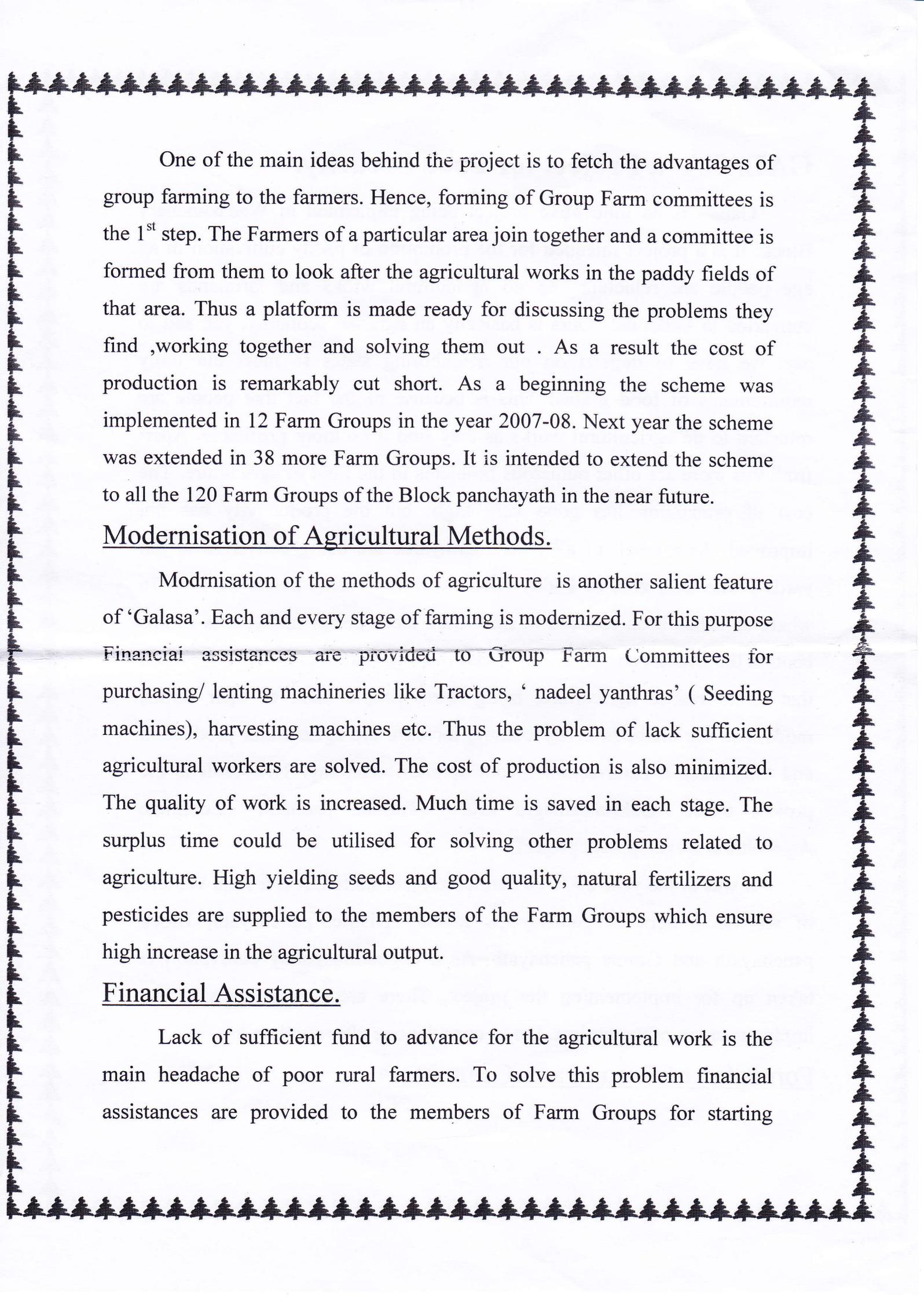


GALASA- a Project for Food Security.

