



An Abridgement of Different Traditional Farming Systems

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Traditional farming refers to agricultural practices followed from generation to generation using local and indigenous knowledge and they rely on old-age techniques and tools. It involves cultivating crops and raising livestock; and they are also called as “small-scale farming”. The traditional farming methods vary across cultures and regions reflecting the diversity of agricultural practices worldwide. A few basic types of traditional farming are discussed below:

<p>1. Subsistence Farming: This is the most common type of traditional farming system in India. Farmers produce food primarily for their own consumption, with little or no surplus for sale. It is prevalent in remote rural areas with small landholdings.</p>	
<p>2. Shifting Cultivation: It refers to temporary cultivation in one area until soil fertility declines after that, moving to a new plot, allowing the land to regenerate. In this system, farmers clear patches of forest land, cultivating few years and then moving to new area when soil fertility declines. It is also known as slash and burn Agriculture, Jhum cultivation in Northeast India such as Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Tripura</p>	
<p>3. Mixed Farming: It entails integration of crop cultivation with livestock rearing. This system diversifies income and ensures better resource utilization. An examples for this is Wheat cultivation along with cattle rearing in Punjab or rice cultivation with fish farming in West Bengal.</p>	
<p>4. Organic /Natural Farming: Is a system of farming which is primarily based on the use of natural resources without use of chemicals (e.g. fertilisers or pesticides) or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). It is practiced to obtain healthier and more nutritious food while protecting soil fertility. It is prevalently practiced in states like Sikkim, and parts of Uttarakhand.</p>	
<p>5. Pastoral Farming (Nomadic Herding): Pastoral farming (also known as grazing in some parts of the world) is a farming related to rearing of livestock rather than growing crops and other fodder. The livestock usually graze on naturally-grown grass and other vegetation. Some pastoral farmers grow crops, but instead of selling the harvest, they feed it to livestock (cows, pigs, sheep etc.) so that they stay healthy for optimum production of meat, wool, milk and eggs. It focuses on rearing livestock like sheep, goats, and cattle. It is widely followed in regions like Rajasthan (Raikas), Himalayan region (Gujjars and Bakarwals), and Gujarat (Rabari community).</p>	

6. Taungya cultivation: The word is reported to have originated in Myanmar (Burma) wherein Tauang means hill, ya means cultivation i.e., hill cultivation. Taungya farming is a special arrangement between the forestry department and farmers, which combines the production of both arable and forest tree crops simultaneously on same piece of land. Essentially, the system consists of growing annual arable crops along with the forestry species during early years of establishment of the forest plantation. The land belongs to forest department or their large scale leases, who allows the subsistence farmers to raise their crops and in turn protect tree saplings.



7. Zabo cultivation: It is an indigenous farming system practiced in north-eastern hill regions, particularly in Nagaland. The word Zabo means impounding of water, which found to originated in Kikruma village in Phek district of Nagaland. In this farming system, the combination of forest, agriculture, livestock and fisheries exists with well-founded soil and water conservation base. This system is generally practiced in high altitude hill areas, where it is not possible to construct terraces and or irrigation channels across the slope. Here, the cultivation is fully depends on the amount of water stored in the pond and land is primarily utilized for rice cultivation. Rainwater is collected from the catchment of protected hill tops of above 100 per cent slopes in a pond with seepage control and silt retention tanks are constructed at several points before the runoff water enters in the pond. This is a unique farming system for food production to make livelihood.



Conclusion

In general, traditional farming indicates cultivation of crops along with raising livestock. Traditional farming often emphasizes use of local and indigenous knowledge which heavily relies on natural processes. The limited use of mechanization or modern technology highlights that, this approach focuses on sustainability and harmony with the environment and climate by conserving soil fertility and productivity.