


# Reviewing agricultural insights of Kṛṣiparāśara for sustainable farming and conservation

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## Abstract

Farming and conservation of natural resources are inevitable subjects and these are the cardinal concepts in the development of a nation. The current state of affairs is quite dire, and it is against this backdrop that we must consider the immense and exceptional wealth of the Vedas, whose teachings offer perceptive and insightful judgments on every field of study. Krisiparasara, one of the agricultural books, highlights the potential and adaptability of ancient Indian farming practices.

## Introduction

The farming techniques and styles in ancient times were very vast and marvelous. Scientific thoughts in ancient India were multifarious and the influence of these knowledge systems is certainly outstanding and incomparable in the contemporary scenario. So it is necessary to learn these ancient knowledge systems and, as follows, Krisiparasara of Rsi Parasara is an effort to expose an insight into it and the implications of these things to society. The ancient sages recognized the prominence of the agriculture, farming, conservation and harvesting methods of all plants.

Being a gregarious being, one must engage in a variety of socially beneficial activities. The study of our ancient wisdom aids in the economic growth of farmers and provides insight into the multidisciplinary fields of agriculture, horticulture, and Ayurveda. Thus, it is imperative to shine light on the hidden gem of farming and agriculture in ancient India. The study of agriculture, or Krisiparasara, offers us a genuine window into our enduring wisdom and spiritual growth. Having farmed before, our forefathers employed only organic products for sustenance and defense against pests and illnesses. We are currently lowering the use of pesticides in agriculture, thus this knowledge is extremely pertinent to modern agriculture.

## Literary Survey

The literature surrounding ancient agricultural practices in India encompasses a rich tapestry of texts dating back thousands of years. The Rigveda, one of the oldest texts, contains hymns praising the significance of agriculture and its connection to natural forces. The Yajurveda provides detailed rituals and ceremonies related to farming, emphasizing the importance of environmental harmony. The Arthashastra by Chanakya delves into the intricate governance of agriculture and land management in ancient Indian society. Krisiparasara, a treatise specifically dedicated to agriculture, offers valuable insights into farming techniques, crop selection, and soil conservation methods. The Manusmriti discusses agricultural laws and ethical guidelines for landowners and farmers. The Sushruta Samhita, although primarily a text on medicine, contains references to agricultural practices for cultivating medicinal plants.

The Jataka tales depict the agrarian lifestyle prevalent during the time of the Buddha, highlighting the close relationship between humans and nature. The Natya Shastra, an ancient Indian treatise on performing arts, also contains references to agriculture and rural life. The Sangam literature of Tamil Nadu provides vivid descriptions of agricultural activities and the agrarian economy of ancient South India. Collectively, these texts offer a holistic view of ancient Indian agriculture, serving as a repository of knowledge for contemporary sustainable farming and conservation efforts. Some rural and tribal songs related to agriculture like 'Kṛṣīgītā' also have implicit references on this topic.

### Research Problem

Sustainable farming practices to mitigate the effects of climate change are very necessary in today's time. This includes studying the resilience of crops to changing climate patterns, optimizing water usage in irrigation systems, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural activities, and promoting soil health and biodiversity to ensure long-term productivity. Our knowledge systems of India give more importance to this concern. So people from any category should be aware of this and it is essential to study and analyze our ancient texts, which impart such knowledge to us.

### Methodology

Gathering data from diverse sources, and various resources of our available literature. The data related to nature-friendly farming techniques without using chemicals in the text Kṛṣiparāśara is also subject to analysis.

### Analysis and Discussion

For India's economic and social development, agriculture is essential. Numerous references can be found in our Vedas and ancient treatises for maintaining plants and trees sustainably without endangering the environment. These texts provide a rich repository of sustainable agricultural practices. These timeless texts offer invaluable insights into maintaining plants and trees in harmony with nature, thereby safeguarding the environment for future generations. The methods employed in our ancient resources are valuable and can be used to restore the soil's natural equilibrium.

The primary sources containing agricultural practices are the Brhatsamhita of Varamihira, the Sarngadhara Paddhati (written by Sarngadhara), the Khrishi Sukthi, Amarakosha, Vriksayurveda, the Krishi Parasara, the Arthashastra by Kautilya, the Atharvaveda, the Agni Purana, the Dhanwanthri Nighantu, the Raja Nighantu, and the Bhavaprakasha Nighantu. Among them, Krisiparasara discusses every aspect of farming, including weather, irrigation, gathering and preserving seeds, harvesting, and crops storage. The majority of the 243 verses in this work were written in Anushtubh. This text describes farming methods, tree preservation, organic manure-based pest control, soil selection, water conservation, and water resources. It also says that rice is passionately extolled as the main source of strength and happiness in the home. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the significance of soil selection and cultivation.

