In a move to extend nutrition food for tribal people, Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP) of International Crops Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and Department of Tribal Welfare, Telangana, have jointly launched Giri Poshana - a tribal nutrition project. The project commenced in January 2019.

The aim of the project is to provide nutritional support to tribal women (pregnant and lactating) and children (3-6 years) through Anganwadi centres (AWCs) along with the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA) with focus on aspirational districts of Komaram-Bheem Asifabad, Bhadradri Kothagudem and Jayashankar Bhupalpally in Telangana.

This project is promoting dietary diversity towards improving health status of tribal children and women and is implemented through selected AWCs under the ITDAs at Utnoor, Bhadrachalam and Eturunagaram. The target group are provided with nutritional food products: multi-grain meal, jowar meal, multi-grain sweet meal, energy bar, nutri-cookies and jowar bytes. Among these six products three are Ready to Cook (RTC) and three are Ready to Eat (RTE). These food products have been developed by NutriPlus Knowledge Programme (NPK) at AIP-ICRISAT using local crops and are based on millet, sorghum, and pulses. The food products contain sorghum and millets (source of micro nutrients and vitamins, prebiotics, antioxidants) and pulses (source of protein).

ICRISAT field supervisors are monitoring and ensuring that all the beneficiaries receive GP food either at home or from the AWCs. A total of 7,241 beneficiaries have received Giri Poshana food in the month of March 2020.

Further, AIP team has explored different ready-to-eat products which can replace ready-to-cook products. Jowar meal is to be replaced by millet flakes mixture, multi grain meal by peanut – fried gram chikki and multi grain sweetmeal by ragi- jaggery cookies. While identifying the products, it was ensured that the nutritional values of the new RTE food products are similar to the RTC products which are being discontinued for this period. To deliver the food, most of the teachers are visiting homes, measuring and delivering the ration once in 15 days while taking precautionary measures to avoid the spread of COVID-19.