



Kuttanad Package: An Analysis from 2008- 2012

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

MEASURES TO MITIGATE KUTTANAD WETLAND ECOSYSTEM

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Jan Mery Joseph

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M S Swaminathan recommendations to mitigate Kuttanad Wetland Ecosystem was submitted as an interim report to the Government of India and Kerala on 13th February 2007. (MSSRF, 2007). The specific recommendations by Swaminathan included:

1. The protection and restoration of ecology of water spread area.
2. Main roads should be constructed on pillars since canals flowed down the stream and minor roads with number of culverts to facilitate free flow of water across the road during floods and monsoon.

2.Salinity and Flood management:

Thanner mukham bund must be rebuild and renovated as per modern designs. The work of phase 3 of TMB must be completed and the works of phase 1 and 2 must be renovated. Improve the efficiency of Thottapally spillway and the leading channels. Modernisation of shutter system, use dragged soil to strengthen and widen the patashekaram bunds, ensure coordination between the departments of government with least bureaucratic system. Removal of sand bars timely and maintenance of spilling regularly and ensuring the efficient operation. The Rani- Chithira blocks and C and D blocks must be regulated for flood water Complete construction and Deeping of A-C Canal with removal of all blocks (MSSRF, 2007).

3.Pollution control strategies

The dumping of municipal solid waste and sewage into the river water and kayal of kuttanad must be prevented. The hospital waste dumbering to the rivers and local water bodies must be viewed with care. The 'Pamba action plan' must be implemented without delay since majority of the waste flows to the river from the area of pamba and Achenkovil rivers. Fuel spillage and discharge of human waste into the rivers from transport boats and tourist boats and house boats have been a major cause in the pollution and extinction of variety of species in Vembanad lake. Measure to control the

use of pesticides, insecticides and fertilizers must be initiated. Bio pesticides and manures must be encouraged in farming. (MSSRF, 2007)

4.The removal of aquatic weeds

Usage of compost with organic waste, dung and phosphate must be done every three years to free the rivers and other water sources weed free.

5.Improve biodiversity in backwaters.

The biodiversity rich zone, 'Pathiramanal island' of Kuttanad which is the only pristine area must be protected from natural destruction as well the human interference in the form of tourist intervention. The Ramsar site Vembanad Kayal and biodiversity rich Kayamkulam kayal must be brought back to the richness in terms of biodiversity. The famous fish species 'pearl spot' and 'prawn' must be revived. Initiate health tourism in Kuttanad with the growth of wide variety of medicinal plants and the rice varieties used for 'Ambalapuzha Palpayasam' must be encouraged and widely produced and the mangroves could be used as the symbol of cultural significance. 'The Gandhi Smriti Vaanam' projected started for the maintenance of biodiversity in Purakad Kari must be actively implemented or at least the rice cultivation scheme must be acquired. (MSSRF, 2007)

6.Sustainable livelihood opportunities

Apart from the above schemes, the Kuttanad Package proposed various programmes for the improvement of livelihood opportunities. This incorporates the plan of yield schedule, pronouncing Kuttanad as a unique agrarian zone, division of the cultivating area or division of patashekarams to improve cultivating coordination's, work government assistance, coordinated cultivating, coconut endeavours, upholding natural cultivating, fisheries and execution of appropriate 'set of accepted rules' for the water the travel industry in Kuttanad. The above summary of the strategies was proposed by the report submitted by MSSRF and the



detailed implementation techniques, methods and work divisions are also well explained in the original report. (MSSRF, 2007)

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION AS PER SCSL
ECONOMICS REPORTS OF GOVERNMENT OF
KERALA:
INITIATIVES OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS
OF GOVERNMENT
IRRIGATION

The Government of Kerala awaits the report of the project implementers to get detailed project report on the revival of 'Thannermukham Bund' and 'Thottapally Spillway'. Mr. V R Prasad, journalist and college professor hailing from Kuttanad claims that no developmental activities were carried out to revive 'Thottapally Spillway' and 'Thannermukham Bund'. The modernisation of both these structures are not yet initiated in any manner, thus flood in monsoon and flow of salt water to the 'kayal' from sea during summer is not solved yet. As per M S Swaminathan report, 160.00 crores and 18.90 crores were to be utilised from the fund for modernisation of TMB and improving efficiency of TSW and it shows this amount was not utilised accordingly. (SCSL, 2013)

As per the SCSL report, the regulation of flood water in C and D blocks and Rani- Chithira blocks are not completed. The same report gives account of 2048.56 crores which is said to have utilised in the mitigation of flood water in kayal and near C and D and Rani- Chithira block (118.91 crores), mitigation of floods in 5 padashekarams of group 9 of Kuttanad (379.5 crores), mitigation in Nedumudipadashekarams (24.76 crores), mitigation in the padashekarams of Kuttanad in phase 2 (1525.39 crores). The amount recorded here is something greater than the entire fund allocated, however, V R Prasad rightly says that the only so called 'developments' done in patashekarams were importing of piles and slabs to strengthen the bunds, however, the construction of bunds have not been completed in any patashekarams moreover, the constructions were started in uncultivated paddy fields which in a way is not going to control floods or support farming in any way.