The influence of planets on agriculture and rainfall is dwelt upon in some detail. The clouds have been classified into four- Avarta, Samvarta, Puskara and Drona, and the effect of each is described in this work. It contains a detailed description of determining the annual rainfall. Krisiparasara lays down the effects of the commencement of ploughing on different days of the week and lunar days. Krisiparasara says that agriculture is the life of all creatures. One, though tainted with blemishes like jealousy, is redeemed by honoring guests. He is indeed the best among men, by whom a guest is honored; the entire world and gods are worshiped.<sup>1</sup>

कृषिधैन्या कृषिर्मध्या जन्तूनां जीवनं कृषिः । हिंसादिदोषयुक्तोपि मुच्यते अतिथिपूजनात् ॥

**Seed conservation**

Krisiparasara advocates for the conservation and use of traditional, locally adapted seed varieties. All seeds must be collected in Magha or Phalguna.<sup>2</sup> After drying them up in the sun, they should be kept in small bundles after separating the husk. The seeds are closely tied up and must not be connection with any impurities. They become useless by coming in contact with fire, smoke, rain-water and fish. After sowing seeds, Vaisakha is the best month. Jyesta tolerable, Asadha bad, and Sravana worst. It emphasizes the conservation and utilization of traditional, locally adapted seed varieties through various methods. One, being pure and with a concentrated mind, should personally sow three handfuls of seeds moistened with cold water after meditating upon Indra.<sup>3</sup>

हिमवारिनिषिक्तस्य बीजस्य तन्मनाः शुचिः ।

इन्द्रं चित्ते समाधाय स्वयं मुष्टित्रयं वपेत् ॥

Krishiparasara states that the cultivator with a delighted heart, having observed punya for paddy, should face eastward. The practices of Krisiparasara, help to maintain the genetic diversity of crops and ensures their resilience to changing environmental conditions.

**Water and soil management**

Efficient water management techniques are a crucial component in Krishiparasara. Water management Practices such as drip irrigation, mulching, and rainwater harvesting help conserve water and ensure optimal moisture levels for crops. The most remarkable feature of this text is that it considers agriculture as depending merely on rainfall, and all forms of irrigation. According to Krisiparasara, one should safeguard the ladies of the house in the same way as one would protect the family by storing water. This text's most notable aspect is that it views agriculture as solely dependent on rainfall and all types of irrigation. Krisiparasara says that agriculture has rainfall at its root, life too has rainfall as its source. Therefore, at the outset, acquire knowledge of rainfall very carefully.<sup>4</sup>

वृष्टिमूला कृषिः सर्वा वृष्टिमूलं च जीवनम् ।

तस्मादादौ प्रयत्नेन वृष्टिज्ञानं समाचरेत् ॥

Soil conservation and regeneration are central to Krishiparasara. Techniques such as minimal tillage, cover cropping, and agroforestry are employed to improve soil structure, fertility, and microbial diversity. Krisiparasara describes the suitability of the soil for cultivation in different months. The soil is said to be like gold in Magha, silver in Phalguna, Copper in Caitra and the cultivation in hemanta is held to yield the richest produce. Seeds, their collection, preservation and sowing rules are discussed in this text.

**Crop Protection:**

Instead of relying on chemical pesticides, Krishiparasara promotes natural methods of pest and disease control. This includes the use of bio-pesticides, botanical extracts, and beneficial insects to manage pests while minimizing environmental impact. Krisiparasara emphasizes organic farming methods, avoiding synthetic chemicals and pesticides. Instead, it promotes the use of organic manures, compost and bio-fertilizers to improve soil health and fertility. According to Krishiparasara, cow-dung is the best manure for crop protection and blooming. This has been highly extolled to the point of veneration. Having powdered all that and dried it up in the sun, throw the manure into a pit in every field of Phalguna. Then, at the time of sowing, take out the manures; without manure, paddy plants grow up bereft of fruits.<sup>5</sup> Parasara says that with all care, render agricultural produce free from weeds. If weeds are removed, they become yield to cultivators. For freedom of paddy from disease, drain off water in Bhadra; preserve water then up to the roots only. Paddy, filled with water in Bhadra, is damaged by various maladies and does not yield the best produce to cultivators.<sup>6</sup>

नैरुज्यार्थं हि धान्यानां जलं भाद्रे विमोचयेत् ।

मूलमात्रार्पितं तत्र कारयेज्जलरक्षणम् ॥

**Finding and Conclusions**

The natural equilibrium is being lost nowadays, and the environment we live in is becoming more and more contaminated. In this case, we must reveal the hidden wealth of scholarly knowledge contained in our ancient texts. In the current context, these knowledge systems have an unparalleled and remarkable influence. Therefore, mastering these antiquated knowledge systems is essential since they provide insight into the implications of these ideas for society.

The importance of agriculture, farming, conservation, and plant harvesting techniques was acknowledged by the ancient sages. To address the shortcomings of both current and historical agricultural techniques, an integration of the traditional and modern systems is required. The analysis of Krisiparasara encourages people to do farming with natural resources. In order to raise awareness of the vital importance of protecting and conserving trees and other plants, Krisiparasara focuses on farming methods and styles, with a particular emphasis on paddy cultivation practices. This is still very important today, and we need to use these methods to improve our ecosystem and overall health. The study of Krisiparasara helps individuals to realize their potential and apply newly acquired information to advance their abilities for the good of society and the country as a whole.

**End Notes**

- 1, Krisiparasara 8
- 2, Krisiparasara 157
- 3, Krisiparasara 178
- 4, Krisiparasara 10
- 5, Krisiparasara 110,111
- 6, Krisiparasara 193

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