# THE KERALA STATE FARMERS' DEBT RELIEF COMMISSION, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

## Suo Motu Proceedings No. 5 of 2007

**Present**
**Justice K.A.Abdul Gafoor**
**Chairman**
**And**
**Prof. M.J.Jacob**
**Shri. M.K.Bhaskaran**
**Prof. N.Chandrasekharan Nair**
**Members**

## Recommendations in relation to Palakkad District made to Government of Kerala

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This is the last among the suo motu proceedings initiated by the Kerala State Farmers' Debt Relief Commission, herein after referred to as the Commission, in the year 2007. It was based on a report submitted by one among its members Shri. M.K.Bhaskaran, who conducted a preliminary enquiry into the farmer distress in Palakkad district with notice to the revenue officials and the officials of the agriculture department. According to him there were grounds and reasons, prima-facie, to conduct a detailed enquiry as to whether Palakkad district as whole, any part thereof or any crop there was to be declared distress affected. Accordingly the Commission decided to initiate suo motu proceedings in terms of Section 5 of the Kerala Farmers' Debt Relief Commission Act 2006 (Act 1 of 2007), hereinafter indicated, for brevity, as the Act,.

Notices were issued to the representatives of the people like MPs, MLAs and presidents and members of panchayats at various levels, the related governmental agencies and departments, farmer organisations and banks including cooperative banks and lead bank notifying sittings of the Commission to collect evidence, conducted in Government Guest House, Palakkad on 3rd and 4th October 2007.

Officials including the District Collector and other revenue officials, Principal Agricultural Officer of the district, officials from Economics and Statistics Department etc. were present. Several of the representatives of the

people and secretaries of the panchayats attended the hearing. Farmers in large number and representatives of their organizations also were present to give evidence. Officials from various banks also responded to the notice of hearing.

The farmers and the representatives of their organisations described the heteroginity of the agrarian situation prevalent in the eastern and western parts of the district including the variation in rain fall and availability of water for cultivation and the difference in the cultivation operation itself. They also strenuously pleaded that due to natural calamities including the drought as well as heavy monsoon, there were consecutive crop failure and loss to farmers in the past three-four years. According to them due to non availability of sufficient farm labour, they could not carry out farming operations in time. They could not get optimum proceeds thereby. There was heavy increase in input costs because of price rise of fertilizers and pesticides and upward revision of wages of farm workers. The prices of the produces were not remunerative at all and cultivation was a loss always. The farmers could not even pay the interest of farm loans availed, much less any thing towards repayment of the principal amount. Several of them are facing threat of recovery and distress sale of their holdings. The difficulties in the tribal area of Attappady were also highlighted.

According to the officials including the District Collector, the farmers were facing serious distress due to natural calamities and fall in prices of their produce. According to bank officials remittances toward loan repayment were on a decline during the last two / three years. The representatives of people present in the enquiry also supported the plea of the farmers and submitted that the district shall be declared distress stricken.

We have to consider these aspects in the light of the authentic facts and figures on agriculture and other relevant factors. We may also have to view the geographical situation of the district in general as well.

Palakkad District lies at the footstep of the Western Ghats forming the eastern border of Kerala State. Palakkad is known as the land of Palmyra's and paddy fields. This district with mountains, vallies, forests, rivers and streams are highly rich in flora and fauna.

Palakkad was a part of erstwhile Malabar district of Madras Presidency during the British rule. After India became independent, it formed part of the Madras State. On reorganization of states in 1956 and consequent formation of Kerala State, it was made a separate district on the first of

January 1957 comprising Palakkad, Perinthalmanna, Ponnani, Ottappalam, Alathoor and Chitoor taluks. Later, on formation of Malappuram district in June 1969, major portions of Ponnani and Perinthalmanna Taluks were excluded from Palakkad district and a new taluk called Mannarkkad was formed grouping the remaining villages of erstwhile Perinthalmanna taluk. At present Palakkad district consists of two revenue divisions; namely Palakkad and Ottappalam, five taluks and hundred and sixty three villages. The taluks of Pallakkad, Alathoor and Chittoor form part of Palakkad revenue division and the remaining two taluks of Ottapplam and Mannarkkad form part of Ottappalam revenue division. For the purpose of local administration the district is divided into thirteen block panchayats and ninety grama panchayats, apart from four municipalities

The population of the district as per 2001 census is 2617072 with 1265794 males and 1351278 females. The sex ratio of the people of the district is 1068 females for 1000 males. The density of the population of the district is 584 persons per Sq. Km. as against the State wise rate of 819. Literacy rate is 84.31%. Altogether there are 85638 cultivators and 317192 agricultural workers in the district. As per 1991 census there were 444998 individual households.

The total area of the district is 4480 Sq.miles. Out of this, 1360 Sq.miles are covered by forests. Major part of the district falls in the mid land region with an elevation of 75 to 215 meters. Nelliampathy and Parambikulam areas of Chittoor taluk in the South and Attappady and Malampuzha area in the North are the high land regions with an elevation over 250 meters. Total cropped area of the district in comparison with that in other district, along with other related details, for the last two years is as follows.

**2004-05**

| Sl. No | District | Total Geographical area | Forest | Net area sown | Area sown more than once | Total cropped Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Thiruvananthapuram | 218600 | 49861 | 138424 | 43062 | 181486 |
| 2 | Kollam | 251838 | 81438 | 138050 | 51535 | 189585 |
| 3 | Pathanamthitta | 268750 | 155214 | 89836 | 27767 | 117603 |
| 4 | Alappuzha | 136058 | 0 | 93983 | 32889 | 126872 |
| 5 | Kottayam | 219550 | 8141 | 167213 | 51924 | 219137 |
| 6 | Idukki | 514962 | 260907 | 233091 | 68900 | 301991 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Eranakulam | 235319 | 8123 | 158203 | 55069 | 213272 |
| 8 | Thrissur | 299390 | 103619 | 136847 | 62009 | 198856 |
| 9 | Palakkad | 438980 | 136257 | 198474 | 126006 | 324480 |
| 10 | Malappuram | 363230 | 103417 | 195485 | 80004 | 275489 |
| 11 | Kozhikode | 233330 | 41386 | 158280 | 71548 | 229828 |
| 12 | Wayanad | 212560 | 78787 | 115892 | 92038 | 207930 |
| 13 | Kannur | 296797 | 48734 | 199414 | 58129 | 257543 |
| 14 | Kasaragod | 196133 | 5625 | 131693 | 20528 | 152221 |
| State | | 3885497 | 1081509 | 2154885 | 841408 | 2996293 |

**2005-06**

| Sl. No. | District | Net area sown | Area sown more than once | Total cropped area |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Thiruvananthapuram | 140414 | 39807 | 180221 |
| 2 | Kollam | 131975 | 57500 | 189475 |
| 3 | Pathanamthitta | 83332 | 31755 | 115087 |
| 4 | Alappuzha | 87206 | 34205 | 121411 |
| 5 | Kottayam | 168800 | 50871 | 219671 |
| 6 | Idukki | 214363 | 84299 | 298668 |
| 7 | Ernakulam | 140218 | 67905 | 208123 |
| 8 | Thrissur | 139596 | 53591 | 193187 |
| 9 | Palakkad | 220743 | 108815 | 329558 |
| 10 | Malappuram | 193067 | 82533 | 275600 |
| 11 | Kozhikkode | 158936 | 70226 | 229162 |
| 12 | Wayanad | 117984 | 94752 | 212736 |
| 13 | Kannur | 200623 | 57414 | 258037 |
| 14 | Kasaragod | 135226 | 19571 | 154797 |
| | STATE | 2132483 | 853244 | 2985727 |

Agriculture is the main occupation of the district. Paddy is the widely cultivated crop in the district. So Palakkad is also known as the ***rice bowl*** of Kerala.

Palakkad is the major food crops producing district in the State. It ranks first both in the area and production of food crops, without comparison to the other districts, as revealed from the following statistics.

