, have come together to protect soil biodiversity during an agriculture and tribal sovereignty campaign launched through 27

‘Swaraj Sangathans’ in Banswara, Dungarpur and Pratapgarh districts.

The villagers took a pledge to preserve their resources of farmland, water, livestock and indigenous seeds on the World Soil Day on Saturday. Special emphasis was laid on making efforts for harvesting of water coming to the agricultural fields and preventing the fertile soil being drained away.

The Vaagad region, comprising the three tribal-dominated districts, witnessed the activities for spreading awareness about the livelihood rights of tribals, traditional farming and an effective resource management during 11 days of the campaign.

Villagers from Dahod district in Gujarat and Bajana and Thandla regions of Madhya Pradesh also joined the campaign.

Development practitioners, academicians and activists assembled at a conclave in Banswara at the end of the campaign to highlight the struggle of tribal population to preserve their indigenous practices as well as the challenges of survival amid malnourishment, weather variability and resource losses.

Jayesh Joshi, secretary of Banswara-based Vaagdhara, said the exploitation of resources in the tribal areas and scientific advancements were making the lives of inhabitants difficult.

Bhanwar Singh Chandana', coordinating director of Udaipur's Astha Sansthan, said the tribal communities wanted to live in harmony with the nature. Tribals were adversely affected by soil erosion, climate change, malnourishment and reducing biodiversity, he said.

The conclave highlighted soil as legacy formed over thousands of years, which was to be left for the posterity.

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