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**Banana Cultivation Scheme in
Panachikkadu Grama Panchayath
Kottayam District**

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Abstract

The 11th plan paradigm made a thrust on primary sector. The evaluation of banana cultivation scheme implemented in 2008-09 in Panachikkadu panchayath of Kottayam district shows the mismatch between the plan and expenditure; the improvement in cultivation due to a subsidy linked scheme, the extension of cultivation into more area, the factors motivated the public and the effect of increased production on price. The study also recommends for effective utilization of resource, adoption of a need based approach, institutionalization of vibrant local market, introduction of risk aversion through insurance.

Disclaimer

This working paper has been prepared by Shri. Amanath P.A, Research Assistant, District Planning Office, Kottayam. The facts and figures in the report are based on quick field survey done by the author and do not reflect the views or policies of Kerala State Planning Board. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the scheme/projects implemented by the Local Self Government during 11th Five Year Plan.

Decentralised Planning and Development

Development is a process whereby the real income of people increases with economic growth and social changes. The decentralised planning is a mechanism by which the fund functions and functionaries are owned and operated by local governing institutions. The peoples' planning and decentralisation has made qualitative changes in the Kerala economy. The local governing institutions get a major portion of state development fund. Individual oriented benefit programmes are large in numbers and it varies from panchayaths to panchayath. Construction of rural infrastructure and its maintenance became a primary function of Panchayath Raj Institutions.

Though the first generation challenges in decentralised planning like inadequacy of fund, lack of political will, nepotism which are prevalent in developing countries are not present in Kerala. But the second generation challenges like lack of effective utilization of resources is prevalent in Kerala. [Dr.V. Shantha Kumar; How to make efficient in the schemes implemented by panchayaths, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram]

Decentralised planning ensures community participation in planning and implementation. Peripheral planning is people oriented; and helps to ensure access to the institutions. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution of India for providing Panchayath Raj and Nagarapalika system is a land mark in the grass root level democracy. Peoples planning in Kerala is a movement by which decentralisation has become institutionalised.

Integrated Banana Cultivation 2008-09 in Panachikkadu Panchayath - An Evaluation

Banana is an important crop in Southern India. The banana plant and other plantains are considered as icon of prosperity and blessings in Kerala. It has been used in various rituals.

The scheme implemented by Panachikkadu panchayath aims to bring increased income to the farmers.

Scope of study

Agriculture is an important source of income in Kerala. It is also important for ensuring food security. The institutional interventions to improve the income and productivity are very important in the context of rising price level and efforts to bring food security. Any study to evaluate the institutional intervention to bring food security, self reliance and productivity has significance in the modern world. This study is an attempt to evaluate how peripheral planning for local economic development, production and access to facilities helped to attain its objectives. It also examines the impact of a subsidy link micro scheme in the primary sector.

Objectives

1. To examine whether there is an increase in production?
2. To examine whether there is an increase in area under cultivation?
3. To examine whether there is a mismatch between the plan objectives and its results?
4. What are the factors that influenced the public to be a part of a subsidy linked scheme?

Methodology

The sample consists of 50 beneficiaries. They were interviewed using a questionnaire. Group discussions were also conducted for collecting information. The plan paper of the panchayath was also examined.

Limitations of the study

The lack of adequate and reliable agriculture statistics at panchayath level and the time made constraints.

Profile of Panachikkadu grama panchayath

Panachikkadu grama panchayath has been shot into fame due to the presence of the only Sarawathy Temple in Kerala; which is known as Dakshina Mookambi. It is situated in a geographical

extend flanked by Kurichi panchayath, Kottayam municipality, Puthupally panchayath in the south, north, west and east respectively overlooking the Kodoor river.

The panchayath comes under the Pallom block panchayth and has got a revenue village under Kottayam taluk. The panchayath has a geographical area of 2231 hectare. Out of this, 533 hectare is 'Nilam' 1398 hectare is Purayidam, 120 hectare is purambok and 100 hectare is Tharish area.

It has a population of 41805 persons, out of which 2310 belong to scheduled castes and 308 belongs to scheduled tribes. The sex ratio is 1080.

Agriculture in panchayath

Agriculture has got an important role as the geographical features favours the same. The presence of Kodoor river and its watershed brings agriculture facility to the area. Agriculture occupies a prominent role in the priority setting in primary sector. Motor houses for paddy farmers groups, electric tractor and triller, provision of pesticides, coconut cultivation, deepening of brooks, construction of bunds, promotional programmes for primary credit societies, incentive to farmers are the interventions made by the panchayath over the decentralized plan era. The panchayath was able to bring 160 hectare paddy field under cultivation.

The scheme

The scheme provided subsidy for banana cultivators to avail fertilizers and pesticides.