Food Crops
(paddy, cereals, pulses, sugar crops, spices and condiments, fruits and vegetables)

| Sl. No. | District | 1975-76 | 1980-81 | 1985-86 | 1990-91 | 1991-92 | 1992-93 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *8* |
| 1 | Thiruvananthapuram | 154449 | 140408 | 125246 | 94533 | 89902 | 87062 |
| 2 | Kollam | 204906 | 164965 | 111220 | 108801 | 105724 | 103628 |
| 3 | Pathanamthitta | -- | -- | 51674 | 52588 | 49302 | 47733 |
| 4 | Alappuzha | 152114 | 140961 | 96277 | 98786 | 92839 | 87657 |
| 5 | Kottayam | 130112 | 102335 | 94408 | 75421 | 71650 | 71068 |
| 6 | Idukki | 104472 | 101241 | 111679 | 96882 | 99475 | 100289 |
| 7 | Eranakulam | 160710 | 163568 | 139025 | 112654 | 112804 | 113807 |
| 8 | Thrissur | 186762 | 162208 | 143247 | 120871 | 114837 | 113158 |
| 9 | Palakkad | 252492 | 270680 | 241698 | 233260 | 235745 | 237995 |
| 10 | Malappuram | 183385 | 163222 | 140386 | 137767 | 136010 | 133049 |
| 11 | Kozhikode | 129370 | 124465 | 72449 | 77637 | 75964 | 71695 |
| 12 | Wayanad | -- | -- | 68298 | 77412 | 84240 | 88440 |
| 13 | Kannur | 250433 | 243948 | 124338 | 136333 | 141105 | 140544 |
| 14 | Kasaragod | - | -- | 86263 | 73237 | 70661 | 73836 |
| | **State** | **1909205** | **1778001** | **1606208** | **1496182** | **1480258** | **1469961** |

| Sl. No. | District | 1993-94 | 1994-95 | 1995-96 | 1996-97 | 1997-98 | 1998-99 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1* | *2* | *9* | *10* | *11* | *12* | *13* | *14* |
| 1 | Thiruvananthapuram | 85022 | 78691 | 82274 | 76451 | 73461 | 74657 |
| 2 | Kollam | 103987 | 95955 | 98449 | 106055 | 105914 | 95562 |
| 3 | Pathanamthitta | 44464 | 43453 | 41516 | 41068 | 37457 | 34808 |
| 4 | Alappuzha | 82132 | 89155 | 81006 | 77292 | 75912 | 68831 |
| 5 | Kottayam | 68888 | 64278 | 639111 | 62541 | 53082 | 52439 |
| 6 | Idukki | 101475 | 110444 | 118230 | 120675 | 127613 | 125432 |
| 7 | Eranakulam | 107695 | 105028 | 103830 | 100799 | 96849 | 97908 |
| 8 | Thrissur | 115448 | 110067 | 108725 | 100432 | 86101 | 83994 |
| 9 | Palakkad | 232620 | 227176 | 236598 | 218785 | 213045 | 193647 |
| 10 | Malappuram | 130584 | 123575 | 118827 | 115355 | 111604 | 105730 |
| 11 | Kozhikode | 71102 | 73290 | 76809 | 72868 | 73878 | 74420 |
| 12 | Wayanad | 95242 | 102466 | 103231 | 100061 | 97685 | 100628 |
| 13 | Kannur | 140626 | 139950 | 137931 | 139391 | 130532 | 127378 |
| 14 | Kasaragod | 76017 | 71160 | 70053 | 66776 | 62758 | 59864 |
| | **State** | **1454302** | **1434688** | **1441390** | **1398549** | **1345891** | **1295298** |

| | District | 1999-2000 | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | Thiruvananthapuram | 74184 | 73502 | 71638 | 69405 |
| 2 | Kollam | 91577 | 90781 | 86939 | 81854 |
| 3 | Pathanamthitta | 36898 | 39166 | 39761 | 39889 |
| 4 | Alappuzha | 69709 | 70890 | 65062 | 60203 |
| 5 | Kottayam | 56784 | 60340 | 59094 | 55415 |
| 6 | Idukki | 135992 | 136896 | 142081 | 145944 |
| 7 | Eranakulam | 96263 | 92064 | 92371 | 91585 |
| 8 | Thrissur | 90141 | 88591 | 86444 | 89808 |
| 9 | Palakkad | 194026 | 203077 | 206484 | 204718 |
| 10 | Malappuram | 114312 | 114417 | 118016 | 119794 |
| 11 | Kozhikode | 77076 | 76803 | 77301 | 72360 |
| 12 | Wayanad | 112808 | 111690 | 104030 | 106138 |
| 13 | Kannur | 123636 | 126216 | 122048 | 119676 |
| 14 | Kasaragod | 62594 | 64643 | 64140 | 64907 |
| | State | 1336000 | 1349076 | 1335409 | 1321696 |

The position still remains the same.

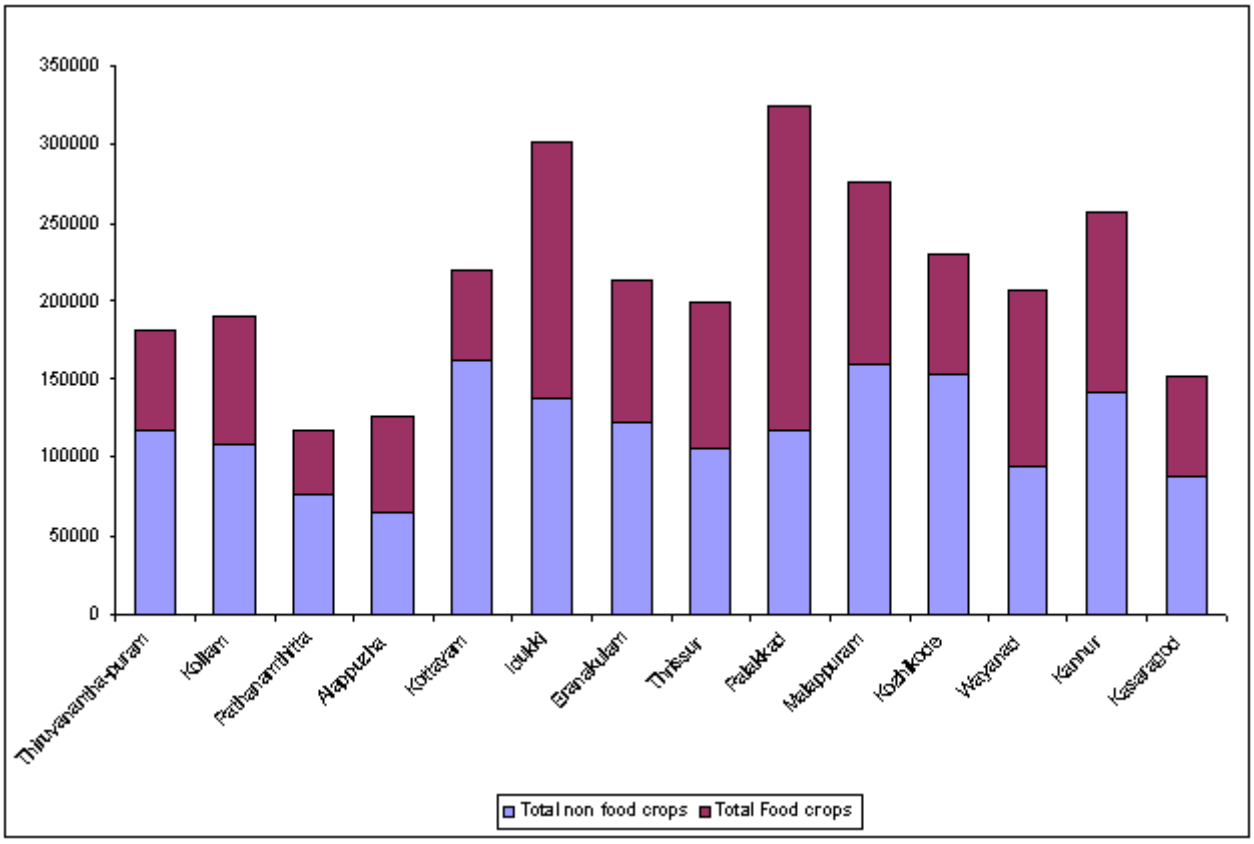
2004-05

(Area in Ha)

| Sl. No. | District | Total food grains |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Thiruvanantha-puram | 5250 |
| 2 | Kollam | 9498 |
| 3 | Pathanamthitta | 4366 |
| 4 | Alappuzha | 32169 |
| 5 | Kottayam | 13616 |
| 6 | Idukki | 3743 |
| 7 | Eranakulam | 28262 |
| 8 | Thrissur | 36688 |
| 9 | Palakkad | 120398 |
| 10 | Malappuram | 17097 |
| 11 | Kozhikode | 4763 |
| 12 | Wayanad | 11970 |
| 13 | Kannur | 9787 |
| 14 | Kasaragod | 5699 |
| State | | 303306 |

In the matter of ratio between food crop and non-food crop production, Palakkad produces more food crops than non-food crops.