Galasa is an innovative project being implemented in Wadakanchery Block. It is a project intended for the promotion of paddy cultivation in an age people are reluctant to do agricultural works and farmlands are converted to flatlands! Ours is basically an agrarian economy. yet, sad to say, we have to depend on our neighboring states to meet our daily requirements of food grains! This is because of the fact that people are reluctant to do agricultural works as they find it no more profitable. Apart from this there are other numerous problems in the field of agriculture. The cost of production has gone very high; but the productivity has not improved. As a result of all these farmyards are being converted to flat yards ! The total area of Paddy fields were 8.84 lacks hector in 1975-76 where as it has been reduced to mere 3.52 lacks hector today. It is in this context the Block Panchayath of Wadakanchery started to think of a project that could rescue agriculture, bring those people back to their farms, modernise the methods of agriculture, increase the agricultural production and thus make a resurrection of our agrarian economy. The result is the project called 'Galasa-samagra krishi vikasana padhathi' (Complete Agricultural Development project).

It was in the year 2007-08 that the project started. It is a Joint venture of all the 3 tiers of panchayaths namely District panchayath, Block panchayath and Grama panchayath. As a beginning paddy cultivation is taken up for implementing the project. There are several steps in the implementation of the project. Let us consider one after another.

Formation of Group Farm Committees.



One of the main ideas behind the project is to fetch the advantages of group farming to the farmers. Hence, forming of Group Farm committees is the 1st step. The Farmers of a particular area join together and a committee is formed from them to look after the agricultural works in the paddy fields of that area. Thus a platform is made ready for discussing the problems they find ,working together and solving them out . As a result the cost of production is remarkably cut short. As a beginning the scheme was implemented in 12 Farm Groups in the year 2007-08. Next year the scheme was extended in 38 more Farm Groups. It is intended to extend the scheme to all the 120 Farm Groups of the Block panchayath in the near future.

Modernisation of Agricultural Methods.

Modrnisation of the methods of agriculture is another salient feature of 'Galasa'. Each and every stage of farming is modernized. For this purpose Financial assistances are provided to Group Farm Committees for purchasing/ lenthing machineries like Tractors, ' nadeel yanthras' (Seeding machines), harvesting machines etc. Thus the problem of lack sufficient agricultural workers are solved. The cost of production is also minimized. The quality of work is increased. Much time is saved in each stage. The surplus time could be utilised for solving other problems related to agriculture. High yielding seeds and good quality, natural fertilizers and pesticides are supplied to the members of the Farm Groups which ensure high increase in the agricultural output.

Financial Assistance.

Lack of sufficient fund to advance for the agricultural work is the main headache of poor rural farmers. To solve this problem financial assistances are provided to the members of Farm Groups for starting

cultivation, making modern machineries and methods available etc. Revolving Funds, which have to be refunded before the close of the financial year are also provided for meeting the expenditure in the different stages of cultivation. During 2007-08 50 Farm Groups were assisted with Revolving Fund . It is intended to assist 18 more Farm Groups during the current Financial Year. The Revolving Fund made available to each Farm Group is Rs.50,000 . The 'Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana' is also providing fund for mechanizing paddy cultivation. Apart from all these Interest Free Loans are provided by the Co-operative Banks to the Farm Group Committees for improvement of agricultural works.