Table 1
The Financial Performance

Plan	Expenditure
Plan Fund – ₹ 5,87,750	Plan Fund – ₹ 2,62,500
Own Fund - Nil	Own Fund – ₹ 1,25,000
Beneficiary Contribution - ₹ 5,87,750	Beneficiary Contribution - ₹ 2,75,000
Total ₹ 11,75,500	Total ₹ 6,62,500

Source: Plan document

At the outset the scheme designed with an outlay of ₹ 11,75,500 (Rupees Eleven Lakh Seventy Five Thousand and Five Hundred only) by converging both plan fund and beneficiary contribution. The subsidy given to the farmers for availing fertilizers and pesticides is for improving their cultivation. Monetary benefit per plant in the form of subsidy was ₹ 23.50 with the beneficiary contribution of ₹ 23.50 thus making a total outlay of ₹ 47 per plant. The fertilizers used in the ratio of 100:11:300 in respect of NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium).

It is evident from the above table that though the outlay was ₹ 11,75,500 the expenditure made only ₹ 6,62,500. The mismatch between the plan and the expenditure in the primary sector should be viewed from institutional, fiscal and social perspective.

Findings of the study

1. Land under cultivation

The development paradigm for the 11th plan included bringing more area under courtyard cultivation (parambu krishi). The strategy of providing financial assistance in the form of subsidy must increase the land under cultivation. The following figure shows the result of the scheme in terms of land under cultivation.

Table 2
Details of Land under Cultivation

Year	Area(In hectare)
2005	60
2006	60
2007	80
2008	100

Source: Primary data

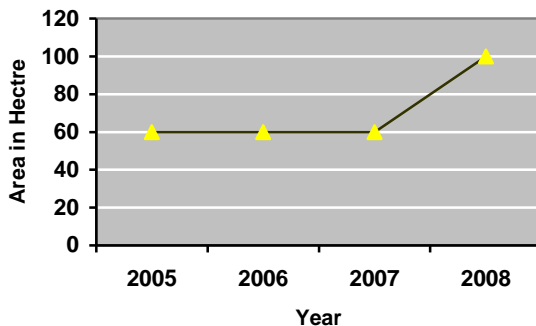
The scheme was attracted by the people to extend banana cultivation. The land under cultivation increased from 80 ha in 2007 to 100 ha in 2008.

The availability of sucker, lease farming and the subsidy has assured a level playing field for banana cultivation. The

following figure shows the increase in terms of land under cultivation.

Figure 1

Land under cultivation



2. Factors affected the increase in land under cultivation

Peoples planning launched a number of individual oriented benefit programmes. Though the resources are being entrusted to the institutions; effective utilization of such resources should be assured. The institutional intervention to increase the land under cultivation and the factors affecting the favorable response from the citizens to such attempt needs special mention.

Table 3

Motivating Factors of Beneficiaries

Factor	Beneficiaries (%)
Subsidy	52
To avail benefit from Panchayath	28
Less effort to undertake	13
Banana cultivators	7

Source: primary data

Subsidy has attracted 52 per cent of beneficiaries while 28 per cent wanted to avail benefit from panchayath. 13 per cent associated with a scheme as it required less effort. 7 per cent included in the scheme as they are banana cultivators.

3. Increase in production

The scheme has resulted in an increase in production. The production has increased from 1000 metric tonne to 1400 metric tonne in 2009-10.

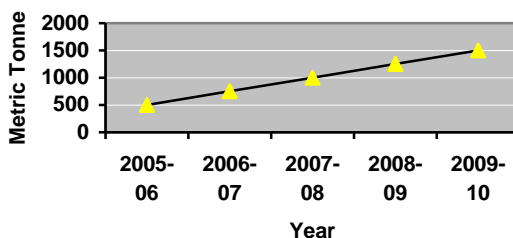
Table 4
Increase in Production

Year	Production (In metric tonne)
2005 - 06	600
2006 - 07	800
2007 - 08	850
2008 - 09	1000
2009 -10	1400

Source: primary data

Thus increase in production of 1400 metric tonne in 2009 - 10 was due to scheme intervention. The following figure represents the increase in production.

Figure 2
The Increase in Banana Production



Effect on price of banana in local market

The increase in production has made its effect on price. The following table shows that the price has decreased from ₹ 19/kg to ₹ 17/kg for the year 2008-09, 2009-10 respectively. The increase in production resulted in a lower price.

Table 5
Price of Banana in Local Market

Year	Price/Kg
2005-06	18
2006-07	20
2007-08	19
2008 -09	19
2009-10	17

Conclusion

The absence of a mechanism to ensure fair price and vibrant local market has resulted in a lower price. Hence it is necessary to make promotional strategies and a local market for such product. Proper mechanism to provide accessibility to value addition must be ensured. Any attempt to increase the production must ensure increase in income whether from the peripheral market.

Risk averting elements like crop insurance should be provided with such schemes. It is fair to conduct soil test before making large scale use of fertilizers and pesticides.

A need based approach must be implemented for the schemes in the primary sector to ensure a sense of belongings and a level playing field for the individuals and the local economy.