

Practices are Not without Concepts: Reflections of the Use of Indigenous Knowledge in Artisanal and Agricultural Projects in India

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ABSTRACT It is encouraging to note that a good number of research based development reports using indigenous knowledge data have appeared during the past five years. However, these studies, which belong to a wide variety of academic disciplines, rarely define the concept of indigenous knowledge. They also do not make it clear that what is indigenous and what is tradition. In this paper, the researcher proposes definitions for the concepts of Indigenous Knowledge (IK), Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) and Indigenous Technological Knowledge (ITK), while distinguishing "indigenous" from "tradition" and "invented tradition". Having defined the concepts, the researcher argue that sustainability even if the indigenous knowledge component is used, can only be maintained when both the practices and the concepts behind them are considered in research and project design. To illustrate the relevance of the difference between Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) and Indigenous Technological knowledge (ITK) two Indian cases are given. The case study on aspects of Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) among artisans shows the concepts behind (trans-) actions. The case study on bamboo shows the importance of the participants' views and Indigenous Technological Knowledge (ITK).