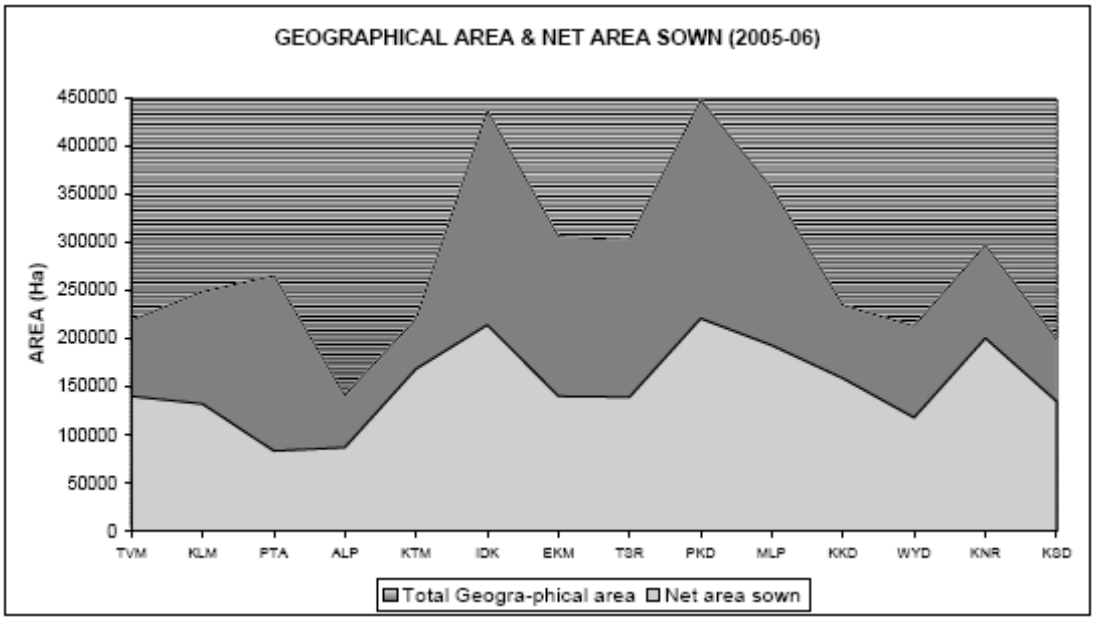
**Ratio of food crop area to non food crop area (2004-04)**




But the most disheartening feature is the reduction in the production of food grains since 1996-97. The slight increase recorded since 1999-2000 was not sufficient to reach the level of 1997-98.

As in everywhere in the State, in Palakkad also, farmers are withdrawing from paddy cultivation, it being not remunerative due to rise in input cost, non-availability of farm labour and low price level. So the rice cultivating area has decreased considerably and the farmers are migrating to other better crops. Even then Palakkad district occupies the first place among the paddy producing area in the State. In Palakkad different varieties of crops like sugarcane, groundnut, tomato, etc are also cultivated. In the hilly region rubber is the main crop. Different varieties of vegetables are also cultivated in the district all over. Tamarind, Neem, Mango and Palm trees are grown in abundance in Palakkad. The district is supposed to be a major center in the State for Mango and Tamarind.

The climate of the district is comparatively hot and humid in most part of the year. So Palakkad is considered to be one among the hottest places in the State. At the same time there is sufficient rainfall during monsoon seasons.



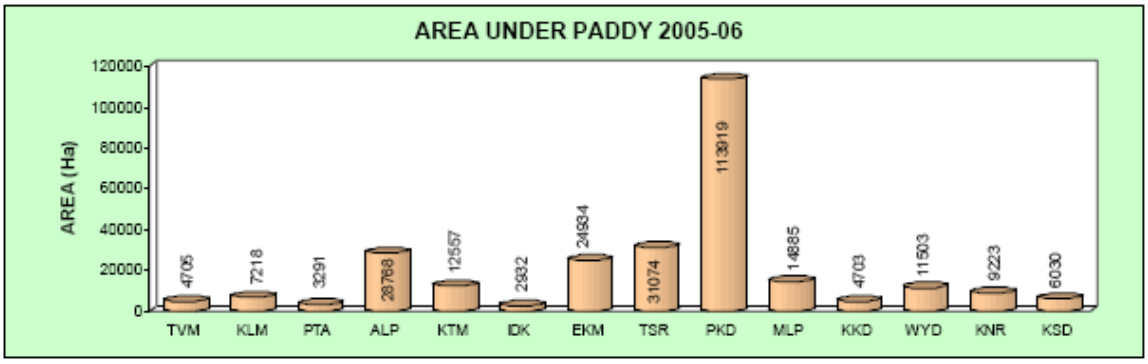

The district is blessed with several rivers which are the tributaries of great river Bharathapuzha where number of dams have been constructed; the largest being Malampuzha dam. Parambikulam and Udumalpett are the other important dams in the district.

Now we will consider each of the main crops grown in Palakkad district. As already mentioned Palakkad occupies the first position in the State for paddy cultivation. The district wise area breakup of paddy cultivation in 2004-05 is as shown below.

2004-05
(Area in Ha)

| Sl. No. | District | Paddy | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Autumn | Winter | Summer | Total |
| 1 | Thiruvananthapuram | 2621 | 2573 | 2 | 5196 |
| 2 | Kollam | 3589 | 5360 | - | 8949 |
| 3 | Pathanamthitta | 834 | 1803 | 1702 | 4339 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Alappuzha | 6366 | 13801 | 11991 | 32158 |
| 5 | Kottayam | 2881 | 7108 | 3172 | 13161 |
| 6 | Idukki | 1147 | 1862 | 157 | 3166 |
| 7 | Eranakulam | 10797 | 12486 | 4862 | 28145 |
| 8 | Thrissur | 9641 | 18052 | 8658 | 36351 |
| 9 | Palakkad | 54409 | 56200 | 420 | 111029 |
| 10 | Malappuram | 4697 | 10462 | 1590 | 16749 |
| 11 | Kozhikode | 431 | 3548 | 644 | 4623 |
| 12 | Wayanad | 0 | 90 07 | 2324 | 11331 |
| 13 | Kannur | 4877 | 4107 | 118 | 9102 |
| 14 | Kasaragod | 3059 | 2524 | 92 | 5675 |
| State | | 105349 | 148893 | 35732 | 289974 |




The area and production of paddy in Palakkad district during the last decade can be reduced into the following table.

Paddy- **Area of Cultivation in Hactares and Production in Tonnes And Pductivity Dist/State kg/ha**

| Year | Area | Production | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1996-97 | 128359 | 294065 | 871361 | 2291 / 2023 |
| 1997-98 | 120809 | 262494 | 764610 | 2173 / 1975 |
| 1998-99 | 107467 | 237788 | 726743 | 2213 / 2061 |
| 1999-00 | 109704 | 250911 | 770686 | 2287 / 2203 |
| 2000-01 | 118701 | 262173 | 751328 | 2209 / 2162 |
| 2001-02 | 115904 | 269302 | 703504 | 2323 / 2182 |
| 2002-03 | 115910 | 243926 | 688859 | 2104 / 2218 |
| 2003-04 | 105131 | 189443 | 570045 | 1802 / 1984 |

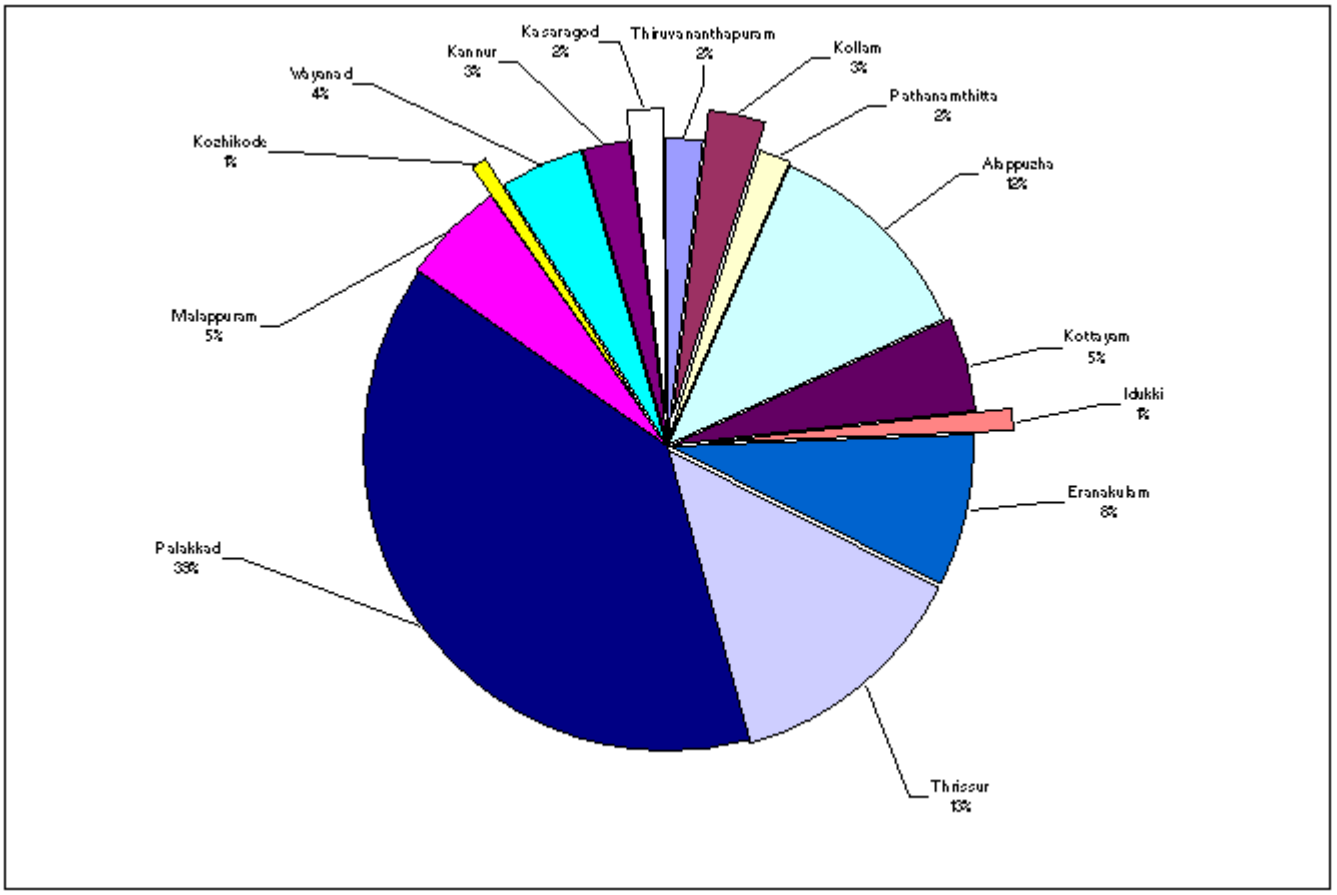
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004-05 | 111029 | 260118 | 667105 | 2343 / 3430* |
| 2005-06 | 113919 | 266634 | 629987 | 2341 / 2299^ |

