



Seed Conservation & Gender Dynamics

Caritas India works with smallholder farmers, especially women, in all states of the country and has raised and strengthened more than 4000 seed banks.





Gender Dynamics of Seed Conservation

- The domain of '**seed**' is a stranglehold of patriarchy.
- Seed patriarchy is an **extension** of patriarchy in agriculture.
- Men wield '**control**' whereas women have '**custody**' of seeds.
- Deconstruction of 'seed processes' reveals '**power concentration**' with men and '**responsibility concentration**' with women.
- **Seed preservation responsibility** almost entirely rests with women.

Gender Differences of Seeds Management



Women Farmers	Men Farmers
Prioritize food crops	Prioritize cash crops and monetizable crops
Serious about diversity on farm	Seed choices offer less diversity on farm
Sensitive about traditional seeds	Inclined to hybrid or ' modern ' seeds
Conserve seeds for cultivating even tiny land parcels	Less interested in seeds for cultivating tiny farms
Very keen about subsistence vegetable cultivation	Less keen about subsistence vegetable cultivation
Greater exchange among more number of women	Exchanges happen in smaller group of men



Gender Differences of Seeds Management



Women Farmers	Men Farmers
Possess better grasp of seed health	Rely on the meticulousness of women
Open to conserving even seeds that might increase their drudgery	Bring in technology-intensive crop seeds
Healthy informality in seed management; still very effective	Structured seed management that does not assure effectiveness
Less squabbles and disintegration	More prone to group level feuds and disintegration
More interested in indigenous seed conservation technologies	More interested in seed conservation technologies of market
Less pest infestation and loss of seeds	More pest infestation and loss of seeds

- Effectiveness of seed bank is **directly proportional to the degree of women's control.**
- **Respect for the sanctity of seed wealth** comes naturally to women.
- Women are **primary custodians** of indigenous seed wealth.



Thank You

