

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

1. The Study

Realising the dire need to correct the growing disequilibrium between the supply and demand for cotton and the severe limits to a continuing extension of the area under cotton, the centrally sponsored scheme to maximise production of cotton by increasing the yield per hectare was initiated in 1966-67. The Scheme encompassed a variety of measures which included production of improved varieties of nucleus and foundation seeds, mass plant protection campaigns, foliar application of urea, demonstrations, grading of kapas etc. Under this programme the central government gave subsidy to the States for the major inputs.

At the instance of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation(PEO) conducted an evaluation study of the scheme in 1972 and its report was brought out in 1978.

2. Objectives

- i) To assess the general awareness of the improved cultivation practices on the part of participating cultivators.
- ii) To assess the level of fertilizer application by participating cultivators.
- iii) To assess the average number of times, the plant protection treatments were adopted by the beneficiaries.
- iv) To look into the physical availability of inputs, their timeliness etc.
- v) To estimate the impact of the Programme on yield, cost of cultivation and net returns per hectare.

3. **Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample**

Only those states in which the Programme had been operational during the period 1969-70 to 1971-72 and those having an area of not less than 20,000 hectares covered by the programme were selected for the Study. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu were selected accordingly. As regards selection of districts, one district each was selected from those States where the area covered was more than 20,000 hectares but less than 50,000 hectares and two districts each from those states where the area covered was between 50,000 and 1 lakh hectares and three districts each from those states where the area covered exceeded 1 lakh hectares. Accordingly, three districts were selected from Maharashtra, two districts each from Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat and one district each from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. In all, 423 participating households in 44 villages of 11 districts were selected for the study.

4. **Reference Period**

Most of the data related to the period 1969-70 to 1971-72.

5. **Main Findings**

1. Almost the entire cotton area covered by the study in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and to the extent of 90% in Punjab, 79.9% in Rajasthan and 76.6% in Haryana was under improved varieties. In Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu the entire cotton area was irrigated while the corresponding figures for Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra were 61.1%, 22.4% and 6% respectively. Different new varieties of cotton were popular in different states.

2. Return per hectare, which varied between varieties, increased from Rs.542 in 1969-70 to Rs.704 in 1971-72. During 1969-70 to 1971-72, the expenditure on current inputs per hectare increased by about 20% whereas yield increased by about 24%.

3. Seed treatment practice was not adopted by all cultivators mainly due to the lack of awareness and not convinced of its utility. Irrespective of whether the seed was supplied by private traders or by official sources there were incessant complaints about the quality of the seeds supplied. Non availability of reliable and good variety seed was reported to be a major problem.

4. Application of fertilizers was not to the extent of the recommended dosage, excepting Gujarat where 80% of the participants used recommended dosage of 'N' and 'P'. In Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab, shortages of fertilisers were reported. Taking advantage of this situation, the private traders were selling inferior qualities at higher prices.

5. In 1971-72, only about one-third of the sample cultivators adopted preventive measures whereas curative measures were undertaken by about 50% of the cultivators. The non-availability of important pesticides, plant protection chemicals, spraying equipments and their servicing facilities, rare demonstrations and poor publicity, absence of adequate number of proper grading centres, etc. were some other important bottlenecks experienced in the implementation of the programme.

6. About 70 per cent of the sample cultivators sold their produce to local merchants/commission agents and nearly 24 per cent to marketing and other types of co-operative societies. Low prices offered by merchants, fluctuations in market prices, malpractices at the time of auction, improper weighing, etc. prevented the cultivators from realising the proper value of their produce.

7. Grading of kapas was not done in any of the states excepting Maharashtra where only about 20 per cent of the respondents reported having done grading.

8. Credit and feedback were two other crucial inputs in short supply. Credit was dominated by unscrupulous private bodies who charged excessive interest rates. Feedback from the ground level completely disregarded the constraints in implementation.

6. Major Suggestions

1. In order to provide quality seed to cultivators, the procurement and distribution arrangements should be reviewed.

2. Requirements of fertilisers and plant protection chemicals should be assessed well in time so that these can be stocked and made available on demand.

3. The extension agencies should educate the farmers regarding balanced use of 'N', 'P' and 'K' nutrients.

4. The structure of co-operatives should be strengthened both organisationally as well as financially.

5. Special demonstrations and training in respect of appropriate use of major inputs should be organised. To undertake periodical check and follow up action in regard to adoption of various improved practices by the cultivators, the extension agencies should be strengthened.

6. Fixation of price of raw-cotton after taking into consideration the price of inputs and other factors, guaranteeing of the price of raw cotton for 2 to 3 years, introduction of grading of cotton according to ginning percentage, moisture contents, staple length and fibre quality are some other measures need to be taken.

7. A monitoring cell in the Ministry of Agriculture should be created which not only restrict itself to mere progress reporting but also appraise financial and physical performance vis-a-vis targets, identify shortfalls, bottlenecks, problems and difficulties faced by implementing agencies, supply feed back for applying corrective measures and review the corrective measures taken in response to the above feed back. The states, in turn, should set up information and control rooms, where key data on the scheme could be displayed in the form of charts, graphs, etc.