

Identification and adoption of indigenous agricultural practices followed by tribals in Melghat area

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ABSTRACT

In the present investigation, knowledge of the farmers about indigenous agricultural practices revealed that majority of the respondents had high level of knowledge and had medium level of adoption of indigenous agricultural and allied practices. Results of the relational analysis revealed that the variables namely age, farming experience, land holding, annual income, extension contacts, social participation had positive and significant correlation with the knowledge. Regarding extent of adoption of indigenous agricultural practices the variables namely, age, farming experience, land holding, annual income, social participation and knowledge had positive and highly significant correlation with adoption. The variables namely, education, occupation and extension contacts had negative and highly significant correlation with the adoption.

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) is local specific knowledge and set of practices in agriculture, natural resource management, health and educational development generated and preserved by people and farmers and confirmed for its stability over centuries. Indigenous knowledge is "Local knowledge" that is unique to a given culture or society. It is information base facilitating communication among people coming from different backgrounds. Such knowledge is passed on from generation to generation in many societies by word of mouth. It is acquired by local people through accumulation of experience, informal experiments and intimate understanding of environment in a given culture.

Tribals all over the world are closely associated with nature and happen to be a large source of indigenous agricultural knowledge. In spite of large monetary investment and implementation of various development schemes, the tribals had not moved much towards development. They are still adopting traditional or local practices of crop production.

As the name implies, Melghat is literally a meeting place of Ghats. The area is very hilly and consists of succession of hills and valleys in a confused pattern with constant abrupt variations in altitude, aspect and gradient. Melghat is a scheduled area and main resident of this area are Korkus- a scheduled tribal community. Korkus are about 75 % of

the total population of Melghat region.

METHODOLOGY

The exploratory research design has been used in the present study. The study was carried out in Amravati district of Maharashtra state. The study was mainly confined to Chikhaldara Panchayat Samiti, which is about 100 km away from Amravati.

For identification of indigenous agricultural practices, 50 oldest tribal farmers were purposively selected for the interview and group discussion held with them to identify the indigenous agricultural practices they know and use in their situation.

Chikhaldara Panchayat Samiti is constituted of 163 villages. A list of villages was prepared from the records of Agricultural Officers concerned. In all, 10 villages were purposively selected on the basis of higher tribal population. The list of tribal farmers in these 10 villages was procured and by resorting to random sampling method, 15 farmers each were selected. Thus, in all 150 tribal farmers were selected which constituted the sample respondents for the purpose of the present investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Table 1, it was observed that relatively higher proportion of respondents (73.33%) had high level of knowledge followed by 26.67 % respondents who had low level of

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