

## Application of Traditional Knowledge in Farming Sector: A Case Study of Organic Farming in Assam from Field to Market

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History has it that the rural economy of Assam has had many an indigenous knowledge based agriculture system which continues to prevail even today. Arrangements like the Bari system, shifting cultivation, terrace cultivation, integrated farming system, fish cum paddy cultivation being practiced with the use of indigenous knowledge continue to be an integral part the rural economy of the state.

Though Green Revolution did not usher in the way it had in the Northern belt of the country, nevertheless, over the years, Assam has suffered a major loss of its soil fertility owing to the copious use of chemical fertilisers. This has only resulted in attenuation of productivity per unit area. Barring the two hill districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao in Assam where shifting cultivation or jhum cultivation is in practice, the fertility of most farm lands in the plain districts have succumbed to the over use of chemical fertilizers. With the introduction of scientific knowledge system in farming, the traditional knowledge system in the state which was in practice for generations has been disarrayed. Moreover, the farm households for decades now have been caught mid-way in trying to cope with the new scientific mechanism of farming which remains mostly inaccessible while losing upon the rich traditional knowledge system.



It has been now more than a decade since Assam had embraced organic farming. Since the year 2007, with its share of success and failure, it is now that the young educated farmers in the state are turning towards the age old rich traditional knowledge base in agriculture practice not only for a recluse but also as a panacea offering good health to the society and wealth to the farmers in terms of a good market return. The young farmers are turning to organic cultivation observing holistically the age old natural processes of tilling the soil, recycling the nutrients fixed to the soil, making organic bio-fertilisers and pesticides, following age old cropping pattern and inter cropping etc. Infact, the organic growers are trying to regulate the functioning and dynamics of farmlands by maintaining the soil fertility for a better return through the age old traditional knowledge based system.



The few young farmers in Majuli, Golaghat and Biswanath Chariali in Assam are farming organically traditional vegetables like aloo (potato), tiyoh (cucumber), bondhakobi (cabbage), dangbodi (yardlong bean), bilahee (tomato), jikaa (ridge gourd or ridged luffa), bengena (eggplant), jalakia (chillies) etc., with their traditional knowledge. The organic products from their farmlands are getting attraction in the local towns which fetch income to the farmers.