



## BENEFITS DERIVED FROM PADDY PROMOTION PROGRAMMES UNDER DECENTRALIZED PLANNING - FARMERS' LEARNED EXPERIENCE

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**Abstract:** Recognizing the importance of paddy promotion programmes at panchayat level, the present study was taken up in Thrissur district of Kerala State. Ex-post facto research design was employed. The respondents were selected by following multi-stage sampling method. A total of ninety beneficiary farmers under various paddy promotion programmes were randomly selected from three gramapanchayats namely Chelakkara, Adat and Arimpur. The schemes implemented under decentralized planning for five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16 were considered. The benefits that the beneficiaries might have gained from various paddy promotion programmes implemented were enlisted and analysed under four dimensions namely 'socio-economic development', 'assets acquisition', 'input support' and 'skill development'. The study revealed that the dimension 'skill development' was the most important benefit. The 'assets acquisition' through the schemes were found to be very low in all the three panchayats.

**Key words:** Benefits, Paddy promotion programmes, Decentralized planning.

### Introduction

Agricultural development programmes aim to ensure food security to the rapidly growing population. Rice, being the staple food to more than 60 per cent of the world's population, is of vital importance. Apart from food security, paddy fields play a critical role in Kerala's environment and ecological systems. Since independence, Government of India as well as State government of Kerala have been promoting paddy cultivation. With the passage of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments to the constitution of India in 1992 and consequent to the enactment of Kerala Panchayat Raj Act in the year 1994 the state carried out pioneering reforms and embarked a path of comprehensive decentralization. Decentralized planning encourages balanced development and reduction in regional disparities through judicious use of resources and participatory development plans with a bottom-up approach. For agriculture and allied sectors it is essential, as the local level resources, climate and agro-ecological features influence the success or failure of any intervention.

Reports reveal that Thrissur district stands third in rice production and shows an increase in the area, production and productivity for the past few years, which can be considered as a positive indicator of successful implementation of various paddy promotion schemes. In addition, the schemes provide various benefits to the farming community. In this scenario, the study was taken up with an objective to identify the benefits accrued by the farmers through various paddy promotion schemes under decentralized planning.

### Research Methodology

Ex-post facto research design was followed. The research work was conducted during the year 2017 in Thrissur district which stands third in rice production among the 14 districts of Kerala (DES, 2016). Multi stage sampling method was employed to select one gramapanchayat each namely, Chelakkara, Adat and Arimpur from three leading rice growing blocks viz; Pazhayannur, Puzhakkal and Anthikkad respectively. Thirty beneficiary paddy farmers each

were randomly selected from the three selected gramapanchayats.

In accordance with the secondary data analysis, sets of all possible benefits that the beneficiaries might have gained from various paddy promotion programmes implemented under decentralized planning for the five years (2011-12 to 2015-2016) were enlisted under four dimensions namely 'socio-economic development', 'assets acquisition', 'input support' and 'skill development'. The respondents were asked whether the benefit was availed or not and the response were assigned '0' and '1' weights for 'No' and 'Yes' respectively.

Percentage analysis was carried out to quantify the benefits gained by the farmers.

### Results and discussion

The promotion of domestic rice production is a key element in the strategies for improving rice self-sufficiency, stimulating economic growth and increasing rural income. The schemes for paddy promotion under decentralized planning implemented at three selected panchayats during 2011-12 to 2015-2016 were analysed. Different

schemes and their components studied are furnished in Tables 1,2 and 3. The major paddy promotion programmes implemented at Adatgramapanchayat were 'Comprehensive organic based rice development scheme' and 'Paddy cultivation assistance to Scheduled Caste Youth' and at Arimpurgramapanchayat the programme implemented was 'Distribution of High Yielding Variety (HYV) paddy seeds & sprayers'. The Chelakkaragramapanchayat implemented 'Comprehensive rice development project' in 2011 and later under various schemes, different inputs like seeds, knapsack sprayers, organic manures chemical fertilizers, Green manure seeds, weed cutters and pesticides were distributed for paddy cultivation. It may be noted the data for Arimpur Panchayat for 2012-13 to 2015-16 are presented since the data for 2011-12 were not received. The implementation of these schemes have supported the farmers to continue rice cultivation in around 700 ha, 1100 ha and 1000 ha in Chelakkara, Adat and Arimpurgramapanchayats respectively (Sulekha, 2017)<sup>#</sup>.

