

(7) Name of the Innovation: “Elarajan” variety of small cardamom.

A. Nature of the innovation

Shri. K.J Benny, Kalarikal, Puliyanmala, Idukki developed the variety through mass selection method. It belongs to cultivar Vazhukka. The plants are robust in nature attains a height of above 3 meters. This variety is characterized with uniform bold capsules of 8 to 9 mm size. The capsules are green in colour and the number of capsules per panicle is very high. On an average, this variety takes 80 days for capsules to become mature after flowering. Seeds per capsules are 23 to 26 and provide the yield of about 2500 kg capsules per hectare.



B. Problem statement

High yielding varieties, which are cultivated by farmers, are highly prone to pest & disease incidence. The need for high yielding variety coupled with inherent disease and pest resistance led to the innovation of “Elarajan” with excellent growth and yield attributing characters.

C. Process of technology development

The Vazhukka variety of cardamom has been widely grown in the region where Benny lives. Sebastian, a cardamom grower from the same village developed an improved variety named Njallani and received a National award from NIF in 2001. His achievement was widely covered by the media. This made Benny realize the possibility of developing new improved variety of cardamom himself. The seeds of Vazhukka variety were collected from his field for plantation. When the plants were about 1 foot high, they were transplanted to a polythene bag and later to soil when they became 2 feet high.



Out of the 500 seedlings he prepared, he noticed five plants with vigorous growth bearing bold cardamom capsules. He further observed and selected one plant and propagated through suckers. He planted them nearby his kitchen so that the growth could be closely observed. They also showed the same characteristics. Lengthy panicles with bold seeds (9mm capsules) having more than 70 tillers were noticed as the unique features. After 5 years of efforts, in 2007 Benny could stabilize the characteristics of this high yielding cardamom variety. He named it as Elarajan meaning the king of cardamom. When shared with his father and brother they were also amazed seeing the bold seeds and high productivity.

The major advantages of the innovation are:-

The variety is moderately resistant to disease and pests as well. The variety, Elarajan has the characteristics of short plant height, more number of panicles per plant and green coloured capsules with high recovery of 20 percent.

D. Replication and promotion

Around 75,000 plants are distributed till now from 2011 onwards to 2500 farmers in various places like Kerala and border districts of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu covering about 1000 acres of land.

E. Recognition

In March 2011, Benny was selected by NIF for participating in the Innovations' Exhibition at the President House, New Delhi, which he considers as one of the most prestigious moments of his life. "This is a lifetime achievement for an ordinary person like me", exclaims Benny.

	Name & Address	K.J. Benny Kalarickal House, Puliyamala P.O., 685 515 Idukki, Kerala
Phone no.		9447027663
Educational qualification		Pre-degree
Land holding (in ha)		2.8
Farming experience		25 yrs
Name of the crop/ Livestock/ other enterprises		Cardamom, Pepper
Social recognition		Nil