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Efficiency of LEADS Project Among The Farmers of Kerala State

Ms. Preethu K. Paul[1], Ms.Dhanusha Balakrishnan[2]
and Dr. G. S Sreedaya[3]
Department of Agricultural Extension College of Agriculture, Vellayani Kerala Agricultural University-Thrissur, Kerala, India
Corresponding Author: Ms. Preethu K. Paul

Abstract: LEADS is a project entitled as the Lead Farmer Centred Extension Advisory and Delivery Services which is based on the concept of field level extension work within a district.LEADS primarily aims at farmer to farmer extension.An attempt was made to assess the efficiency of LEADS among the farmers of Kerala state.Any project implemented should undergo an assesmnet in terms of its relevance and efficiency it created among the intented people.Efficiency is definedas the all possible outcome achieved from the all available income combinations.Hence the study shows that, the efficiency created by LEADS was appreciably high among the farmer groups.

Key words: LEADS, Efficiency, MAPP Technology, life curve, trend analysis, influence matrix, impact profile.Transfer of technology

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I.INTRODUCTION

Agricultural extension in the Kerala state was in a collapsed stage. Transfer of Technology aiming at possible productivity increase as well diversification of income sources in a farming systems perspective for homesteads in Kerala assumes great importance. The risks and uncertainties in agriculture were increasing due to increased incidence of natural calamities as well as due to trade policies of Government of India. There is a need to generate location specific technologies for realising the objective. Kerala Agricultural University has established in 1980s five Regional Agricultural Research Stations for generating location specific technologies through a World Bank aided project from ICAR. The funding for the scheme subsequently dried up from ICAR. Strengthening of Zonal Research stations and generation of location specific technologies have to be supported additionally, to supplement agricultural extension. In this context a project named LEADS (Lead Farmer Centred Extension Advisory and Delivery Services) was implemented as part of the Annual Plan 2011-12 scheme on "Strengthening of Agricultural Extension" in few districts of Kerala. Based on the 'Farmers – to-Farmers' extension approach, the LEADS project was being implemented in Kollam, Palakkad and Kannur districts since 2010-11 and the project was implemented in Wayanad district from 2012-13 onwards. The project was sanctioned for implementation in the state wide *G.O (MS): 198/10/ AD Dated. 6.8.2010.* (Government of Kerala, 2013).In LEADS, the extension activity is focused around the lead farmers and the satellite farmer groups.LEADS primarily aims at farmer to farmer extension. Shrestha, (2005) stated that the farmer to farmer extension is a cost-effective service delivery mechanism in order to extend the basic and innovative technologies particularly to the rural farmers especially in remote areas. In LEADS, Field assistants and technology managers are the key players at the grass root level in transfer of technology. (Sreedaya, 2016). Under LEADS, the crops selected are rice, banana, coconut and vegetables. An attempt was made to assess the efficiency created by LEADS among the farmers of Kerala in the past years. According to Casley and Lury (1982) efficiency is definedas the rates by which the recommended advance agricultural practices are adopted by the farmer

II.METHODOLOGY

Efficiency created by LEADS was assessed by a technology named MAPP (Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes) developed by Neubert (1998). Efficiency of LEADS from 2010 to 2016 was analysed by this methodology. MAPP technology has five steps which includes a life curve development using the productivity details of important crops, namely Rice, Banana, coconut and vegetables under LEADS project, trend analysis of the situations, enumeration of the various LEADS activities and interventionsand their relevance, influence matrix in consideration with the influence created by interventions/ activities upon the farmers and finally an efficiency profile of the LEADS. For the Technology construction focus group discussion was conducted and the alterations were recorded.

III.RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results were obtained by employing the schedule to the farmers. Farmers created the MAPP technology steps during the focus group discussion. The efficiency profile was also created by the farmers at last with the help of researcher assistance.

1. Life curve Development:

Table 1.

Productivity (t or Nuts/ha)				
Year	**Rice**	**Banana**	**Vegetables**	**Coconut**
2010	2.26	6.50	12	7534
2011	2.23	6.50	14	7500
2012	2.32	6.52	16	7610
2013	2.36	6.93	17	7720
2014	2.25	7.0	15	7755
2015	2.34	7.21	15	7773
2016	2.45	7.37	17	7790

Productivity details of Rice, Banana, Vegetables and Coconut

2. Trend Analysis:

The efficiency components of LEADS subjected to trend analysis includes the change in living standards, the access to resources and the level of knowledge expansion.