**Table 1: Components of schemes under decentralized planning in Adatgramapanchayat**

Year	Scheme	Component
2011-12	Comprehensive organic based rice development project (CORDP)	Seeds and Sprayers distribution
		Supply of Production enhancing materials viz; Supply of organic manure, Pseudomonas/ Trichoderma distribution, Bio-plant protectors
2012-13 & 2013-14	Comprehensive organic based rice development project	Seed distribution
2014-15	Comprehensive organic based rice development project	Assistance to meet expense in labour cost
2015-16	Comprehensive organic based rice development project & Paddy cultivation assistance to Schedule Caste youth	Assistance to meet expense in labour cost

(Sulekha, 2017)

**Table 2: Components of schemes under decentralized planning in Arimpurgramapanchayat**

Year	Scheme	Component
2012-13	Distribution of High yielding variety (HYV) paddy seeds & sprayer	Seeds and Sprayers distribution
2013-16 (3 years)	Distribution of High yielding variety (HYV) paddy seeds	Seed distribution

(Sulekha, 2017)

**Table 3: Components of schemes under decentralized planning in Chelakkaragramapanchayat**

Year	Scheme	Component
2011-12	Comprehensive rice development project	Distribution of Seeds and Knapsack Sprayers
		Supply of Production enhancing materials <i>viz</i> , Pseudomonas, micronutrients, organic manure, chemical fertilizer
2012-13	Distribution of seed, labour cost and knapsack sprayer for paddy cultivation	Seeds and sprayer distribution and Assistance to meet labour cost
2013-14	Distribution of seed, organic manure, chemical fertilizer and Green manure seed for paddy cultivation	Distribution of seeds, organic manure, chemical fertilizer and Green manure seed
2014-15	Distribution of seed, organic manure, chemical fertilizer for paddy cultivation	Distribution of seeds, organic manure and chemical fertilizer
	Distribution of knapsack sprayer and weed cutter for individuals	Distribution of Knapsack sprayer and weed cutter
2015-16	Distribution of seed, organic manure, chemical fertilizer and pesticides for paddy cultivation	Distribution of seeds, organic manure, chemical fertilizer and pesticide

(Sulekha, 2017)

The benefits availed by the farmers through the implementation of schemes for the period 2011-12 to 2015-16 under decentralized planning were noted down and are presented below:

**Table 4: Benefits derived from the paddy promotions programmes**

Sl.no	Dimension	Benefit	Panchayat(n=30 each)		
			Adat	Arimpur	Chelakkara
1	<b>Socio-economic development</b>	Increased income from farm	70.00	83.33	76.67
		Employment to family members and others	73.33	73.33	73.33
		Assistance to meet increasing cost of cultivation	40.00	63.33	80.00
		Brought fallow land under cultivation	-	-	30.00
		Membership in farmer groups	100.00	100.00	100.00
2	<b>Assets acquisition</b>	Knapsack sprayer	13.33	20.00	23.33
3	<b>Input support</b>	HYV seeds	100.00	100.00	100.00
		Organic manure	10.00	-	76.67
		Chemical fertilizers	-	-	73.33
		Green manure seeds	-	-	56.67
		Soil ameliorants	53.33	-	53.33
		Plant protection chemicals	-	-	36.33
		Bio plant protectors/bio control agents	73.33	-	33.33
4	<b>Skill development</b>	Identification of pest, disease & weed	90.00	56.67	83.33
		Technical skill in handling equipments and implements	76.67	30.00	46.67
		Promoted group dynamics among farmers and record keeping	100.00	93.33	100.00
		Improved knowledge on new farming practices and plant protection measures	100.00	53.33	73.33

(Source: Compiled from primary data)

The benefits availed by the farmers include socio-economic development, asset acquisition, inputs support and skill development.

