

Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge in Rainfed Rice Based Farming Systems For Sustainable Agriculture: Learning from Indian Farmers

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ABSTRACT Farmers in developing societies have evolved location specific local knowledge and gained through close interaction within natural and physical environments and cultural adaptation, which are recognized now to be more eco-friendly and sustainable. Up to a 1980s, these farmers were considered laggards. These days however, the increasing attention and scientific research have made it possible to recognize such farmers as innovators based on their unique practices in the field of sustainable agriculture. To examine the importance of such farmers' knowledge and role in sustainable agriculture, its study was conducted in purposively selected villages of *Gond* and *Halba* tribes in the southern part of Bastar district, Chhatisgarh, India. Indigenous rice crop management under rainfed agroecosystem was the focus. A combination of methods including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA- participant observation, group discussions, distant learning and semi-structural interview were used to collect the data. A group of experienced scientists from different disciplines of agricultural science were chosen to capture their perception on farmers' practices. The study demonstrate that the perception of agricultural scientists indicates that most of the documented local practices of rice crop management by tribal people are rational and sustainable.