

Indigenous Women, Seed Preservation and Sustainable Farming

Zubeeda Banu and P. Thamizoli

Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, Chennai 600 005, Tamil Nadu, India

KEYWORDS Seed Preservation. Indigenous Women. Nilgiris. Alu Kurumba. Crop Diversity. Sustainable Farming

ABSTRACT Seed is a 'means of production' as well as a product, whether a tribe doing shifting cultivation or a peasant doing settled agricultural. The seed acts as a source of grain and also a future source of seed. For farmers and tribals seeds have high utility cum social and ecological value. The development of sustainable agriculture is closely related to the process of social reproduction, in which women are the central actors. The rapidly increasing literature on women and environment makes a strong case for women centralism to promote a more sustainable agriculture. The emerging paradigm of sustainable farming also emphasizes that in spite of women being central in agriculture and resource management, and have the potential to apply their knowledge and practices, nevertheless women remain marginal in many of these new research and development programmes.