The results from the Table 4 denotes that skill development was the most important outcome. Farmers from all the study area have gained knowledge on new farming practices and plant protection measures. Among farmers, interaction, group dynamics and record maintenance were improved, which also reinforce the fact that most of the activities were undertaken on group basis. Majority of the respondents (90 %) developed their skill to identify pest, disease and weeds and more than three-fourth farmers gained technical skills in handling equipments and implements.

This is in line with the findings made by Sendilkumar (2012) and Singh and Premlata, (2014). According to them major reason for knowledge empowerment was mainly due to their participation in the training programmes conducted by various development agencies in the area.

Regarding the inputs supplied, all the beneficiaries have availed seeds. All the beneficiaries of Chelakkara and 73.33 per cent of Adatpanchayat have received either bio-plant protectors or bio-control agents and soil ameliorants (53.33 %). It can be seen from the table 2 and 3, that Arimpur farmers received only seed inputs whereas, Chelakkara farmers received seed, organic manure, chemical fertilizers, green manure seeds, soil ameliorants, plant protection chemicals, bio plant protectors and bio control agents. Similar results were found in studies made by Vijnana (2016), Unnikrishnan (2016) and Krishnan (2016). Vijnana (2016) reported that the beneficiaries of Comprehensive Paddy Development scheme at *Perumayal* panchayat in Kozhikode district, benefited 100.00 per cent, 50.00 per cent and 75.00 per cent subsidies respectively for the purchase of seeds, chemical fertilizers and organic manures. Unnikrishnan (2016) and Krishnan (2016) opined that cent per cent subsidy for the purchase of seeds and the cost of land preparation were availed by the Comprehensive Paddy Development scheme beneficiaries of Adat panchayat in Thrissur district and *Kadakkappally* panchayat in Alappuzha district.

Majority of the benefits were distributed to the farmers, through *padasekharasamithis* on group

basis. The beneficiaries from three panchayats opined that the scheme created employment opportunities for family members and others, provided assistance to cope up with the increasing cost of cultivation, and has also increased the net income from the farm. The Chelakkara farmers were able to bring fallow land under cultivation.

The assets generated through the schemes were found to be very low in all the three panchayats. This may be due to more allocation of fund to recurring input component which is a vital factor while implementing the schemes.

Since all the respondents from the three panchayats have become members of farmer groups and received high yielding variety seeds, which is the major component in promoting higher rice production, there is ample scope for revitalizing the projects. All the beneficiaries of two panchayats opined that, the paddy promotion programmes enhanced the group dynamics among farmers and record keeping habit while the other panchayat also recorded a higher score of 93.33 per cent. Again it is a positive signal which is to be stimulated for encouraging beneficiary participation.

### Conclusion

The results of the study clearly showed that the paddy promotion programmes implemented at panchayat level had succeeded in imparting skill development among the beneficiaries. Majority of the respondents have developed their skill to identify pest, disease and weeds and more than three-fourth farmers gained technical skills. It was also noticed that all the beneficiaries have availed seeds. In Arimpurgram panchayat seeds were the only component distributed through schemes under decentralized planning whereas in Chelakkaram panchayat farmers received seeds and other major production enhancing materials. The beneficiaries opined that these programmes were promising enough to bring socio-economic development among the farming society. The study results point out that the schemes have assisted farmers in continuing with paddy cultivation in the major paddy growing tracts of the district. Still there

is scope for bringing more changes by improvising existing ones and can also be replicated in other areas the schemes by adding more components to the under paddy cultivation.

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