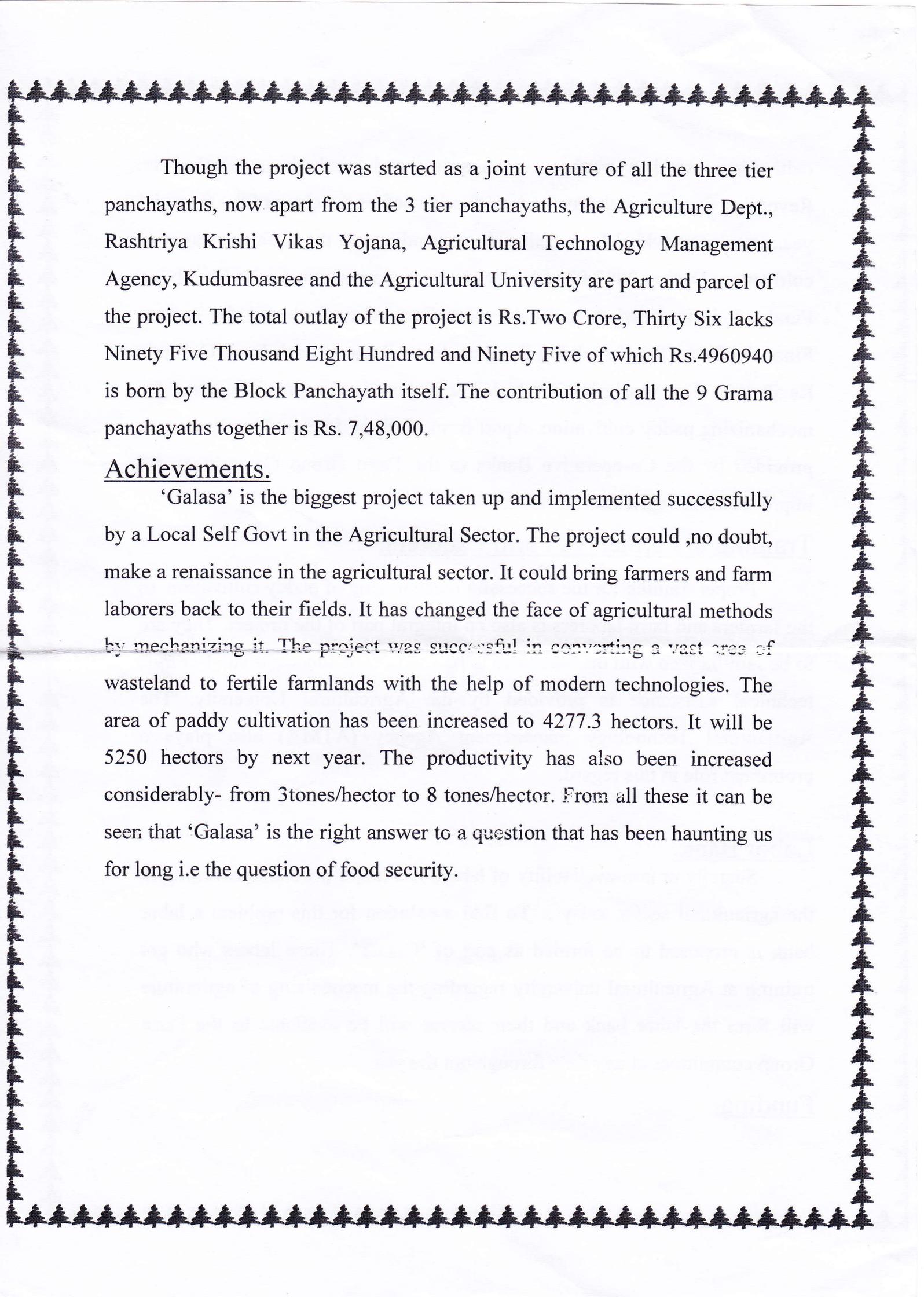
Training to Farmers & Farm Laborers.

Proper training for the successful mechanizing of paddy cultivation to the farmers and farm laborers is also an integral part of the project. They are to be familiarized with the machines to be used , their functions etc. For this, technical assistance is provided by the Agricultural University. The Agricultural Technology management Agency (ATMA) also plays a prominent role in this regard.

Labor Bank.

Scarcity or non-availability of labors is a major problem prevailing in the agricultural sector today . To find a solution for this problem a labor bank is proposed to be formed as part of 'Galasa'. Those labors who got training at Agricultural university regarding the mechanizing of agriculture will form the labor bank and their service will be available to the Farm Group committees at any time through out the year.

Funding.



Though the project was started as a joint venture of all the three tier panchayaths, now apart from the 3 tier panchayaths, the Agriculture Dept., Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Agricultural Technology Management Agency, Kudumbasree and the Agricultural University are part and parcel of the project. The total outlay of the project is Rs. Two Crore, Thirty Six lacks Ninety Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety Five of which Rs.4960940 is born by the Block Panchayath itself. The contribution of all the 9 Grama panchayaths together is Rs. 7,48,000.

Achievements.

‘Galasa’ is the biggest project taken up and implemented successfully by a Local Self Govt in the Agricultural Sector. The project could ,no doubt, make a renaissance in the agricultural sector. It could bring farmers and farm laborers back to their fields. It has changed the face of agricultural methods by mechanizing it. The project was successful in converting a vast area of wasteland to fertile farmlands with the help of modern technologies. The area of paddy cultivation has been increased to 4277.3 hectors. It will be 5250 hectors by next year. The productivity has also been increased considerably- from 3tones/hector to 8 tones/hector. From all these it can be seen that ‘Galasa’ is the right answer to a question that has been haunting us for long i.e the question of food security.