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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**GENERAL CONSTRAINTS IN THE ADOPTION OF INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES BY THE TRIBAL FARMERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study on Indigenous Knowledge of Tribals of Pachaimalai hills, was conducted to study the constraints experienced by the tribal farmers in adopting the indigenous agricultural practices. The study was conducted in Pachaimalai hills of Trichy district. A sample of one hundred tribal farmers (respondents) was selected from the tribal hamelets using proportionate random sampling technique. Nearly twenty one indigenous agricultural practices were identified in the crops like paddy, tapioca and sorghum. In addition ten common indigenous agricultural practices were also identified. The data were collected with the help of well structured and pretested interview schedule and suitable statistical tools were used to analyse the data. The important constraints reported were 'no reward for indigenous agricultural practices by Government Officials', 'youth's preference for urban life,' 'Lack of documentation', and 'poor income from agriculture'.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Today's major effort of agricultural scientist and technocrats are focused on the term called sustainable agricultural development. Sustainable development involves producing goods for the needs of the present generation, while at the same time conserving resources in order to ensure continuous production in the future. (FAO 1993) It is strongly recommended that indigenous knowledge system is offering sustainable approaches to agricultural and rural development (Chambers, 1983; Richards, 1985). 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 recognized as the product of holistic systems of perception, relationship and organizational arrangements as stated by Fernandez (1994). In Tamilnadu the total tribal population is rather small and

scattered all over the state. Like the rest of India, the tribal populations in the state is found to occur in and around hilly tracts. The tribal population in Tamilnadu state is about 5.2 lakhs, representing 1.10 per cent of the total population of the state. An Indian tribes is a small culturally distinct and economically self sufficient community with a language of its own and an autonomous political organisation. (Gosuvami, 1984). The various indigenous agriculture practices of Pachaimalai hills though existed for the last several decades has not been taken for systematic study. Such an attempt alone would bring out the complete picture of the profile characteristics of tribal farmers, identification of various indigenous agricultural practices, levels of adoption and constraints etc.

**METHODOLOGY**

As the main objective to this study was centred around the tribal people, it was planned to select all the three blocks of Pachaimalai hills to have a unique representation. Accordingly, the three blocks viz., for the Vannadu, Thenpuranadu and Kombai were selected for the study. The three blocks in Pachaimalai hills having large area under paddy, tapioca, and sorghum cultivation were purposively selected. Twenty villages were selected based on their maximum area under paddy, tapioca and sorghum crop. Of the total villages selected, eight villages were selected each from Vannadu and Thenpuranadu and four were from Kombai block. From the twenty selected villages, five respondents

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from each were selected randomly for the purpose of data collection. A sample size of 100 respondents was considered adequate for the study. The total number of respondents to be selected from each block was arrived at on the basis of proportionate random sampling procedure.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

General constraints in the adoption of indigenous agricultural practices are reported by the tribal farmers are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Constraints experienced by the respondents in adopting the recommended indigenous agricultural practices.**

(n=100)			
S.No.	Constraints	Total No. of respondents	Per cent
1.	No reward for indigenous agricultural practices by government officials	70	70.00
2.	Youth's preference for urban life	58	58.00
3.	Lack of documentation	47	47.00
4.	Poor income from agriculture	40	40.00
5.	Negative attitude of elite and educated people.	28	28.00

It could be seen from the table 1 that the first and for most constraint experienced by majority of the respondents (70.00 per cent) was 'no reward for indigenous agricultural practices by government officials' followed by youth's preference for urban life (58.00 per cent), lack of documentation (47.00 per cent), poor income from agriculture (40.00 per cent) and negative attitude of elite and educated people (28.00 per cent) as their constraints respectively in adopting the recommended indigenous agricultural practices in their cultivation. Most of the respondents reported that government officials never rewarded the indigenous agricultural practitioners, whereas the farmers who adopt the scientific practices recommended by extension workers were rewarded with cash rewards, prizes, incentive etc. This would have prompted the tribal respondents to report this as a constraint in their cultivation. This findings is in line with the findings of chambers (1983). The youth are trained in formal education institutions run by the people in plains. The youth consider their school teachers and other government officials as their role models. Hence they prefer to establish a life like people in plains, ignoring indigenous practices of the tribal tract. This attitude of youth remains to be a constraint in the adoption of indigenous practices as reported by 58.00 per cent of the respondents. Atte (1989) came out with similar findings relating to the tribal people in Nigeria.

'Lack of documentation of indigenous practices' was reported by 47.00 per cent of the respondents. The indigenous knowledge was not systematically documented and recorded and it was transmitted orally from generation to generation. Getting a complete picture of indigenous knowledge remains to be a difficult task. This may be the reason for the above reported constraint in adopting the recommended indigenous practices.

This is in agreement with the findings of Chambers (1983). The fourth constraint experienced by 40.00 per cent of the respondents was 'poor income from agriculture'. The adoption of indigenous agricultural practices in their cultivation leads to low yield even though it served for sustainable development. The poor income from agriculture was not sufficient to meet out the day to day requirements of the tribal farmers. Hence the tribal farmers reported this as the constraints in their cultivation. This derives support from the findings of Rajasekaran and Warren (1993) who also reported that most of the tribal farmers earned low income from agriculture. The fifth constraint expressed by 28.00 per cent of the respondents was 'negative attitude of elite and educated people'. Nowadays the elite and educated people have high respect for formal schooling and give less respect to indigenous practices. In this situation, the tribal farmers who keep the elite people as the role model and tried to deviate from practicing and adopting indigenous technology. This findings is in line with findings of Atte (1989).

## Conclusion

Common constraints experienced by the tribal farmers in adopting the indigenous practices were, no reward for indigenous agricultural practices by government officials (70.00 per cent) youth's preferences for urban life (58.00 per cent), lack of documentation (47.00 per cent), poor income from agricultural (40.00 per cent) and negative attitude of elite and educated people (28.00 per cent).

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