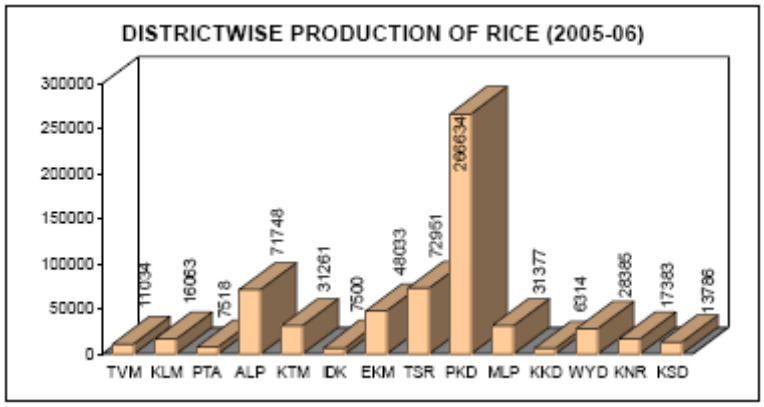
* Winter seaon; and 3494 (autmn) and 3823 (summer)
^ Winter seaon; and 2163 (autmn) and 2733 (summer)

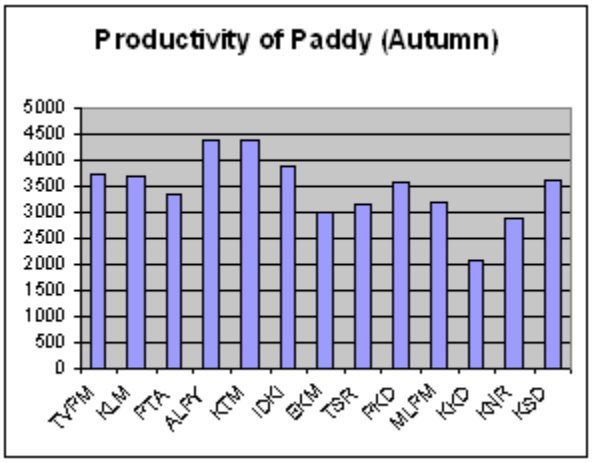
These details reveal a good picture of increase in paddy cultivation during the last two years, though not to the level of 1996-97, with a better productivity rate. More the more at all times productivity of paddy was the highest in Palakkad district as compared to the State wise rate.

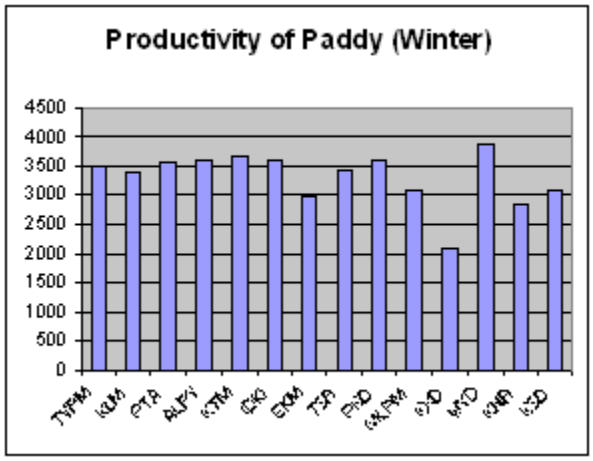
Palakkad ranks first without any comparison with other districts, obviously, in the matter of paddy production also. Palakkad has the dominancy in paddy cultivation.

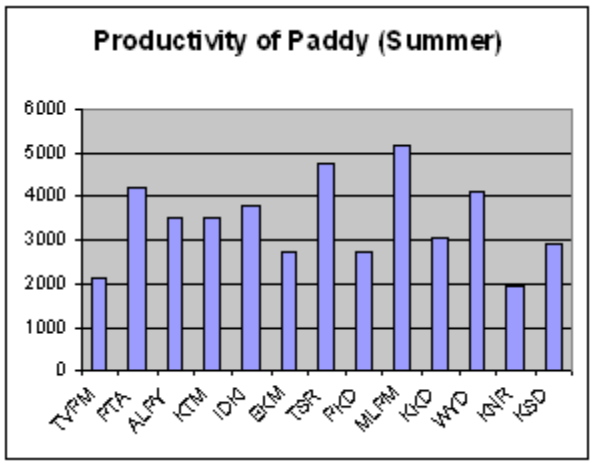
**Production of Rice 2004 - 05**




DISTRICTWISE PRODUCTION OF RICE (2005-06)
300000
250000
200000
150000
100000
50000
0
11034
16063
7518
71748
31261
7500
48033
72951
266634
31377
6314
28385
17383
13786
TVM KLM PTA ALP KTM IDK EKM TSR PKD MLP KKD WYD KNR KSD


Productivity of Paddy (Autumn)
5000
4500
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
TVPM
KLM
PTA
ALPY
KTM
IDKI
EKM
TSR
PKD
MLPM
KKD
KNR
KSD


Productivity of Paddy (Winter)
4500
4000
3500
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0




Though Palakkad has better productivity during Autumn and Winter crops of paddy, in summer it is too low because of the drought like conditions and scarcity of irrigation water. There was wide spread complaints from the farmers that during summer water from Malampuzha dam was reserved for drinking purpose alone and that the farmers and their fields were not benefited out of this project.

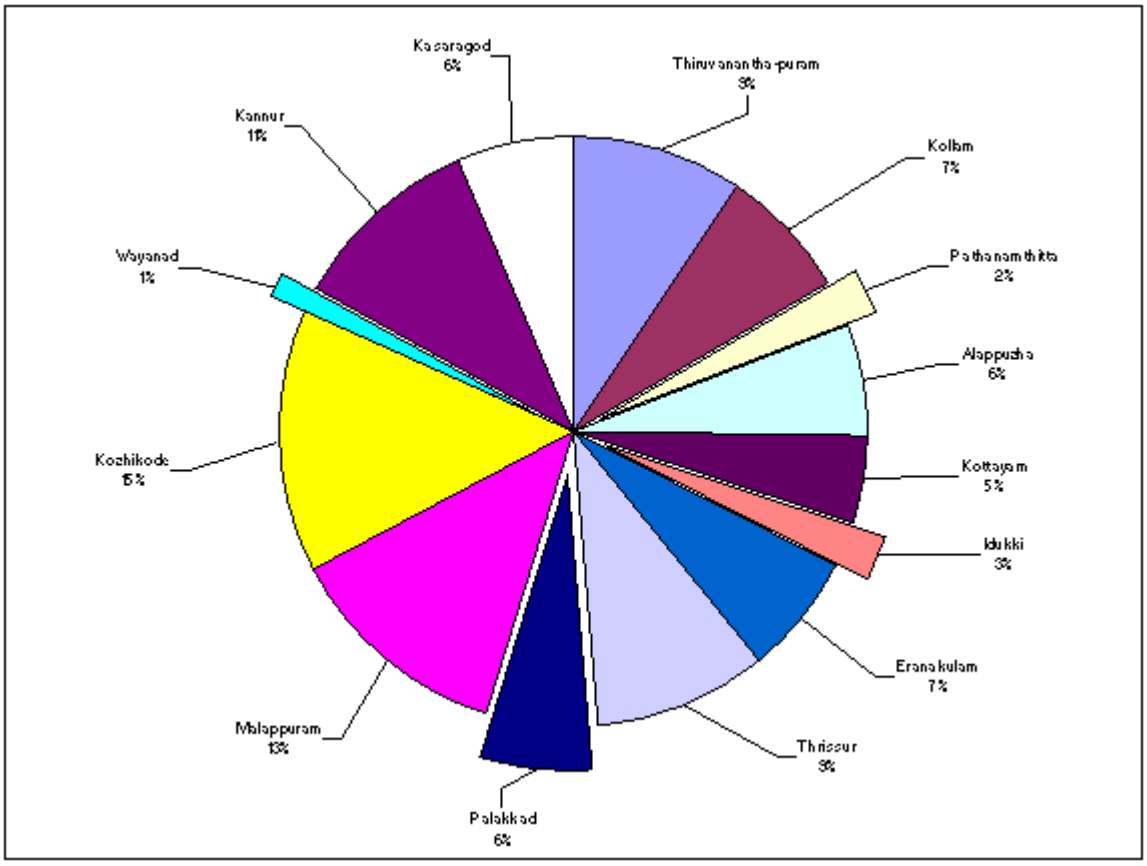
When the aforesaid details are considered together, it cannot be said that paddy farmers are distressed for the purpose of rendering debt relief. Any how this will not preclude them from applying individually to declare distressed, placing sufficient proof and then claim appropriate debt relief.

