

Intensive Banana Cultivation

Kudumbashree, the programme implementing agency (PIA) of Mahila Kisan Sasaktheekaran Pariyojana (MKSP) for Kerala, has undertaken the project through the institution of Joint Liability Group (JLG) of women farmers. The crops under cultivation by 60000 joint liability groups of Kudumbashree in 55000 hectares of land include paddy, banana, vegetables and tubers. During the Onam season of 2017 banana was grown in 3000 ha aiming the festive sales. The market analysis indicated extreme demand versus low production. In view of the analysed trend the mission contemplated intensive banana cultivation for the coming peak period of 2018. Synchronising the harvest in accordance, 10031 JLGs were engaged in 5260.17 hectares of land. The project envisages ample supply of banana to cater to the needs of the common in peak requirement period and also setting a standard tool of measure to guard the price hike. Here the term intensive does not indicate high density planting, but only expansion of area for increased production. The ongoing project standing is as follows.

Sl No	Districts	Number of JLG	Area under Cultivation in Ha
1	Thiruvananthapuram	305	134.10
2	Kollam	926	295.40
3	Pathanamthitta	191	80.40
4	Alappuzha	347	139.55
5	Kottayam	632	453.15
6	Idukki	130	160.10
7	Ernakulam	3732	1744
8	Thrissur	1378	712.84
9	Palakkad	980	808.06
10	Malappuram	609	322.80
11	Kozhikode	238	120.00
12	Wayanad	176	121.77
13	Kannur	250	100.00
14	Kasaragod	137	68.00
	Total	10031	5260.17



Implications

The project culminating during the Onam season 2018 is expected to hit the festive market with plentiful deliverance of bananas. The project has a multitude of objectives such as additional income generation activities for the women farmers, setting a standard model of need based intervention in agriculture sector by Kudumbashree, upholding farm livelihoods, make available safe to eat and nutritious bananas in the domestic markets during the festive season, check the price volatility at peak periods of requirement, discourage the exorbitant prices and exploitation of consumers by the middlemen/hoarders during Onam 2018.