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“Prosperity and Poverty in a Globalised World—
Challenges for Agricultural Research”

Research Experiences from the Field : India prosperity and Poverty in a Globalized World ? challenges for Agricultural Research.

NITYA GHOTGE, SAGARI RAMDAS

Anthra, India

Abstract

During the latter half of the previous century, agricultural and livestock research in India were dominated by green revolution technologies, monocultures, the propagation of hybrids and the replacement of local knowledge and farming systems with imported technology. While these technologies did bring prosperity to some, they also enhanced the poverty of many who were unable to cope with the demands made by the exotic technology . By 1992, the negative environmental consequences of these technologies led to certain key international conventions such as the CBD Convention on Bio Diversity being signed by different nations. The importance of biodiversity began to be discussed and research itself slowly began to explore horizons beyond the green revolution. At about the same time the WTO also came into place calling for new economic polices, structural adjustment programmes and globalisation of the economy in India. By the beginning of this century, research in the country was forced to face the challenges of globalisation both in the formal and non formal sectors . Since 1996, ANTHRA (a resource organisation working on strengthening peoples livelihoods, through supporting sustainable livestock production) in response to the needs of livestock owners has been involved in action research with different communities; pastoral, peasant, tribal - to document, validate and disseminate valuable local practices and indigenous knowledge systems related to livestock breeds, livestock health, housing, management, nutrition, fodder varieties, grazing methods as well as the gender dimensions of these practices. Overwhelmingly, our findings on local practices have been that many of these work excellently, are in tune with local cultures, economies and environment and have enormous potential if applied appropriately of significantly improving the livelihoods of extremely marginal communities. While these practices may not bring great “prosperity” as in a globalised world poor farmers are seldom in a position to keep pace with international market swings, this form of endogenous livestock development would probably equip poor livestock owners to stave of the danger of crippling poverty far better than the green revolution technology could .

Keywords: Action research, Convention on Biodiversity, endogenous livestock development, green revolution, indigenous knowledge, livestock research , WTO