

Rejuvenation of coconut gardens in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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Overview

Coconut is one of the most important crops which have great significance in improving economic, social and cultural status of small and marginal farmer. The coconut is a perennial crop and is unique in that once it starts flowering, the production phase lasts almost through out the year and all through its life. A normal tree produces an inflorescence which finally gives rise to mature nuts in about twelve months after the date of opening of the flower. In a normal tree growing under suitable conditions, there is a continuous process of fruit production right from the primordial stage of the flower to the final mature nut which becomes ready for harvest at intervals of about thirty to forty days.

In the wake of changes in climate experienced in the regions, coconut plantations are affected by number of diseases affecting production and productivity of coconut. Most of the plantations are very old and without any management. The low level of the coconut productivity is due to the reluctance of the growers to remove the senile palms, dense plantation and lack of proper management. Due to prevalence of disease coupled with high population of old and senile palms, productivity is low compared below the national average. Therefore efforts are to be made to cut/remove senile/disease affected palms by



Old and senile plantation

replanting with good quality seedlings and maintaining optimum density of 175 palms per hectare.

Major initiative has been launched by Government of India, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation by implementing the pilot project on Replanting and Rejuvenation of coconut gardens in the affected districts of Kerala and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This project was implemented for improving productivity by cutting old, senile palms, replanting with good quality seedlings and rejuvenation of the existing gardens by adopting integrated management practices. In Andaman and Nicobar Islands the total cultivable area is 50,000 ha and about 25,600 ha area is under coconut. The project is sanctioned with a total outlay of Rs.2275.64 crore and central subsidy of Rs.478.504 crore over

the remaining three years of the XI plan.

Components of the Project

The project is designed to be implemented in a farmer participatory mode in contiguous areas for visible impact. The components includes rejuvenation of the existing coconut palms by integrated management practices which follows balance nutrition, proper irrigation and drainage, growing of green manure crops, intercultural operations etc. To overcome the dense population of coconut palms a component i.e cutting and removal of all old senile, unproductive and disease advanced palms is formulated which is followed by a systematic replanting programme which aims at 50% replantation to maintain optimum and

sustainable density. For smooth implementation of the programme and to achieve the targets proper training and capacity building will be imparted to the farmers in scientific management of coconut palms.

Assistance provided for implementation

For adoption of integrated management practices a subsidy of Rs.15000/ha will be provided in two installments of Rs.7500/- each. The eligibility for availing assistance is 4ha per beneficiary.

For cutting and removal of old, senile, unproductive palms a subsidy @ Rs. 500 per palm for first 20 palms, Rs. 250/- per palm for subsequent removed palms, subject to maximum of Rs.13000/ha shall be provided to the farmers.

For replanting of disease tolerant dwarf and hybrids in the



Cutting and removal of old and senile palms

identified areas it is proposed to provide subsidy @ Rs.20/- per seedlings.

Status of Implementation

As a prelude to implementation, farmers of the area were summarized on the details of the projects. A survey was conducted

to study the details of the number of palms to be cut and removed, seedlings to be replanted, integrated management practices to be carried and accordingly total amount was earmarked.

With the objective to provide balanced nutrition to the existing coconut palms as well as to the new seedlings for better production a total of 1091.49MT of Neem Manure,18923.50 kgs of micronutrients,18854.0kgs of bio-pesticides were distributed to the beneficiaries. To control the most voracious rhinoceros beetle and to manage the nuisance of rats a total 2500 nos. of rat trap and 12539 nos. of Pheromone trap and Lure were distributed to the farmers. (Table-1)

Under the programme, cutting of old, senile and unproductive palms about 666 beneficiaries were benefited by cutting 4962 coconut palms till now with an expenditure of Rs.24.810lakh. Replanting of 3323 good quality coconut seedlings was done in the projected areas of the islands. The productivity of coconut has considerably improved in the project areas especially Carnicobar zone. The rejuvenation of coconut gardens was carried in many areas of A&N Islands and during the three phases of the

