

An Exploration of the Role of Indigenous Women's Knowledge in the Food System

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Literature demonstrates the growing importance of traditional knowledge from indigenous farming to move agricultural practices toward sustainable practices. Indigenous women are becoming increasingly involved in agriculture providing their traditional knowledge of the environment to agricultural production. This paper will seek to consolidate existing work in the area of indigenous women's traditional knowledge and integrating this knowledge into existing food security theories.

Barooah et al. (2008) have indicated that women from the Bobo Tribe of Northeast India have an intimate relationship with nature and are able to integrate traditional knowledge to crop production to make full use of limited space. This traditional knowledge helps to develop methods of production in which a number of crops are grown together for the purpose of meeting basic needs of the rural household. This focus of agricultural production to meeting basic needs over and above the consideration of entering a food marketplace sees greater agricultural diversity and yields. Crops and livestock are not produced solely for their market value, but for a multitude of uses including nutritional and medical uses.

The traditional knowledge held by indigenous women can help bridge the gap between current agricultural practices and the rights of rural peoples to define the uses of their natural resources. The democratic resource distribution system implemented through the intricate, local relationship between indigenous women and their farm helps to improve rural food security for the entire community.

References

Barooah, M., & Pathak, A. (2009). Indigenous knowledge and practices of thengal kachari women in sustainable management of bari system of farming. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*, 8(1), 35-40.