

A Study on the Impact of the Scheme for the Distribution of Implements and Equipments to the Farmers

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ABSTRACT

The present study revealed that the scheme for the distribution of implements to the farmers was made aware only to two-thirds of the farming community in the block and more than 90 per cent of them have benefitted through this scheme. However, the local panchayats did not take interest in the execution of the scheme and the panchayat union has carefully followed the procedures laid down under the scheme.

INTRODUCTION

Experiments conducted by the Department of Agriculture (Anon, 1957) have proved that the improved agricultural implements help the farmers by minimising the cost on labour, time and cost. Tamil Nadu introduced a scheme for the supply of implements and equipments to all the needy farmers at subsidised rates since 1959. This study was taken up to find out the impact of the scheme with regard to the awareness and utilisation of implements and equipments by the farmers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was undertaken in Perur Panchayat Union at four levels *viz.*, farmers, the panchayats, the block and the gramasevak through specially con-

structed interview schedules. At farmers level 109 respondents were selected at random from 10 revenue villages of the block. At other levels, the whole universe was taken as a sample unit. Percentage analysis was made for the different aspects studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that only two-thirds of the farming community (68 per cent) of the Perur Block was aware of the scheme. Information gathered as to how many of the farmers were actually in possession of the improved implements along with the beneficiaries among them are presented in Table 1.

Only 48.6 per cent of the farmers possessed any one or more of the agricultural implements or equipments. Further among individual implements or equipments, it was

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Table 1. The possessors and the beneficiaries of improved agricultural implements

Name of implements/ equipments	Posses- sors		Benefi- ciaries	
	No.	Per cent (n=109)	No.	Per cent
Hand operated sprayers	39	35.8	32	82.0
Iron ploughs	34	31.2	32	94.1
Ridge ploughs	23	21.1	21	91.3
Bund farmers	21	19.3	19	90.5
Hand operated dusters	11	10.1	10	90.9
Levelling boards	6	5.5	5	83.3
Power sprayers	5	4.6	—	—
Buck scrappers	4	3.7	3	75.0
Junior hoes	3	2.8	2	66.7
Wetland puddlers	2	1.8	2	100.0
Burmese settum	1	0.9	1	100.0
Intercultivators	1	0.9	1	100.0
Non-possessors	56	51.4	—	—
Over-all (No. of farmers owning any one or more improved equipments)	53	48.6	48	90.6

observed that the hand operated sprayers were very popular with the farmers followed by iron ploughs, ridge ploughs and bund formers (Table 1). The increased percentage of ownership indicated the high adoption of modern agricultural practices by the farmers.

The reasons offered by the non-possessors indicated that the small size of the holdings cultivated by the farmers and the availability of implements / equipments for hire wherever needed (each to the extent of 48.2 per cent) were the main reasons (Table 2).

Table 2. Difficulties faced by the non-possessors of agricultural implements and equipments

Difficulties	No. of farmers	Percent- age * (n=56)
The holdings were small	27	48.2
The implements were easily hired whenever needed	27	48.2
Lack of water facilities	12	21.4
Not aware of the implements	11	19.6
Not interested in implements	8	14.3
Weak economic position	7	12.5

* The percentage do not add up to 100 since more than one reasons were quoted by the respondents.

Role played by the panchayats in the execution of the scheme: The extent of panchayats responsibility in selecting the beneficiaries is furnished in Table 3.

Only 6.2 per cent of the beneficiaries were selected and recommended by the panchayats for the supply of the implements from the blocks. This low percentage was also covered by only one panchayat out of nine panchayats (Table 3). In deciding the number and the kind of implements to be supplied to the farmers, the panchayats have not played any role and left the whole thing to the officials. The evaluation report (1960) also observed in support of the fact that in some blocks the members seemed to be lukewarm and they left the farming policy and the decisions to the officials.

Role played by the gramasevaks: The facts regarding the conduct of the method demonstrations of the imp-

Table 3. Extent of panchayat's responsibility in the purchase of implements by the beneficiaries

Panchayat's responsibility	Extent of beneficiaries	
	No.	Percentage (n=48)
Beneficiaries selected and recommended by one out of nine panchayats	3	6.2
Beneficiaries selected and recommended by the officials without referring to the panchayats	45	93.8

roved implements were gathered from all the block gramasevaks and the data presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The time of method demonstrations conducted by gramasevaks

Details	Gramasevaks	
	No.	Percentage (n=10)
Conducted in time	4	40
Conducted but not in time	5	50
Not conducted at all	1	10

Ninety per cent of the gramasevaks conducted the method demonstrations of the improved agricultural implements. However, 50 per cent of them did not conduct the demonstrations in time.

Table 5. The trend of expenditure incurred towards the distribution of improved implements and equipments

Details	1966-67		1967-68		1968-69	
	(Rs.)	(%)	(Rs.)	(%)	(Rs.)	(%)
Expenditure for the distribution of						
(a) Plant protection equipments	1062.50	(27)	2007.50	(64.9)	2952.50	(70.4)
(b) Other agricultural implements	2882.00	(73)	1248.00	(35.1)	1247.50	(29.6)
	3744.50	(100)	3555.50	(100)	4200.00	(100)

Role played by the panchayat union: As laid down in the scheme, the amounts set apart were spent more towards the supply of the plant protection equipments as furnished in Table 5.

It was seen that even though the amount spent towards the supply of plant protection equipments was low in the year 1966-67 (27 per cent), the amount spent in the subsequent years

was considerably on an increasing trend (Table 5). Even though the maximum amount was spent for the supply of plant protection equipments, the study has brought to light that there were no specific targets and deliberate planning for the supply of these equipments. Hence, the setting up of maximum amount for the supply of these equipments was only an incidental achievement.

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