Most of the piles and slabs imported to the region is still not utilised and the used ones have not provided any intended results. Moreover, the mitigation of the patashekarams were not the initial step to begin the developments of Kuttanad package. it is the lack of for- sightedness and the increased corruption in the government that does not follow the right order of development as mentioned in the report of M S Swaminathan.

AGRICULTURE

Kerala Agro Industries Cooperation Limited is said to have bought 92 power tillers, 100 tractors and 150 combine harvesters while 296 motors and 108 petty paras was given by the engineering wing of Agricultural Department (SCSL, 2013). It is also recorded that 421 hectares of fallow land started to be cultivated and 9230 farmers were given input assistance (SCSL Economic, 2013). 2,296 MT seeds were distributed and seed processing plants and godowns are in construction stage in Mavelikara and Pandalam. Constructions in Pandalam is said to have completed (SCSL, 2013).

The developments said to have been mentioned in the above reports is the so called 'developments' implemented under Kuttanad package within the span of 5 years by the Government of Kerala. From this it is quite sure that no recurring policies or large projects with long term effects were planned or implemented. M S Swaminathan reports had plans about integrated farming, coconut enterprises etc. Let's assume that 7.5 crores allocated by Swaminathan report for crop production be utilised in the building of seed production plants and godowns in Mavelikara and Pandalam and the seed distributions conducted.

Under pest for casting and early warning service, 65 structures are being constructed among which 35 was completed when the Kuttanad package period was ended. It is also proudly reported that training was conducted in pest management. (SCSL, 2013). State Horticulture Department claims to have provided subsidy for 3825 farmers on organic agriculture in various forms like, bee, vermin compost, cocoa etc.

It is also recorded that 49.9 lakh was full utilised in the year 2011- 2012. In 2012- 2013, 108.16 lakh was released of which 75 lakhs was utilised. Few other expenses recorded were renovation of 170 ponds at a cost of Rs. 9.08 crore, Rs. 3.37 crores cost outlay of well cubing, open wells., 0.21 crores utilised for fruit and medicinal plants supply, 0.73 crores used for planting seedling along bunds and 1.3 crores used for training and administrative expenses. This shows that 171. 97 crores were totally used in the agriculture sector (SCSL, 2013).

The reports and the actual implementation of the policy has a lot of gaps in itself. The developments that the reports like SCSL shows gives cannot be considered a well-planned implementation. The soil and the state of the land of Kuttanad need well cared developmental policies as mentioned in Swaminathan report (V R Prasad, 2021). The order



of implementation as per M S Swaminathan report is not at all followed by the implementation committee. Swaminathan himself has made an account of the developments that should be carried out initially. (V. R Prasad, 2021)

ANALYSIS OF THE SUCCESS RATE

From the above records and reports, it can be generally evaluated as a less success package which could utilise only some amount from the fund allocated and the package could not bring much of long-lasting developments in the region. All the developments which are said to be done were done with short term goals such as winning elections and winning the support of people. None of them could give a long-lasting effect in Kuttanad. The bund construction is the only 'visible' development said to have been done in this region but in those developments too have not brought any reasonable change in the hardships of farmers during monsoon and often the harvest is lost when water from nearby waterbodies enters farmland in breaking the bunds.

In short, the dissertation concludes that Kuttanad Package 1 has been a failure for it could not meet majority of proposals made by M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai. It also could not control the major issues of the region including floods, the issue of salt water intrusion, the loss of paddy cultivation harvest due to covering of field by water due to breakage of bunds etc. All the issues are still in Kuttanad and have not been eradicated as a whole. The best proof for the same is the floods happening every year, special mention to

the floods of 2018, 2019, 2020 which caused heavy destruction in terms of properties, agriculture and human life as such.

Another evidence for the failure of the package is the continuation of the package in the name 'Kuttanad Package phase 2' in the years after 2012 and still Kuttanad Package 2 is a recurrent project being mentioned in the budgets of Government of Kerala every year. It is widely believed (84%) by the people of Kuttanad that Kuttanad Package 2 will be implemented in near future (Survey, 2021). Let the belief be not in vain and the project be initiated for the betterment of the region, its people and the resources.

