



Research Article

Studies on agro-biodiversity of soliga tribes in BRT wild life sanctuary

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Abstract : The soligas of BRT wild life sanctuary, Karnataka mainly engaged in settled cultivation and collections of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) like honey, lichens, soap nut, amla are also one of their recent occupations. Soligas lead their life in harmony with the nature. Soligas are dependent on relatively primitive agriculture for their livelihood and solely on NTFPs collection. The information on agro-biodiversity was collected by direct interview with the tribal farmers. The tribal farms harbour huge biodiversity, especially the farms in which traditional practices are being followed. The agro-biodiversity of Soliga's is very rich with 87 varieties and about 50 species which includes 3 varieties of pumpkin, 8 finger millet, 4 tubers, 5 citrus, 5 maize, 8 bean and other varieties compared to the farmers of the other regions and also with rich diversity of multipurpose trees and shrubs on farmlands.

Key Words : Agro-biodiversity, Soliga, Variety, Tubers

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INTRODUCTION

Biological diversity, the planets life support system when disturbed/degraded, not only destroys individual species, but also threatens the human sustenance in the biosphere, either directly or indirectly. So, pains to conserve biological diversity, both at local and global levels must be based on facts. Farmers especially in tropics have a long tradition of raising food crops, trees and animals together, as well as exploiting a wide range of products from natural wood lots (Nair, 1993). A diversity of crop and animal species, at the community, farm or field level adds to social and economic consistency through reducing dependency on a single enterprise (Khan and Arunachalam, 2003).

BRT wild life sanctuary is situated in Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka. Soligas are the main indigenous tribal community of B.R.Hills, they lead semi-nomadic life. Engaged in settled cultivation and collections of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) like honey, lichens, soap nut, amla are also one of their recent occupations (Uma Shankar *et al.*, 1996). The indigenous cropping systems, animal rearing and other agriculture activities are in tune with the rituals of the tribes. Soligas are also known for their rich knowledge on soil fertility and ecofriendly agricultural practices. The Soligas seldom plough the land and they do not use chemical fertilizers or other chemical pest and diseases control measures and practice organic farming (Jadegowda and Ramesh, 2008). The need exist to ensure that agro-biodiversity is now conserved. Any biodiversity conservation process, however, cannot succeed without the involvement of the local people (Getz *et al.*, 1999). Hence looking to the importance of the agro-biodiversity a survey was carried out to study the agro-biodiversity of soliga tribal farmers at BRT wild life sanctuary.

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