

ANCIENT INDIGENOUS ABOLISHING PADDY VARIETIES OF BENGAL- AN OBSERVATION

ASHIS GHOSH

Swamiji, Eco-Club, C/O. Tushar Dutta, 1/E-5, Mitra Compound, P.O.: Midnapore, Dist: Paschim Medinipur, 721101, West Bengal, India.

Nearly 6,000 varieties of paddy plants were grown in Bengal. No attempt has been made to conserve the ancient indigenous abolishing paddy varieties. Present paper gives the list of many varieties which are still grown in restricted remote places of Bengal.

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Although Charaka described 39 varieties of rice under 4 categories namely a) Sali-ripening in winter, b) Shastika - ripening within 60 days in summer, c) Vrihi - ripening in autumn and d) Trinadhanya - a wild varieties of food grains having awns. Yet no attempt has been made to conserve the ancient indigenous abolishing paddy varieties of Bengal. Different varieties of rice differed from region to region. A country which has good potential available, natural resources can overcome the problem of poverty alongwith gained prosperity. Crop improvement can be done by inoculating the desirable characters of native rice plants into the high yielding plants because the disease resistant native plants can survive in drought area, saline soil, and in immersed as well as in flooded conditions etc. But the high yielding rice varieties have no such qualities. The straw of native plants are hardy, lusty and better for making thatched houses and food for domestic animals. Once upon a time more or less 6,000 varieties of paddy plants were grown here and there in Bengal. Of them a few thousand varieties are donated to International Rice Research Institute of Philipines. Still no book is available covering the individual details and desirable characteristics of 6000 varieties. During ethnobotanical survey it is observed that undermentioned varieties are still grown in restricted remote places here and there.

List of Paddy Varieties :

1) Ganga Pali, 2) Tulsi Mukul, 3) Tulsi Manjari, 4) Dahar Nagra 5) Agnishal, 6) Sita Shal, 7) Asan Jharia, 8) Sundarmukhi, 9) Raghu Shal, 10) Vashamanik, 11) Churnakathi, 12) Darhkashal, 13) Balaram Shal, 14) Chandrakanta, 15) Mala, 16) Bahidkalamkathi, 17) Asan Latay, 18) Chakramala, 19) Dudenana, 20) Gobinda Bhog, 21) Bankchu, 22) Jhingeshal, 23) Ram Shal, 24) Punjab shal, 25) Dumurkandi, 26) Bau Bhog, 27) Vimshal, 28) Gour-Nitai, 29) Nagra shal, 30) Laxmi Chura, 31) Haludgadhi,

32) Jalai, 33) Chali, 34) Lathishal, 35) Deradun, 36) Jwata, 37) Saru Patnai, 38) Jugal Dhan having 'twin endosperm' available only in the village Roport of Sonamukhi Block of Bankura District, 39) Kanakchur-Its parched-paddy has great demand to prepare sweetmeat of Joynagar in South 24 Pgs. District, 40) Kashiphul and 41) Drapodishal of Midnapore District 42) Paramanneshali or Hatipanjar of Murshidabad District, 43) Benaphul or Chiniskhakkar, 44) Boya-Suitable for water-lodged condition, 45) Mugibadam 46) Kabirajshal, 47) Badshabhog, 48) Khudikhas or Bansphul (Scented rice of Birbhum District), 49) Kalidubarajpur, 50) Suryaujal and 51) Tulaipanji (boiled rice are scented) of Dinajpur District, 52) Latasal, 53) Basu-Dhan (*O. rufipogon* Griff) - Tribals use the grains as a supplement of rice, 54) Kuraghas (*Chloris variegata* SW.) - The perennial grass in used by he tribal as fodder and the watery juice of the internodes as eyedrop against conjunctivitis, though it is not a paddy.

In undivided Bengal a list of native paddy varieties was available in the "Statistical Accounts of Bengal" by Willum Wilson Hunter^{1,2}. But within 150 years all the native rice plants are gradually being extinct.

Indigenous plants have good power of physiological adaptation, suitable for ecosystem, mixed cultivation, alongwith fish, duck and mollusces. Many of them (Tulaipanji, Gobindabhog etc.) are profitable than high yielding plant and grown well without manures and pesticides. They are not long-termed deleterious biological magnifier in ecological food chain. Genetically engineered plants are not safe for food and environment.

References

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2. Ramiah K and Ghosh RL 1980, Origin and distribution of cultivated plants of S.E. Asia. *J. Genetics and Plants Breeding*, Vol. XI-XIII (1951-1953), pp. 7-13; ICAR, New Delhi, pp. 271-272.