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The study attempts to ascertain the current situation of tissue cultured banana at field level with special reference to growth characteristics, extension services, socio-economic aspects, and to suggest improvements and further research.

Data was collected through a questionnaire which dealt with the above aspects of banana cultivation. The particular localities were selected as they were relatively important for banana cultivation (both tissue cultured plants and conventional plants).

A sample of 100 people including banana growers, agricultural instructors and farmers who are non growers of banana were interviewed. As a result of the preliminary study a pot experiment of 50 tissue cultured plants and 50 conventional planting material was carried out to compare the requirement of water during their establishment in the soil (first 3 months in the field). 3 water levels were used where watering was done daily at a fixed time. Number of leaves, plant height, girth size were measured every week for 3 months.

It was observed that tissue cultured banana plants need more water than conventional plants during the first 3 months in the field. When given the required amount of water, tissue cultured plants grew faster than the conventional plants.

The following features were observed through the questionnaire:

- \* There is a very high demand for disease free planting material.
- \* Tissue cultured plants produce more suckers than conventional plants, over 90% are of sword suckers.
- \* Disease problem was reported to be minimal for tissue cultured plants.
- \* It is of vital importance to commercialize the banana cultivation. Village level extension services are not at a satisfactory level to diffuse the improved cultural practices and to answer the needs of the farmers.
- \* Farmers are satisfied with the quality of the bunches they have obtained over conventional bananas. Some tissue cultured banana plants had failed to produce fruits, probably due to the use of inaccurate techniques such as extensive subculturing at the laboratory level. Therefore there was a tendency for some farmers to refuse these plants.
- \* Farmers have not received an encouragement for the use of tissue cultured banana plants.