

**EVALUATION STUDY OF CENTRALLY SPONSORED
PACKAGE PROGRAMME FOR JUTE - 1978**

1. The Study

Notwithstanding the introduction of a set of extensive measures in the First Five Year Plan and the addition of a battery of intensive measures to the initial set in the subsequent plans, the production of jute remained widely fluctuating. The Government of India, in 1968-69, launched the Special Package Programme for Jute with a view to enhance the unit yield, especially of superior quality fibre. The Scheme envisaged to saturate the selected areas with all the development inputs like improved seeds, foliar spraying, adoption of correct retting practices and extraction of fibre, to motivate the growers to adopt scientific techniques of farming and grading of fibre. At the instance of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation undertook an evaluation study of the Programme in 1972. The study Report was brought out in 1978.

2. Objectives

- i) To assess the general awareness about the improved cultivation practices;
- ii) To assess the level of fertiliser application;
- iii) To assess the plant protection treatments undertaken;
- iv) To review the availability of inputs, their timeliness etc; and
- v) To assess the impact of the Programme on yield, cost of cultivation and net returns per hectare.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

The States, blocks and villages which were eligible for being selected for the study included only those where the Programme had been in operation for the last three years ending 1971-72. Four States viz.

Assam, Bihar, Orissa and West-Bengal, all of which employed an area of more than 2000 hectares under Jute, were selected accordingly. One district was selected from each of the States where the area covered by the Programme was between 2000 and 10,000 hectares and two from each of those States where the area covered was above 10,000 hectares. In the next stage, the eligible blocks within the selected districts were sampled by employing the stratified sampling method. In the penultimate stage, eligible villages were sampled on the basis of the area covered under jute cultivation. In the final stage, the households adopting the prescribed package of practices for the last three years ending 1971-72 were sampled by stratifying them into 5 equal strata. The stratification was done on the basis of benefits received. The final sample thus consisted of 4 States, 6 districts, 8 blocks, 23 villages and 230 households.

4. **Reference Period**

The data were collected for the period 1969-70 to 1971-72.

5. **Main Findings**

1. In 1971-72, the coverage under the improved varieties of Jute among the sample households was 100%, 90%, 85.6% and 65% in West Bengal, Orissa, Assam and Bihar respectively.

2. The entire jute area in Orissa and about 35% in West-Bengal was irrigated, while in Bihar and Assam the crop was exposed to the vagaries of monsoon.

3. During 1969-70 to 1971-72, the expenditure on current inputs per hectare increased by about 21%, whereas yield remained constant. The yield per hectare and net return per hectare were the highest in West-Bengal and the lowest in Bihar. Net return per hectare differed among different varieties and it decreased with increase in size-group in all the three years.

4. In Assam and Orissa, popular variety was 'JRC-212' and in Bihar it was 'JRC-321'. In West-Bengal almost the entire area was under 'JRO-632' variety.

5. Non-adoption of seed treatment practices and correct retting procedures, deficiencies in the application of fertilizers and in the foliar application

of urea, lack of irrigation facilities and the susceptibility of the crops to pests and diseases were the main problems reported by majority of the cultivators in the selected States.

6. The cultivators in Assam and Orissa mainly used their own seeds, whereas in West Bengal majority had purchased seeds from the sale points of National Seed Corporation in 1971-72. The Co-operatives did not play any role in the supply of seeds in Assam, Bihar and Orissa, while in West Bengal their role was quite insignificant.

7. It was reported from the selected states that sufficient number of sprayers were not available and the arrangements for their repairs were also not satisfactory.

8. Insufficient flow of co-operative and commercial bank credit to the cultivators was reported from the selected states. As a result of this, the farmers had to depend on money lenders-cum-wholesale traders for their credit needs.

9. Concept of grading in the technical sense was not in vogue in most of the States.

10. Lack of organised marketing facilities, financial stringency of the cultivators and non availability of transport facility were the main reasons advanced for not selling the produce in the markets.

6. Major Suggestions

1. It is of paramount importance to educate the cultivators regarding the importance of high quality seeds. The farmers should be motivated to accept improved technology. They should also be educated about the utility of the balanced use of 'N', 'P' and 'K' nutrients and the adoption of curative and preventive measures.

2. Training should be imparted on different aspects of the programme viz cultural practices, harvesting methods, retting procedure and fibre extracting techniques.

3. The other measures suggested to improve the supply side include bufferstocking and timely distribution of seeds, supply of necessary equipments for undertaking plant protection measures, strengthening of the co-operative structure, linking of credit with marketing of produce, setting up of sufficient number of grading centres, provisions for adequate facilities for storage of fibre, introduction of early maturing and high yielding varieties etc.

4. Monitoring of the programme should be introduced in the initial stage itself to identify shortfalls or bottlenecks in its implementation.