Year wise distribution of agri-inputs for rejuvenation of coconut gardens (Table -1)

S. No.	Particulars	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
1.	Neem Manure (inMT)	311.49	176.0	304.0	300.00
2.	Multi micronutrient (in kgs)	3323.5	-	11200.0	4400.0
3.	<i>Trichoderma viridae</i> (in kgs)	2769.5	3080.0	3500.0	-
4.	<i>Pseudomonas fluroscense</i> (in kgs)	2769.5	-	-	-
5.	VAM (in kgs)	1385.0	-	-	-
6.	Pheromone trap (in nos.)	-	1760	-	2500
7.	Pheromone Lure (in nos.)	-	1760	3519	3000
8.	Rat Trap (Metallic) (in nos)	-	-	2500	-
9.	NPK (19:19:19) (in kgs)	-	-	-	800.
10.	<i>Beauveria basianna</i> (in kgs)	-	-	-	5350.0

Year wise Physical and Financial achievement of the project – Replanting and Rejuvenation of Coconut gardens in A & N Islands. (Table-2)

Sl No	Particulars	Target		Fund Release	Physical Achievement		Financial Achievement (₹ in Lakh)
		Phy.in Ha/Nos	Fin. (₹ in Lakh)		Area (Ha)/ nos.	No. of Beneficiary	
(2009 March,10)							
i)	Cutting and removal of disease affects/Senile Coconut Palm @ ₹500/- per palm	2122 Nos.	10.61	10.61	1106 Nos.	300	5.53
ii)	Replanting with coconut seedlings @ ₹ 20/- per palm.	5000 Nos.	1.00	0.20	-	-	-
iii) Rejuvenation of Coconut Gardens							
	1 st installment	346.1 ha	25.96	25.96	346.10 ha	420	25.96
	2 nd installment	346ha	25.96	25.96	346.10 ha	420	25.96
	1 st installment	800 ha	60.00	33.00	440 ha	450	33.0
2011-12							
i)	Cutting and removal of disease affected/ Senile Coconut Palm @ ₹.500/- per palm	8000 Nos.	40.00	25.00	533 Nos	21	2.665
ii)	Replanting with coconut seedlings @ ₹. 20/- per palm	4000 Nos.	0.80	1.00	-	-	-
iii) Rejuvenation of Coconut Gardens							
	1 st installment	800 ha	60.00	37.50	500 ha	664	37.50
	2 nd installment	440.0 ha	33.00	33.00	440 ha	450	37.50
2012-13							
i)	Cutting and removal of disease affects/Senile Coconut Palm @ ₹. 500/- per palm	8000 Nos.	40.00	25.00	3323 Nos.	345	16.615
ii)	Replanting with coconut seedlings @ ₹.20/- per palm	5000 Nos.	1.00	1.0	3323 Nos.	345	0.6646
iii) Rejuvenation of Coconut Gardens							
	1 st installment	800 ha	60.00	37.50	500 ha	670	37.50
	2 nd installment	500 ha	37.50	37.50	500 ha	188	37.50



Rejuvenation of Coconut Gardens

year a total of 1786 ha area of coconut plantation has been rejuvenated with an expenditure of Rs.234.92 lakh. The outcome of the efforts taken in the project is remarkable. (Table-2)

There is no doubt that the rejuvenation and replanting responds well and this plantation sector will improve an important component of country's agrarian economy for its contribution to the GDP, employment generation and benefit the growers, workers and stakeholder.

Exporters registered with CDB exceeds 1000

The number of coconut exporters registered with CDB exceeded 1000. Majority of the registered exporters are from Tamil nadu followed by Kerala and Maharashtra. Large number of exporters registered with the Board are exporting fresh coconut and they contribute to nearly 40% of the total registered exports. It is expected that during 2013-14, the total value of coconut export will cross Rs.2000 crores. For the first time, India's coconut product exports excluding coir and coir products had recorded the value of Rs. 1000 crores during 2012-13.