

7. Oilseed Production Programme (OPP) in Karnataka

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Government of India in May 1986 appointed a Technological Mission to enhance oilseed production under the Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP). The programme was designed to supplement the efforts of the state governments to increase the production and productivity of various oilseed crops such as groundnut, rapeseed/mustard, soybean, sunflower, sesamum, castor, safflower, linseed and Niger grown in the state. The mission was designed to harness the best of production, pricing and management technologies to accelerate self-reliance in oilseeds and vegetable oils through effective implementation strategies. The Planning Commission had then assigned a production target of 30 million tonnes to the oilseed sector. Following this intensive programme, a sea change was observed in the oilseed sector, where production increased from 108 lakh tonnes in 1985–86 to 247.3 lakh tonnes in 1998–93.

Oilseeds occupy an important position in the Indian agricultural economy; oilseed crops have the second largest share of area under the cropping pattern of the country, next only to foodgrains. But this sector did not receive the desired attention during the phase of technological change. This was, however, corrected through the growth impetus during Technology Mission, which began in May 1986. Spurred by the import of oilseeds/edible oils increasing at a faster rate and the import bill of edible oils increasing from Rs. 1,000 crores in 1982–83 to Rs.2,926 crores by 1996–97, the intervention of Technology Mission was well placed. Again, in the recent past the import of edible oil caused panic among oilseed producers and processors. The quantum of imported edible oils increased from 1.9 lakh mts to 49.0 lakh mts during 1990–91 to 1999–2000. In response to this, the Central Government increased the import duty to 67 per cent, and the issue is still simmering. All these factors point towards economic sensitivity of the crop. Karnataka is one of the major oilseed growing states. The share of oilseeds in its gross cropped area was about 12 per cent during the early eighties, and went above 21 per cent during the early nineties, where it stayed during the decade.

The evaluation was attempted at two levels, namely, at the secondary level, taking the oilseed sector of Karnataka and locating the strong and weak regions. The specific objectives are:

1. To analyse the performance of oilseeds in the State and the districts where the programme is being intensively implemented.
2. To locate the impact of the programme on the beneficiaries as against the non-beneficiaries.

The impact of OPP was reviewed at the micro level separately for district as well as state- level schemes. The specific beneficiary-level responses of the state intervention through OPP were ascertained through a widespread sample survey with a structured questionnaire. The sample survey was undertaken with a three-stage purposive sampling

method. The districts chosen for the field survey during the first round were Chitradurga, Bellary, Belgaum, Gulbarga, Koppal, Bijapur, Dharwad, and Shimoga.

Findings

- Out of these districts, one taluka each was selected again based on the density of investment under OPP (including state and district sector schemes). After discussing with the officials at the district level, villages having beneficiaries of different schemes were selected. Separate questionnaires were canvassed for the state scheme beneficiaries as well as district sector scheme beneficiaries. However, the analysis was carried out together in order to understand the aggregate impact of the OPP project on the oilseed economy of the state.
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- Componentwise spread of beneficiaries indicated that the largest number of beneficiaries take advantage of seed treatment or Rhizobium culture followed by those who are benefited by root grub control, gypsum treatment and certified seed distribution. Only 3 per cent of the beneficiaries have received weedicides, against less than 2 per cent reported to have received input kits. Not many were covered under seed distribution.
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- The cropping pattern of the beneficiaries indicated dominance of oilseed crops. This finding is quite natural as we reached mainly to the oilseed growers in search of those who have derived benefits out of the OPP programme. A large number of beneficiaries are inclined more towards the low-density rainfed crops. It was very clear that oilseeds serve as a major cash crop for farmers under rainfed conditions.
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- Technology adoption has been one of the important objectives of the OPP. The programme focuses on providing new technological inputs and incentives to adopt such technology. It was observed that a large number of farmers have changed from the traditional oilseed varieties to modern oilseed varieties. This change can be attributed solely to the oilseed production programme.
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- One of the strategies adopted under OPP is to increase area under oilseeds by changing the cropping system favourably towards oilseeds. The results of the micro-level study reveal that, with the exception of safflower and linseed, the area under oilseed has been declining. This decline is not of large magnitude. It is interesting to observe that farmers with lower size of holdings have increased their area under oilseeds but those with higher size of holding have registered a decline.
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- As regards the incremental yield achieved out of the oilseed production programme, the results are not very encouraging. It seems that the farmers might have underestimated the yield increase as these do not match even the crop-cutting experiments of the district. There has been a slight decline of about 17 per cent in productivity. Positive changes in the yield levels were observed in the case of safflower, linseed and soyabean. The reported decline in the yield level of groundnut was 7.3 per cent, whereas sunflower is reported to have a 45 per cent lower yield than before the OPP. These observations are based on the data of a single year and need to

be cross-checked during the second phase of the evaluation.

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- Finally, the success of a programme should be measured by satisfaction levels of beneficiaries. The satisfaction level differs across the components of the programme but in the aggregate a two-third majority has indicated satisfactory implementation of the programme. However, a good number of suggestions have been made by the farmers in regard to the problems that they have encountered, which need to be dealt with immediately.