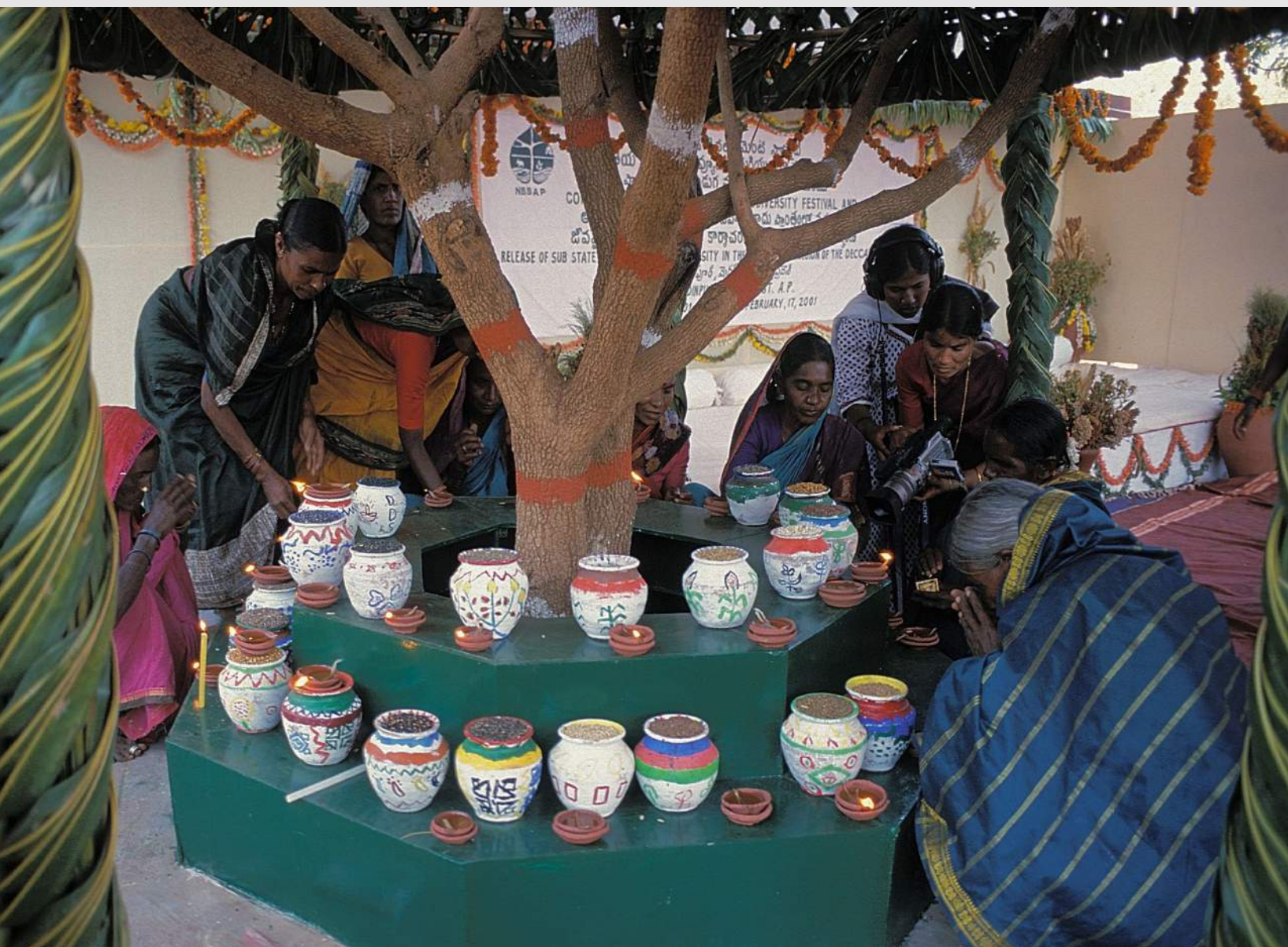


# Food & Agriculture



*Above: Traditional seed variety conserved by the women of Deccan Development Society (DDS).*



*Above: A mobile biodiversity festival organized by DDS in 2001.*



*Above: Reaching out through community radio, part of DDS's programmes.*

Food is the essence of human well-being. There are innumerable examples in the country of initiatives that attempt not only the conservation of **traditional seed and livestock variety**, but also to secure all the links in the chain from production based on organic principles to consumption based on local markets.

One of the most creative efforts is of **Deccan Development Society** (DDS) in the eastern states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In a globalising world, their objective has been to protect the autonomy of food, from seeds and crop production to the natural resource base on which it depends, and from creating a regional market to employing the media as an education tool. This autonomy is achieved through empowering women's *sanghams* or voluntary village level associations, mostly consisting of *dalit* women.

In Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh, the **Timbaktu Collective** works with many of the same principles. It began in the early 90s by creating village level self-help groups based on thrift and credit, and since then has gone on to create cooperatives to deal with issues as wide ranging as food production to commons management.

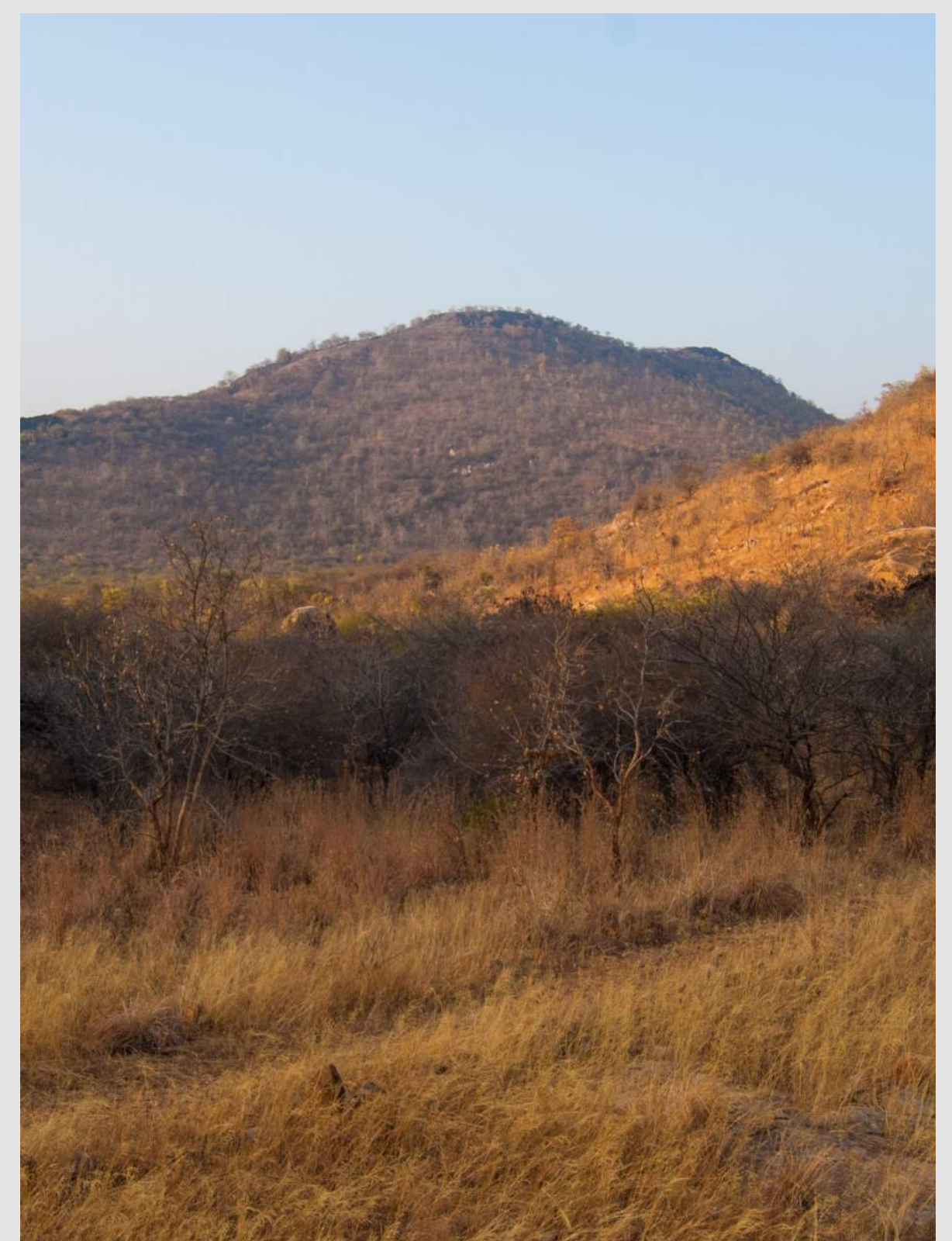
Importantly, both DDS and the Timbaktu Collective have shunned conventional organic certification that is very expensive and perpetuates a 'license raj' culture, and have adopted the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) approach that is based on farmer-to-farmer peer review, individual integrity and mutual trust.



*Ragi is an important millet in drought-prone areas of Andhra Pradesh.*



*A Timbaktu Collective facility of bottling organic groundnut oil.*



*Commons management is intrinsically related to food, recognized by the Timbaktu Collective.*