

# From hosiery to agriculture

They are now fetching Rs. 225 for a bunch of bananas at the local market

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**TIRUPUR:** At a time when farmers are looking for alternate ventures that are pocket-friendly following steep rise in input costs and absence of reliable marketing infrastructure, three hosiery manufactures here have taken up agriculture quitting from their textile business altogether.

K. Ganesh (41), his cousin M. Palanikumar (40), and their uncle M. Palanisamy (62), all residents of Palavanchipalayam, are now successful banana farmers cultivating 'Grand-9 robusta' variety on a three acre family-owned plot.

Passion for agriculture germinated in their minds after they happened to attend an awareness campaign conducted by Department of Agriculture Engineering on 'latest agriculture practices and role of agriculture to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth' at their hamlet a few months ago.

Enthused by the orientation programme, they then joined the entourage led by officials from agriculture engineering and allied departments which went on a familiarisation trip to progressive farms located at Anamalai, Gopichettipalayam, Chennampatti and Chinnamanur areas.

The trio then plunged into cultivation with subsidy assistance



**TIME TO REJOICE:** K. Ganesh, M. Palanikumar and M. Palanisamy harvesting bananas at their farm at Palavanchipalayam.

— PHOTO: M. BALAJI

extended by agriculture and allied departments under the Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water-bodies Restoration and Management (IAMWARM) project.

"The amount has been disbursed towards establishment of micro irrigation systems and for purchase of high quality fertilizers," K. Shanmugam, Assistant Engineer, Department of Agriculture Engineering, said.

With the first harvest commenced a few days ago, Mr. Ganesh, Mr. Palanikumar and Mr. Palanisamy are ecstatic as their 'babes' had given them good yield.

"Thanks to adoption of modern

farming practices as advised by the department officials, we have obtained healthy bunches with each having an average of 120 bananas against the projected average of 100 bananas," Mr. Palanikumar told *The Hindu*.

Owing to it, the 'businessmen-turned-farmers' were fetching Rs. 225 a bunch at the local market itself.

"This is indeed one of the highest rates received for a bunch of G-9 robusta variety in the state," Mr. Shanmugam said.

Euphoric over the productivity, Mr. Palanisamy and his nephews now plan to expand their area of cultivation by another two acres shortly.