

INDIGENOUS TRIBAL FARMING PRACTICES IN KOLLI HILLS, TAMIL NADU

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Abstract: Indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) is an integral part of the culture and history of a local community. It has evolved through several years of regular experimentation on the day to day life and available resource surrounded by the community. It based on experience, often tested over long period of use, adapted to local culture and environment, dynamic, changing and lay emphasis on minimising risk rather than maximising profits. Knowledge, skill and survival strategy of farmers operating with low external inputs have often ignored to promote modern agriculture. The tribal farmers have been confronting to several constraints in farming which hinder their way for development. The present study was undertaken in Kolli hills of Tamil Nadu, to find out the constraints faced by tribal farmers and to suggest suitable measures to overcome these constraints. The results revealed that the major constraints faced by tribal farmers were resource poorness (78.66%) followed by illiteracy (72.22%) lack of training facilities (70.00%) and lack of technical guidance (64.44%). Various suggestions provided by the sample of tribal farmers were educational facilities should be provided for the tribal people. More educational institutions should be established (82.24%) followed by providing training facilities to the farmers on proven indigenous technologies (77.77%).

Key words: ITK, Tribal Farmers Practices, Technical Guidance, Kolli Hills, Tamil Nadu

Introduction: Indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) is an integral part of the culture and history of a local community. It is evolved through several years of regular experimentation on the day to day life and available resource surrounded by the community (Prabhakar et. al., 2011 & Vinod Singh, 2015). It based on experience, often tested over long period of use, adapted to local culture and environment, dynamic, changing and lay emphasis on minimising risk rather than maximising profits. Knowledge, skill and survival strategy of farmers operating with low external inputs have often ignored to promote modern agriculture. (Sankaran, 2005). Indigenous knowledge is found to be socially desirable, economically affordable, sustainable and involves minimum risk (Mohammad Awais, 2007). But the farmers are facing many constraints in farming practices, keeping in view of these points the study was conducted to identify the constrains faced by the tribal farmers and suitable measures to overcome these constraints.

Methodology: The study was conducted in Kolli Hills of Tamil Nadu. Two encompasses seven clusters of villages were selected from the total 14 clusters of village (Nadu). Six cluster villages viz., (Ariyur Nadu, Bail Nadu, Gudini Nadu, Gundur Nadu, Selur Nadu, And Valappur Nadu). From each village 15 farmers (mostly wise farmers) were selected, so total number of 90 farmers was selected for the study. The majority of interviews were conducted with the individuals although there were a small number of group interviews (up to 15 people) too for consensus opinion. Frequencies and Percentages were calculated for making simple comparison.

Results and discussion: Problems faced by the tribal farmers: By carefully examination of the

results presented in Table. 1, it is revealed that, most of the farmers are having problems of resource poorness (78.66%) followed by Illiteracy (72.72%), lack of training facilities (70.00%), Lack of technical guidance (64.44%), Poor economic status of the farmers (61.11%), Lack of transport facility (56.66%), Farmers are not willing to take risk (54.44%), Afraid of work with outsiders (50.00%), Failure of crops due to delay/no rains (46.66%), Lack of market facilities (43.33%), Poor contact of extension worker with farmers (42.22%) and Lack of cooperation from fellow farmers (38.88%).

Here we have seen that most of the farmers of this particular region are resource poorness, it means they are not having some basic facilities for farming and they are also not having good quality of seed, irrigation facilities, market facilities etc. The second most important problem is illiteracy, because of that tribal people cannot interact to outsider and also they cannot understand the modern technology of farming. Other than these two problems, many of the other problems are also there such as lack of training facilities, lack of market facilities etc. Farmers are saying that the person who are appointed for helping the farmers Village development officer coming to their field, they are not provide any information about agriculture practices, if some farmers try to approach they are unwilling to help them.

Documented Indigenous Knowledge for Improvement in Agriculture: A glance of the Table 2 revealed that suggestions cum strategies for proper utilisation of ITKs are “Educational facilities should be provided for the tribal people. More educational institutions should be established (82.24%)” followed by “Provide training facilities to the farmers on proven indigenous technologies (77.77%)”,

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to problems faced by them(n=90)

S. No	Problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Resource poorness	88	78.66	I
2	Illiteracy	65	72.22	II
3	Lack of training facilities	63	70.00	III
4	Lack of technical guidance	58	64.44	IV
5	Poor economic status of the farmers	55	61.11	V
6	Lack of transport facility	51	56.66	VI
7	Farmers are not willing to take risk	49	54.44	VII
8	Afraid of work with outsiders	45	50.00	VIII
9	Failure of crops due to delay/no rain.	42	46.66	IX
10	Lack of market facilities	39	43.33	X
11	Poor contact of extension worker with farmers	38	42.22	XI
12	Lack of cooperation from fellow farmers	35	38.88	XII

“Farm equipment made available to the farmers which are cheaper, easily available and easy to handle based on traditional wisdom (71.11%)”, “Enhancing farmers experimental capacity and farmer to farmer training through participatory approach (67.77%)”, “Provide market facility in tribal areas (60.00%)”, “Good, reliable transport and communication facility should be provided in tribal villages (55.55%)”, “Tribal villages should be connected to a regular supply of electricity (52.22%)” and “Strengthening local farmer organisation and also inter villages cooperation (51.11%)”. Here in above table we can see most of the farmers want educational facilities and they want more educational institutes should be established so the tribal people should get the education and second most importantly they want training about modern techniques of farming, they also want training for getting job other than agriculture. The other very good suggestions also coming from farmer’s side such as Farm equipment made available to the farmers which are cheaper, easily available and easy to handle because they are facing the problem of labour

shortage, Enhancing farmers experimental capacity and farmer to farmer training through participatory approach, Provide market facility in tribal areas so the farmers can purchase all the necessary requirements for farming in time and they can sell their produce in right time and they can get good price without deterioration of their produce, Good transport and communication facility should be provided in tribal villages so the farmers can reach the market in time and they also want twenty four hour electricity supply in their villages so all the necessary activities should go in proper way without any hindrance. It was brought out in this study tribal farmers are facing many of the problems in indigenous farming practices in which unavailability of resources and illiteracy are most serious problem and they are having valuable suggestions for improving their situations which will help in their development and they are sure if government should take proper initiative for solving their problems then definitely they will come out of these problems.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to suggestions given by them

S.No	Suggestions and Strategies	Frequency	Percent-age	Rank
1	Educational facilities should be provided for the tribal people. More educational institutions should be established.	74	82.22	I
2	Provide training to the farmers on proven indigenous technologies.	70	77.77	II
3	Farm equipment made available to the farmers which are cheaper, easily available and easy to handle based on traditional wisdom.	64	71.11	III
4	Enhancing farmers experimental capacity and farmer to farmer training through participatory approach.	61	67.77	IV
5	Provide market facility in tribal areas.	54	60.00	V
6	Good, reliable transport and communication facility should be provided in tribal villages.	50	55.55	VI
7	Tribal villages should be connected to a regular supply of electricity.	47	52.22	VII
8	Strengthening local farmer organisation and also inter villages cooperation.	41	51.11	VIII

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