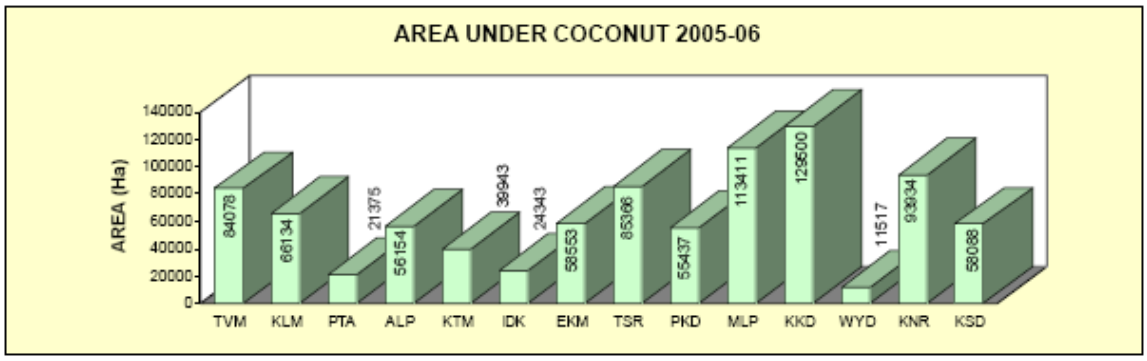
Coconut is another important crop in the district to be considered. The relevant statistical data are as follows.

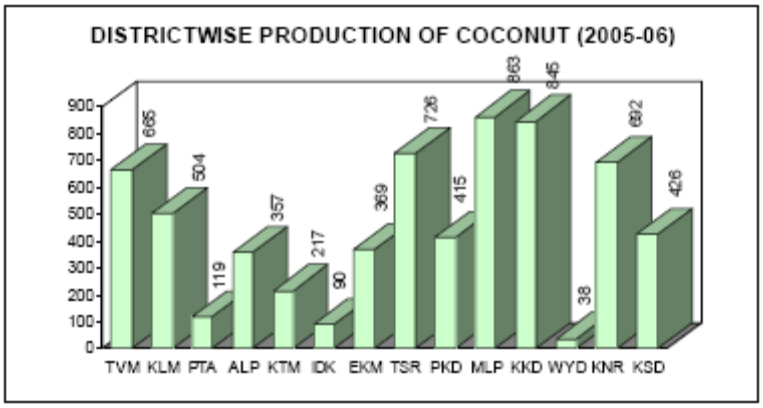
**Coconut - Area of Cultivation in Hactares and Production (Million nuts) And Pductivity Dist/State Nuts/ha**

| Year | Area | Production | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1996-97 | 46037 | 202 | 5276 | 4388 / 5276 |
| 1997-98 | 48929 | 237 | 5210 | 4844 / 5891 |
| 1998-99 | 45439 | 194 | 5132 | 4269 / 5817 |
| 1999-00 | 45857 | 218 | 5680 | 4574 / 6140 |
| 2000-01 | 46393 | 252` | 5536 | 5432 / 5980 |
| 2001-02 | 50568 | 284 | 5479 | 5616 / 6049 |
| 2002-03 | 53207 | 363 | 5709 | 6822 / 6349 |
| 2003-04 | 55655 | 380 | 5876 | 6828 / 6540 |
| 2004-05 | 55533 | 344 | 6001 | 6195 / 6673 |
| 2005-06 | 55437 | 415 | 6326 | 7486 / 7046 |

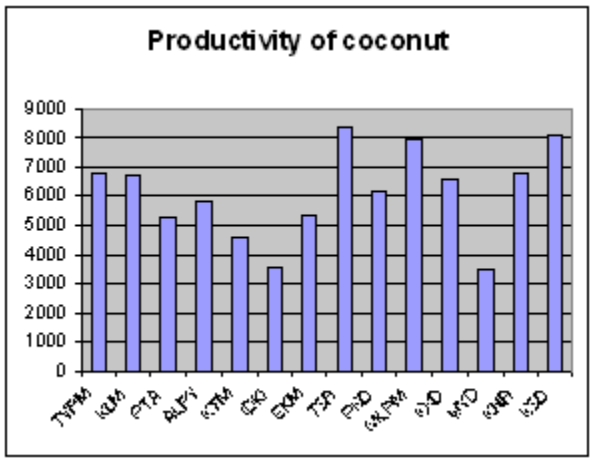
# Area under coconut 2004 - 05

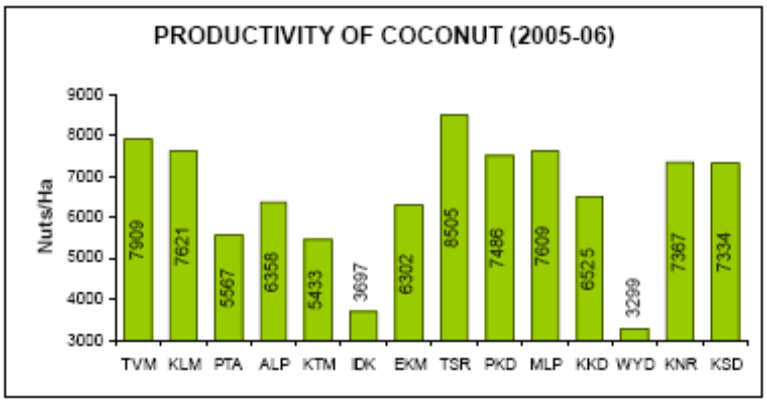





**2004-05**




Generally speaking coconut cultivating area is on increase in Palakkad except the nominal fall experienced and noticed in the last two years. Even then it is higher than in 2002-03. At the same time the net production is on definite increase; except in the year 2004-05, which is attributable to the drought experienced in the year 2003. But the increased production in 2005-

06 was really encouraging. It testifies that the drought of 2003 did not leave any telling effects beyond one year.

In the light of this better productivity rate, not withstanding the adverse circumstances faced by coconut growers all over the State, like the pests yellow leaves disease etc.; which have to be addressed in a different plane, the crop cannot be considered distressed.

Ground Nut -Area Production and Productivity (only in Palakkad)

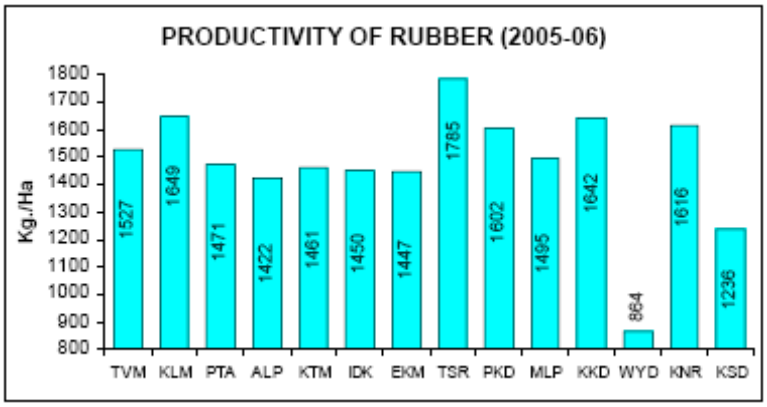
| Year | Area(ha) | Prodn(tonn) | Prdvty-Kg/ha |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1999-00 | 6920 | 5144 | 743 |
| 2000-01 | 3676 | 2733 | 743 |
| 2001-02 | 2437 | 1812 | 744 |
| 2002-03 | 2422 | 1801 | 744 |
| 2003-04 | 2687 | 1988 | 740 |
| 2004-05 | 1346 | 996 | n.a |
| 2005-06 | 3299 | 2441 | n.a |

The aforesaid data on area of cultivation and productivity reveal that the groundnut has stability in every respect. The sharp decline in production experienced in 2004-05 is attributable to the drought in the previous year. The crop has picked up better later.

