

An Innovative Method of Saving Grains from Rats in Tribal Areas

□ Prof. N.K. Ambasht

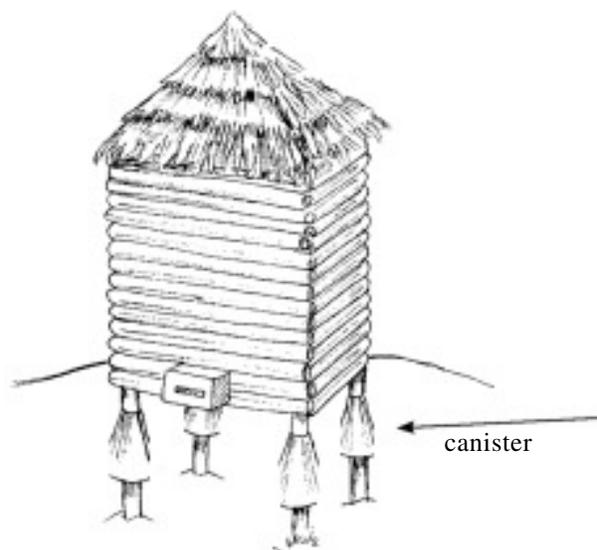
We come across several unnoticed innovations in our daily life. I would like to cite here one interesting example of innovations in rural area. In fact it is a very interesting and innovative solution to a very serious problem of huge wastage of grains by the rates in the remote tribal villages of Chhattisgarh.

Usually the tribal people store their grains in containers made of mud kept in some shaded part of their houses. As these containers are made of mud, the rats usually make holes at the bottom and destroy a lot of grains. It was a very big problem to protect the grains from the rats.

The farmers thought of a solution and made a wooden platform a little higher from the ground level, thinking that the rats will not climb to the higher platform. But this idea was of not of much use. The rats could easily climb up to the bottom of the mud container through the sides of the platform and thus they continue to destroy the grains. Their financial position was also not so good to purchase metal containers of that size to store the gains, the problem continued. But they did not stop thinking for a better and effective way.

Now, a very new and innovative idea clicked in their mind. This time instead of making a platform on four sided walls, they made four pillars on four corners of the square shaped platform made of wooden logs. The mud container filled with grains was kept on this platform. The idea of making four pillars also could

not prove to be the complete solution, as the rates could still climb up on the pillars and reach up the container. A step further, another idea came into their mind for minimizing the possibility of climbing of the rats up to the platform. This time they took four empty canisters normally used for storing and carrying oil



Innovative storage system

and ghee etc. The upper lids were removed. Before placing the wooden platform on the four pillars, one empty canister of cuboidal shape was kept on each pillar in inverted way keeping its bottom up. The side walls of the canisters were kept a little above the ground so that the rats could not climb on the canister's walls. Thereafter, the mud container having grains was kept on the so innovatively designed platform.

Now, when the rats tried to climb up the pillars they could do so easily up to the inverted bottom of the canister. But they were not able to climb up on the wooden platform. This innovative trick got very popular and thus helped the tribal people in saving their grains from the rats. There would be many other such grass root innovations in our traditions. Effort should be made to identify and record such innovations.

□□

Author is former Chairman of the National Institute of Open Schooling, (Govt. of India), Noida (UP)

Mobile: 9818630709