



Full Length Research Article

SUGGESTIONS EXPRESSED BY THE TRIBAL FARMERS FOR BETTER UTILIZATION OF INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The study has attempted to analyse the suggestions expressed by the tribal farmers for better utilization of indigenous agricultural practices in Pachaimalai hills. This study was conducted in Pachaimalai hills of Trichy District of Tamilnadu. It occupies a prominent position in tribal population of Tamilnadu. A sample size of hundred respondents was selected on the basis of proportionate random sampling techniques. Data were collected by interviewing the respondents personally with the help of pre-tested and well-structured interview schedule. The data collected were processed, coded and tabulated. Majority of the respondents expressed “documenting indigenous agricultural practices”, Rewarding indigenous practices by government official and “Provisions of Subsidised inputs to indigenous farming” for sustainable development in this region.

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INTRODUCTION

The term indigenous knowledge denotes a type of knowledge that has evolved within the community and has been passed on from one generation to another. This knowledge is generated and transformed through systematic process of observing local conditions, experimenting with solutions and readopting previously identified solutions to modified environmental, socio economic and technological situations.(Brouwers,1993). Although an increasing amount of research on indigenous knowledge system, is now being done, reversing this negative trend, a review of literature shows that indigenous knowledge is still not always recognised as the product of holistic systems of perceptions, relationships and organizational arrangements as stated by Fernandez (1994). In recent years indigenous knowledge is gaining significance and a number of scholars have shown considerable interest in the indigenous technical knowledge of rural people. It is also shown that in many cases, these indigenous knowledge systems have sophisticated technical component which enable people to deal with survival of the natural and cultural environments (Atte, 1989). The various indigenous agriculture practices of pachaimalai hills through existed for the last several decades have not been for systematic study.

Such an attempt alone would bring out the complete picture of the profile characteristics of the tribal farmers, identification of indigenous agricultural practices, levels of adoption and constraints and suggestions expressed the tribal farmers. In this present study aims to identify some of the suggestions expressed by the tribal farmers for better utilization of indigenous agricultural practices.

METHODOLOGY

Pachaimalai hills located in Trichy district of Tamil Nadu. Tribal people constitute 90.00 per cent of the total population of this tract and they mainly depend on agriculture and allied activities and they are noted for rich traditional wisdom. It was planned to select all the three blocks (vannadu, thenpura nadu and kombai) of this tracts. Among three blocks, twenty villages were selected based on their maximum area under cultivation of crops.

From the twenty villages, five respondents from each village were selected proportionate random sampling techniques. A sample size of 100 respondents was considered adequate for the study. The required data were collected by using a well structured interview schedule. The data collected were processed, coded and tabulated for statistical analysis.

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S.No	Suggestions	No of Respondents	Per cent
1	Formal research and development on indigenous practices.	75	75.00
2	Documenting indigenous agricultural practices	70	70.00
3	Formation of regional indigenous resource centre	63	63.00
4	Rewarding indigenous agricultural practices by educated people	61	61.00
5	Change in attitude of farmers	60	60.00
6	Provision of subsidised inputs to indigenous farming	58	58.00
7	Strengthening the extension services	55	55.00

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Suggestions given by the respondents for better utilization of indigenous agricultural practices for sustainable development: Keeping in mind the findings of the research study, the followings suggestions are provided for effective utilization of the indigenous agricultural practices observed in this tract. The following suggestions are provided for effective utilization of the indigenous agricultural practices observed in this area. From the perusal of table 1 it may be noted that majority of the respondents (70.00 per cent) suggested Formal research and development on indigenous practices followed by documenting indigenous agricultural practices (70.00 per cent), formation of regional indigenous resource centre (63.00 per cent),rewarding indigenous agricultural practices by educated people(61.00 per cent),change in attitude of farmers (60.00 per cent), provision of subsidised inputs to indigenous farming(58.00 per cent), and strengthening the extension services (55.00 per cent).

Three fourth of the respondents suggested the formal research and development on indigenous practices in the study area. Farmers practiced different agricultural practices which have been inherited over generations and developed by indigenous initiatives. Many of these practices were time tested. Hence it is suggested by the farmers that instead of introducing new package of practices, formal research and development could be focused on indigenous practices with new experimented design and trials. This may result in the evaluation of new practices which may be modified indigenous practices existing in this area. These indigenous technologies in modified farms will be more easily accepted by the farmers. Nearly three fourth of the respondents suggested documenting indigenous agricultural practices. Hence arrangements could be made for documenting the indigenous practices in detail. The methods like participant and non-participant observation. Documentation of oral history, folk songs etc, could be utilized for the documentation of the indigenous practices. Sivasankaran (1996) has also made a similar observation in his study area. Another major suggestion is that the tribal respondents formation of regional indigenous resource centre. A regional indigenous resources centre could be establish in this tract because of the wealth of the indigenous practices in this area and arrangements may be made to link it with national and international resources centres. Among 61.00 per cent of the respondents suggested that rewarding indigenous agricultural practices by educated people. The elite and educated people should be made to reward and respect the indigenous practitioners by making them to realize the importance of indigenous practices through various training programmes. Kanagasabapathy (1996) has also made a similar observation in this study area. Another suggestion is change in attitude of farmers. Indigenous knowledge is unique to a given culture which facilitates communication and decision making.

The indigenous practices are evolved by the farmers due to constant experimentation and innovation. But most of the farmer feel that it is inferior when compare to scientific knowledge. In extension programme, the local farmers with indigenous practice should be identified, persuaded and motivated to educate the other farmers. The attitude of all the farmers can be changed by arranging more educational campaigns and discussion. More than half of the respondents suggested that provision of subsidised inputs to indigenous farming. Since many of the respondents were found to adopt several indigenous practices in their cultivation, they require financial help as subsidy and subsidised inputs to adopt the practices better and get higher yields. Hence the government could arrange for providing subsidised inputs to the tribal farmers to enhance their adoption. Slightly more than half of the respondents requested for strengthening the extension services. At present the strength of extension staff for extension work in pachaimalai hills is very meager. The extension personnel prefer to serve in plains where there are more amenities. Extension workers in this tract may be encouraged with more monitory benefits, which may motivate them to discharge their duties effectively in hilly areas. The extension staff may be trained on indigenous practices of this area. Somasundaram (1995) reported that such a suggestion was made by the farmers in his study area also.

Conclusion

Majority of the respondents in adopting the indigenous agricultural practices. So it is suggested that the state department of agriculture may give suitable instruction to the grass root workers to deliberately intensify and contact all the youths during their visits to educate the youth on the importance of various indigenous practices and make them to have faith on indigenous knowledge.

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