Rubber is also widely grown in about 30,000 ha in Palakad district. Details on rubber are as under.

**Rubber-Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 28781 | 31235 | 572820 | 1085 / 1067 |
| **2000-01** | 28993 | 31619 | 579866 | 1093 / 1222 |
| **2001-02** | 28985 | 31759 | 580350 | 1096 / 1222 |
| **2002-03** | 29064 | 34334 | 594917 | 1181 / 1250 |
| **2003-04** | 29612 | 40915 | 655134 | 1382 / 1368 |
| **2004-05** | 29900 | 43353 | 690778 | n . a |
| **2005-06** | 31951 | 51184 | 739225 | 1602 / 1495 |




Productivity is on remarkable increase. The price tag of the commodity is very attractive. The rubber growers are on very better prospects as compared to other cultivators.

But arecanut cultivators are experiencing difficulties of different pests and diseases, low productivity and fall in price. The relative data are as follows.

**Arecanut-Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 3786 | 2320 | 83337 | 613 / 1017 |
| **2000-01** | 4241 | 2859 | 87947 | 674 / 1007 |
| **2001-02** | 4026 | 4007 | 84679 | 995 / 909 |
| **2002-03** | 4936 | 5706 | 107279 | 1156 / 1100 |
| **2003-04** | 5963 | 6615 | 105490 | 1109 / 1029 |
| **2004-05** | 6464 | 6248 | 110340 | 967 / 1026 |
| **2005-06** | 6466 | 6290 | 119309 | 973 / 1099 |

Price rate has fallen down from 58 paise per nut on June 2004 to 48 paise in June 2006. It has not picked up later in tune with the increase in input cost. We have already, in our recommendation in relation to Kasargod district, recommended to Government to declare this crop distress affected. At that time we have taken note of the written opinion of Government that areca farmers are in real distress. Accepting that view of Government in our recommendation in relation to Government made on 18th March 2008, we have recommended to declare this crop distress affected. If that is accepted, necessarily, the areca growers in Palakkad also will be benefited. So, this crop shall be considered distressed.

Palakkad produces Cotton as well. The productivity remains static for the last several years, as revealed from the following table.

**Cotton - Area of Cultivation in Hactares and Production(No of bales of 170 Kg ) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha) (only in Palakkad District)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdvty |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 4772 | 7702 | 274 |
| **2000-01** | 3847 | 6209 | 274 |
| **2001-02** | 3760 | 6069 | 274 |
| **2002-03** | 3400 | 5488 | 274 |
| **2003-04** | 2949 | 4748 | 274 |
| **2004-05** | 1472 | 2370 | 274 |
| **2005-06** | 2655 | 3452 | 221 |

The statistics also reveal that the cultivators were leaving this crop, because it is not attractive nor remunerative. The story of cotton growers in Vidharba is very notorious. The sharp fall in international cotton prices was one of the reasons for loan defaults by the farmers. The basic issues that have led to increasing number of farmers taking their lives, there, were lack of remunerative prices for cotton. The price at one stage fell from Rs.2250 to Rs.1500. Central Government declared a support price of Rs.1700. This price was not enough to cover the costs. In such circumstances we are of the view that cotton shall be declared distress affected crop.

Sugarcane is grown in Chittor taluk and also in Attappady area. The relevant data to be examined are shown in the table below.

**Sugarcane- Area of Cultivation (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 2713 | 33473 | 57882 | 12338 / 10014 |
| **2000-01** | 1643 | 13977 | 27555 | 8507 / 8184 |
| **2001-02** | 1610 | 13696 | 26978 | 8507 / 8258 |
| **2002-03** | 1989 | 16920 | 31283 | 8507 / 8324 |
| **2003-04** | 1592 | 13548 | 29098 | 8510 / 8231 |
| **2004-05** | 790 | 6723 | 15430 | 8510 / 8032 |
| **2005-06** | 360 | 3485 | 9165 | 9681 / 7500 |

Chittoor sugar mill on which the sugar cane growers are depending is not functioning since 2003, except for refining spirit. The company has to pay off a net amount of 3.75 crores to sugar cane cultivators towards the sugarcane supplied. The cultivators are now totally depending on Tamilnadu based merchants for selling out their produce. As they were not getting the price of the produce supplied to the company, they are since long depending these Tamilnadu based merchants for their financial need and therefore they are forced to sell out their produce, immediately on harvest to these merchants at the price dictated by them. This is the present state of affairs of the sugar growers presented to us by the representatives of the farmers and endorsed by the officials in the agriculture department.

The heavy decline in the area of production and productivity since 1999-2000 is sufficient to tell us a sad story of sugar cane growers. This is mainly because Chitoor taluk experienced severe drought and shortage of water during the last few years, continuously. It is to be noted that the Commissioner for land revenue had declared Chitoor taluk in Palakkad district drought affected area, in terms of Kerala Famine Relief Fund Rules 1965as per order No.LR(H) 2-975/02 dated 19.08.2002. This order was based on a report from the District Collector, Palakkad to declare Chitoor taluk a drought affected area. Accordingly the Land Revenue Commissioner declared Chitoor taluk a drought affected area from April 2002.

This continued drought in the taluk also pushed the sugar farmers against the wall. Thus, sugarcane is a distressed crop.

On the other hand pepper has comparatively a good trend in Palakkad. The increasing area of cultivation of pepper as in table below denotes that the farmers are inclined to shift to pepper.

**Pepper- Area of Cultivation in Hactares and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1999-00 | 4844 | 818 | 47543 | 169 / 240 |
| 2000-01 | 4916 | 598 | 60929 | 122 / 301 |
| 2001-02 | 5063 | 723 | 58240 | 143 / 286 |
| 2002-03 | 5482 | 778 | 67358 | 142 / 323 |
| 2003-04 | 6079 | 875 | 69018 | 144 / 319 |
| 2004-05 | 7305 | 991 | 74980 | 136 / 316 |
| 2005-06 | 7457 | 1129 | 87605 | 151 / 368 |

Production is also on steady increase though productivity did not pick up that much momentum. Of course, there was price fall. This is an adverse factor which has affected the pepper farmers. But the price is now improving. The Central Debt Waiver Scheme recently announced in Parliament on 29.02.2008 is sufficient to give relief to marginal and small holders. So there is no reason to consider the crop distress affected, merely based on the fall in price alone.

Further, the total area of pepper cultivation is less than 7500 ha. This cocstitutes only a negligible portion of the entire cropped area of 324480 ha in the district. So there is no reason now to consider the district distressed, based on the details of pepper.

The relevant data on cardamom, another crop in Palakkad district are as in table below.

**Cardamom- Area of Cultivation in Hactares and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1999-00 | 2919 | 180 | 6585 | 62 / 159 |
| 2000-01 | 2921 | 176 | 7580 | 60 / 184 |
| 2001-02 | 2754 | 190 | 8380 | 69 / 203 |
| 2002-03 | 2754 | 201 | 8680 | 73 / 210 |
| 2003-04 | 2754 | 213 | 8875 | 77 / 215 |
| 2004-05 | 2756 | 229 | 8616 | n. a |
| 2005-06 | 2754 | 270 | 9765 | n. a |

The aforesaid statistics reveal that area of production of cardamom is some what static. But the productivity rate is comparatively too low in Palakkad district, so far as the cardamom is concerned. It is because of the drought like conditions experienced heavily and continuously in Palakkad district. It will tell upon the productivity of cardamom. The cardamom growers also faced adversity of pests and diseases and low shower rate during summer. We need not consider the matter in depth, as we had already recommended to Government, after conducting an enquiry in relation to Idukki district, where this crop is grown more than in Palakkad district to declare this crop distress affected. At that time and in the recommendation made to Government on 31st August 2007, we had considered this aspect in relation to Palakkad district as well. Taking into account the total area of cultivation of cardamom, there is absolutely no reason to consider the district in entirety distress stricken, based on the adversities faced by the cardamom farmers.

Any how as and when government take a decision on our recommendation mentioned above, cardamom farmers here also will be benefited.

Coffee is another crop to be considered. Coffee is grown in Palakkad district in about 4,650 hectors. It is one among the three districts where coffee is grown. The relevant data are as under.