Table 2. Trend analysis of the efficiency components

Efficiency components	**YEARS**							**Observed trend over the years**
	2010-11	**2011-12**	**2012-13**	**2013-14**	**2014-15**	**2015-16**	**2016-17**	
A) Changes in living standard								
Agricultural yields	**	**	***	****	*****	*****	*****	Very positive
Family income	**	**	***	****	*****	*****	*****	Very positive
B) Access to resources								
To markets	**	**	***	****	****	****	****	Positive
To inputs	*	*	**	****	****	****	****	Positive
C) Improvement of knowledge								
Knowledge about land use systems	**	**	**	**	**	***	****	Positive

(*Very Negative, ** Negative, *** Average, **** Positive, ***** Very Positive)

The trend was found positive because of the well and timely cooperation between the lead farmer and satellite farmer groups with the Krishibhavan. Demonstrations were conducted regularly in the farmer's fields by the officials of the state.

3. Relevance of activities or interventions taken up by LEADS

The various activities undertaken by LEADS are Monthly Technology Advice (MTA), Participatory Technology Development (PTD), On Farm Trials (OFT), Front line Demonstrations (FLD), Field Visits and Closed User Groups (CUG).

Table 3. Relevance of activities taken by LEADS

Activities/ Interventions	Relevance to day to day life	Main beneficiaries
MTA	*****	Lead Farmers, Satellite farmers
PTD	*****	Satellite Farmers

OFT	**	Lead Farmers
FLD	***	Lead Farmers
FIELD VISIT	*****	Lead Farmers, Satellite farmers
CUG networks	***	Lead Farmers, Satellite farmers

Farmer respondents opined that the Month Technology Advice (MTA), Participatory Technology Development (PTD) and field visits as most relevant ones. The monthly technology advice meetings, Participatory Technology Development (PTD) programmes and field visits were regularly performed by the concerned authority. During the monthly technology advice meetings almost all the problems of farmers were discussed and solutions were given by the officials timely. Also the field visits performed by the field assistants helped the farmers to maintain a healthy relationship with the krishibhavan and during the visits the field problems faced by the farmers were observed by the assistants and due solutions were provided by them.

4. Influence Matrix

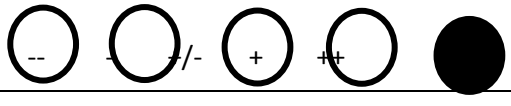
Table 4. Influence matrix of the activities

Efficiency components	**Interventions/ Activities**						
	MTA	PTD	OFT	FLD	Field visits	CUG networks	**TOTAL**
A) Changes in living standard							
Agricultural yields	5	3	1	2	5	4	**20**
Family income	5	3	1	2	5	4	**20**
B) Access to resources							
To markets	3	2	1	2	4	2	14
To inputs	2	2	1	2	4	3	14
C) Improvement of knowledge							
Knowledge about land use systems	4	3	1	1	5	3	**17**
Total	**19**	13	5	9	**22**	16	

From the influence matrix it can be seen that, amongst the major interventions, field visit and the month technology advice (MTA) influenced more to the efficiency components Again, the most influenced components of efficiency due to these activities or interventions were agricultural yield and family income which showed a positive influence. It can be inferred from the result that LEADS is successful in bringing change in income of farmers by increasing the yield. But the scope for improvement is still there if LEADS can make concrete efforts to improve the input to market facilities

5. Development of efficiency Profile:

Efficiency profile was created, to show the efficiency of LEADS. This is a diagrammatic representation developed on the basis of impact created by the intervention or activities of LEADS upon the efficiency components

Efficiency Components	**Efficiency profile** -- - +/- + ++
Agricultural yields	

Family income	-- - +/- +
To markets	-- - +/- +
To inputs	-- - +/-
Knowledge about land use systems	-- - +/- +

A perusal efficiency profile, indicates an inclination towards positive scores in most of the components assuring the higher efficiency generation.

IV. CONCLUSION

Assessment of Efficiency of LEADS among the farmers of Kerala state was conducted in terms of its efficiency components. The results shows that the efficiency created by the LEADS interventions were higher among the farmer groups of the state. This suggested the implementation of more projects to strengthen the agricultural extension across the state in the coming years. Utilization of the field level farmers for transfer of technologies creates an immense effect on strengthening the agricultural extension

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