Thus, 'Kuttanad Package 1' had not been a complete success and was not implemented properly due to lack of proper organisation, corruption and proper coordination between the departments, corruption in the politics and very importantly the lack of a learned leader who know the taste and touch of Kuttanad.

The question of the contribution of various departments of government towards implementation of the package is discussed and analysed above. We concluded that the departments have not coordinated.

RESULT OF THE SURVEY:

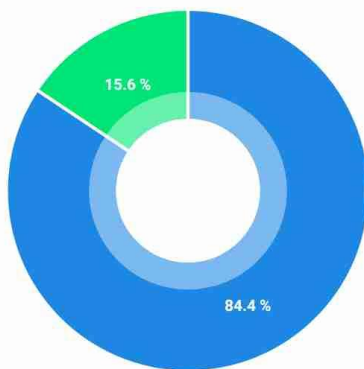
The survey was conducted to know the stand of people in the implementation of Kuttanad package. Also, the extent of hope of people regarding the implementation of package.



Do you think Kuttanad package will be implemented in the near future

PIE CHART

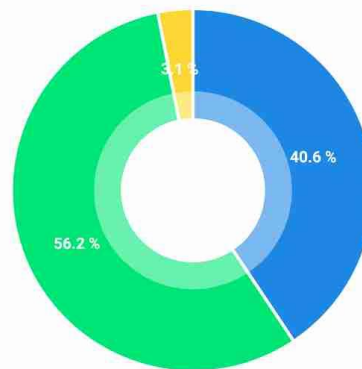
- yes - 27
- No - 5



Was kuttanad package 1 (2008-2012) successful?

PIE CHART

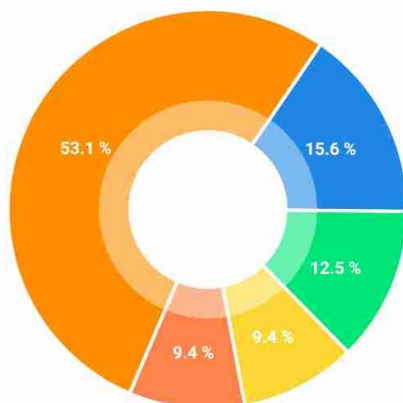
- yes - 13
- No - 18
- others - 1



If yes, why?

PIE CHART

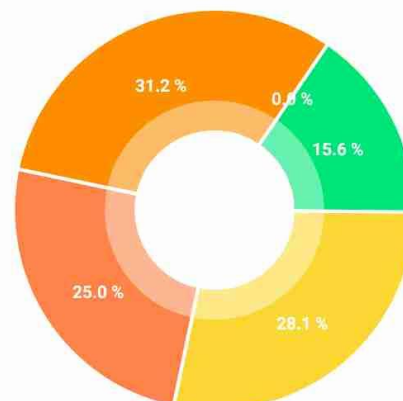
- Well taken over by government. - 5
- Well coordinated between irrigation, transpor...
- The fund was well utilized. - 3
- All of the above - 3
- None of the above - 17



If no, why?

PIE CHART

- Not taken over by Government of Kerala. - 0
- Non-coordination between the government d...
- Improper usage of fund - 9
- All of the above - 8
- None of the above - 10





THE INTERVIEW DETAILS:

The interview details with V R Prasad provided with information from the point of view of a witness from Kuttanad region. He talked about the corruption in politics and the halts that came in the path of Kuttanad Package implementation strategies. Hailing from Kuttanad, he claimed that all the developments carried out here was not out of a farsightedness and the only aim was money making by the politicians and 'sustainable development of the region' and the upliftment of the people was no way the goal of corrupted political leaders of the region. (Prasad, 2021)

From his experience of working with a prominent news channel, he got to take the interviews and collect reports of various prominent personalities who would have a hand in this project. V R Prasad agrees opines that Kuttanad Package 1 cannot be considered as a successful package in terms of its implementation. He considers irresponsible government, corrupted Political leaders, lack of proper channel and responsible implementer, lack of coordination and 'loss of track of M S Swaminathan report' as the reasons for the failure of Kuttanad Package 1. (Prasad, 2021)

Prasad strongly believes that Kuttanad Package 2 will come to action if and only if there is proper channel and plan to make it a reality. He also believes that the land of Kuttanad itself need to be reworked, assessed and maintained well before implementation of any new strategies including the package as such. (Prasad, 2021)

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