**Coffee-Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 4650 | 1790 | 60470 | 385 / 719 |
| **2000-01** | 4650 | 1900 | 70550 | 409 / 833 |
| **2001-02** | 4650 | 3450 | 66690 | 742 / 786 |
| **2002-03** | 4650 | 2150 | 63322 | 462 / 762 |
| **2003-04** | 4650 | 2200 | 63850 | 473 / 754 |
| **2004-05** | 4650 | 2050 | 54300 | n . a |
| **2005-06** | 4650 | 2325 | 60175 | n . a |

Coffee growers faced drop in production and great fall in price. We had dealt with it in detail in our recommendations made to Government on 31st August 2008 wherein we found that these telling factors persuaded us to find that the coffee farmers were distressed. In Palakkad also coffee growers face the same problems. But, based on that alone, the entire district cannot be considered distressed, as it is cultivated only in a small region in the district. We have already recommended this crop to be declared distress stricken, in our recommendation in relation to Idukki district. Government has not taken a decision on that matter. As and when a decision is taken, the coffee growers in Palakkad alo will be able to draw consequent benefits.

Same is the position in relation to tea.

**Tea- Area of Cultivation in (ha)and Production(tones) and Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

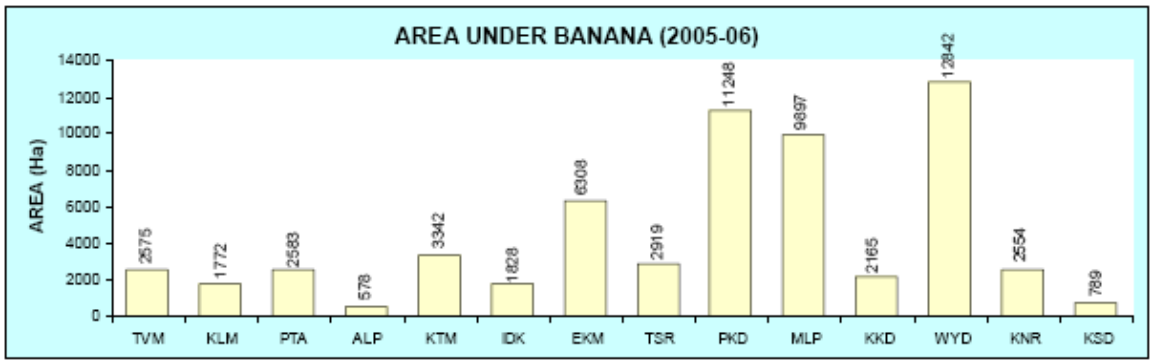
| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 840 | 2302 | 61955 | 2740 / 1781 |
| **2000-01** | 852 | 2302 | 69132 | 2702 / 1876 |
| **2001-02** | 852 | 1973 | 66090 | 2316 / 1791 |
| **2002-03** | 852 | 2124 | 55348 | 2493 / 1493 |
| **2003-04** | 852 | 2259 | 57553 | 2651 / 1502 |
| **2004-05** | 852 | 2012 | 49508 | n . a |
| **2005-06** | 852 | 1852 | 56384 | n . a |

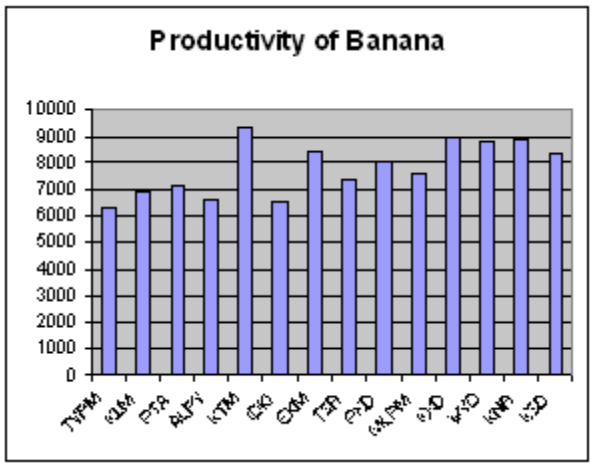
In Palakkad there are small tea growers who faced the problems of heavy fall in price and no demand for tender leaves plucked by them. In our recommendation in relation to Idukki district we have recommended to Government to declare tea a distressed crop. At that time we considered the matter in relation to other districts including Palakkad, where also the tea growers are experiencing the same problems as in Wayanad and idukki. We have already recommended this crop also to be declared distressed in our recommendations made to Government on 31-08-2008. The area of cultivation is also comparably small and it is confined to high ranges alone.

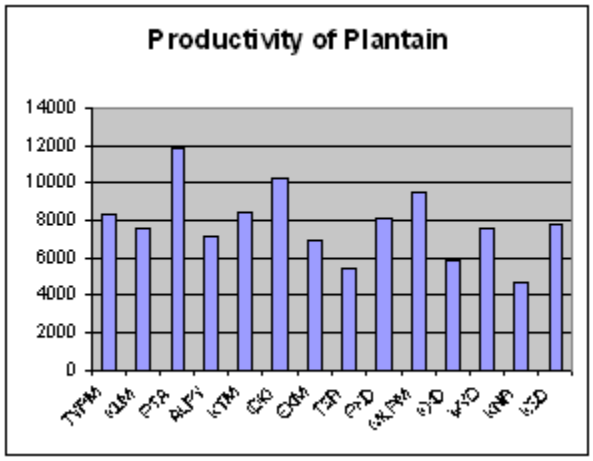
There are a host of other crops as well in Palakkad. like banana, other plantains, cashew, tapioca, mango, ginger, sweet potato, other tubers and vegetables, turmeric, tamarind, green chillies, etc.. The statistics on these crops are as under.

**Banana- Area of Cultivation (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1999-00 | 5279 | 52737 | 398145 | 9990 / 10197 |
| 2000-01 | 5931 | 40376 | 327955 | 6808 / 7278 |
| 2001-02 | 7414 | 66041 | 375903 | 8908 / 7389 |
| 2002-03 | 8155 | 65005 | 421809 | 7971 / 7577 |
| 2003-04 | 10096 | 74576 | 442220 | 7387 / 7910 |
| 2004-05 | 10705 | 86083 | 475371 | 8041 / 8076 |
| 2005-06 | 11248 | 82643 | 491823 | 7347 / 8010 |






## Other Plantains- Area of Cultivation (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1999-00 | 4268 | 34591 | `410566 | 8105 / 7710 |
| 2000-01 | 4770 | 33035 | 403695 | 6926 / 7427 |
| 2001-02 | 5671 | 47195 | 393182 | 8449 / 7125 |
| 2002-03 | 6362 | 61864 | 409282 | 9724 / 7467 |
| 2003-04 | 6363 | 59872 | 399717 | 9409 / 7472 |
| 2004-05 | 6871 | 55419 | 416115 | 8066 / 7619 |
| 2005-06 | 7092 | 63159 | 445333 | 8906 / 8064 |

## Cashew- Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 5854 | 2258 | 65547 | 386 / 733 |
| **2000-01** | 6136 | 2458 | 66178 | 401 / 718 |
| **2001-02** | 5947 | 2262 | 65867 | 380 / 73 |
| **2002-03** | 5463 | 2316 | 66087 | 424 / 746 |
| **2003-04** | 5083 | 2123 | 65655 | 418 / 760 |
| **2004-05** | 4814 | 2436 | 60584 | 506 / 743 |
| **2005-06** | 4391 | 1785 | 68262 | 407 / 872 |

## Tapioca- Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 6373 | 133282 | 2531752 | 20914 / 22621 |
| **2000-01** | 6646 | 136341 | 2586903 | 20515 / 22572 |
| **2001-02** | 5649 | 133313 | 2455880 | 23599 / 22087 |
| **2002-03** | 4960 | 105002 | 2413217 | 21170 / 23164 |
| **2003-04** | 3939 | 92021 | 2540790 | 23362 / 26945 |
| **2004-05** | 4186 | 101867 | 2400043 | 24335 / 27123 |
| **2005-06** | 3994 | 105321 | 2568284 | 26370 / 28367 |

## Mango- Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 7535 | 27930 | 257761 | 3707 / 2849 |
| **2000-01** | 8040 | 29802 | 259635 | 3707 / 2867 |
| **2001-02** | 8709 | 38224 | 305545 | 4389 / 3540 |
| **2002-03** | 8742 | 86344 | 347154 | 5352 / 4021 |
| **2003-04** | 9802 | 66664 | 384190 | 61 / 4497 |
| **2004-05** | 9999 | 95205 | 525326 | n. a |
| **2005-06** | 9991 | 95114 | 511131 | n. a |

