

## SEMINAR - II

### STATUS OF TRADITIONAL RICE IN BANGLADESH

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#### Extended Summary

Rice cultivation started in Bangladesh at least 6000 years ago. During long course of selection procedure both natural and artificial, the variations were created through mutation and spontaneous hybridization and a huge number of traditional varieties were produced in four groups of rice-Aus, B. Aman, T. Aman and Boro. These traditional varieties provided the staple food for our ancestors for years after years. These traditional varieties dominated our agriculture up to eighties of the last century. The traditional varieties covered 95.36% rice area during 1970-71 and the area was reduced to 55.96% in 1990-91, while it was reduced further to 31% in 2002-03. The contribution of traditional varieties on total rice yield was 86.28% during the period just after liberation which is now reduced to near about 20% by this time. The reduction of cultivation area of these varieties is mainly due to the adoption of local improved pure line varieties, modern varieties, reduction of traditional farming system and shifting of cultivation to other crops. These varieties are our main genetic resources on which our future varietal improvement programme will depend. They have allelic richness and immense genetic diversity and they do support a much greater number of rare alleles. Moreover, they have got some special features like aroma, taste and they have special adaptation ability to various adverse conditions. We should give special thrust to develop higher yielding aromatic rice. We need to maintain all those valuable varieties not only to meet our diversified need and choice but to maintain these rich sources of genes in an evolutionary agro-ecosystem. Sylhet, Faridpur, Barisal, Patuakhali and Noakhali area can be selected for growing more traditional varieties as a part of the *in situ* conservation programme providing some sort of economic support to the farmers. BRRI has collected and conserved 4523 traditional *indica* rice germplasms in their gene bank. The evaluation and characterization of the already conserved materials should be completed to utilize them to develop variety directly and to utilize them in the other varietal improvement programme.

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