## Ginger -Area of Cultivation in and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 1191 | 3433 | 41344 | 2882 / 3670 |
| **2000-01** | 1460 | 5699 | 42699 | 3903 / 3677 |
| **2001-02** | 1452 | 6478 | 40181 | 4461 / 3753 |
| **2002-03** | 1133 | 4196 | 32412 | 3703 / 3602 |
| **2003-04** | 902 | 1932 | 32972 | 2142 / 3872 |
| **2004-05** | 969 | 3316 | 45305 | n . a |
| **2005-06** | 1362 | 6350 | 56288 | n . a |

## Turmeric -Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 771 | 1498 | 8362 | 1943 / 2106 |
| **2000-01** | 778 | 1985 | 9037 | 2551 / 2190 |
| **2001-02** | 799 | 2152 | 7895 | 2693 / 2219 |
| **2002-03** | 698 | 1747 | 6938 | 2503 / 2210 |
| **2003-04** | 548 | 933 | 5652 | 1703 / 2037 |
| **2004-05** | 532 | 1287 | 6244 | n . a |
| **2005-06** | 799 | 2501 | 8237 | n . a |

## Sweet Potato -Area of Cultivation in Hactares and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)

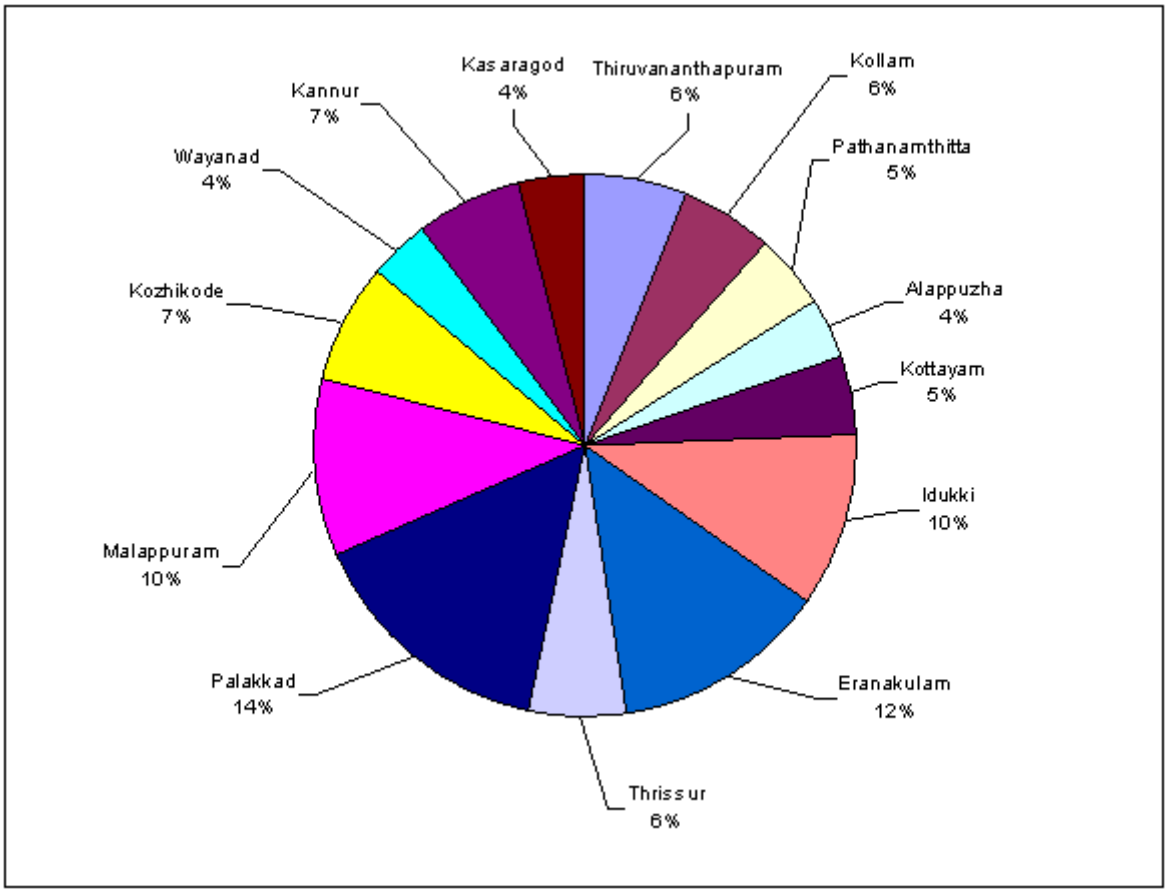
| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 519 | 4787 | 10698 | 9224 / 10817 |
| **2000-01** | 369 | 3403 | 8963 | 9222 / 10984 |
| **2001-02** | 257 | 2370 | 8672 | 9222 / 11609 |
| **2002-03** | 180 | 1660 | 10463 | 9222 / 12309 |
| **2003-04** | 330 | 3043 | 11981 | 9221 / 11957 |
| **2004-05** | 276 | 2545 | 10013 | n . a |
| **2005-06** | 129 | 1190 | 9013 | n . a |

## Tubers, Vegetables and Pulses - Area of Cultivation in Ha

| Year | Tubers | Vegetables | Pulses |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 3194 | 9728 | 1862 |
| **2000-01** | 2553 | 9695 | 1072 |
| **2001-02** | 2697 | 10661 | 1164 |
| **2002-03** | 2547 | 8810 | 541 |
| **2003-04** | 2267 | 10274 | 310 |
| **2004-05** | 2951 | 8167 | 4701* |
| **2005-06** | 2003 | 9726 | 4761* |

***Including Tur***

## Percentage of area under vegetables 2004 - 05



**Green Chillies -Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | 139 | 149 | 310 | 1072 / 994 |
| **2000-01** | 64 | 69 | 222 | 1078 / 982 |
| **2001-02** | 177 | 191 | 692 | 1079 / 1000 |
| **2002-03** | 169 | 182 | 787 | 1077 / 1005 |
| **2003-04** | 74 | 79 | 679 | 1068 / 996 |
| **2004-05** | 112 | 120 | 775 | n . a |
| **2005-06** | 412 | 441 | 1192 | n . a |

**Tamarind -Area of Cultivation in (ha) and Production(tones) And Pductivity Dist/State (Kg/ha)**

| Year | Area | Prodn | Prdn-State | Prdvty-Dist / State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1999-00** | **6236** | **769** | **29564** | **1234 / 1562** |
| **2000-01** | **6507** | **8029** | **29598** | **1234 / 1548** |
| **2001-02** | **6389** | **7883** | **29295** | **1234 / 1549** |
| **2002-03** | **6967** | **8596** | **29514** | **1234 / 1536** |
| **2003-04** | **6993** | **8601** | **29406** | **1230 / 1532** |
| **2004-05** | **7170** | **8819** | **29945** | **n. a** |
| **2005-06** | **6804** | **8395** | **28777** | **n. a** |

These statistics do not reveal any circumstance of distress in general. At the same time we are conscious that due to unforeseen climatic variations and natural calamities, the farmers cultivating these crops may suffer heavy loss and damages. Such individual farmers can apply to the Commission, with ample proof to declare them individually distress affected, so as to claim debt relief on that basis.

There were 56 farmer suicides in total in district according to the District Collector. According to the details available in Government farmer suicides in Palakkad district was bit alarming till 2006 when there were 32 instances. From 2006 there was blissful change in farmer suicides. Until March 2007 there were only 7 such incidents. Another statistics reveal that there were only 5 such instances between May 2006 and March 2007. On the basis of these details, it cannot be said that the situation in Palakkad is so alarming, warranting declaration of the district distress affected.

We have also considered the over due and outstandings in agriculture credit sector as made available to us. According to us, that the outstandings are more, alone is not a reason by itself to consider the entire district distressed.

The consideration made above reveals that the crops of cotton, sugar cane, arecanut, coffee, cardamom and tea are distressed in Palakkad district. The total area of cultivation of these crops comes only to 17737 ha. as against the total cropped area of 324480 ha in the district. It thus comes over 5% of the entire cropped area. Therefore, merely because six of the crops in the district are considered distress affected, the entire area in the district cannot be recommended to be declared distress affected.

The crop of sugar cane is cultivated, according to the information gathered at the time of hearing, mainly, in Palakkad alone, apart from the cultivation in negligible area in Marayoor in Idukky district, where also it can be considered distress affected. Cotton is cultivated in Palakkad district only. So declaration of these crops distress affected will not have any bearing on other districts.

Accordingly, evaluating the details as considered above and in exercise of the powers vested in us under Section 5(1)(a) of the Act, we recommend to Government of Kerala that **the crops of sugar cane and cotton** be declared distress affected.

Dated this the 26th day of March 2008

Justice K.A.Abdul Gafoor, Chairman

Prof. M.J.Jacob, Member

Shri. M.K.Bhaskaran, Member

and
Prof. N. Chandrasekharan Nair, Member