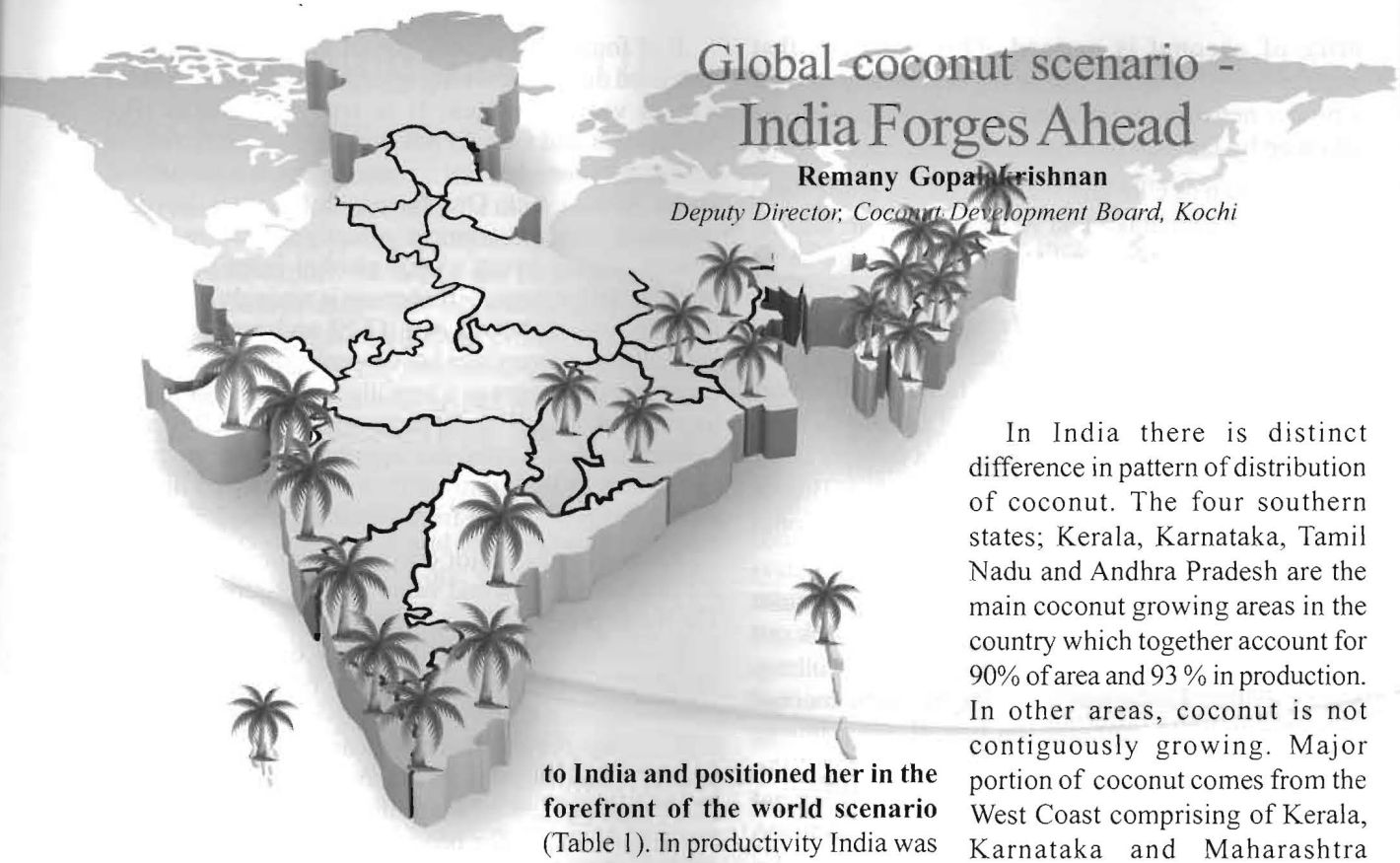


Global coconut scenario - India Forges Ahead

Remany Gopalakrishnan
Deputy Director, Coconut Development Board, Kochi

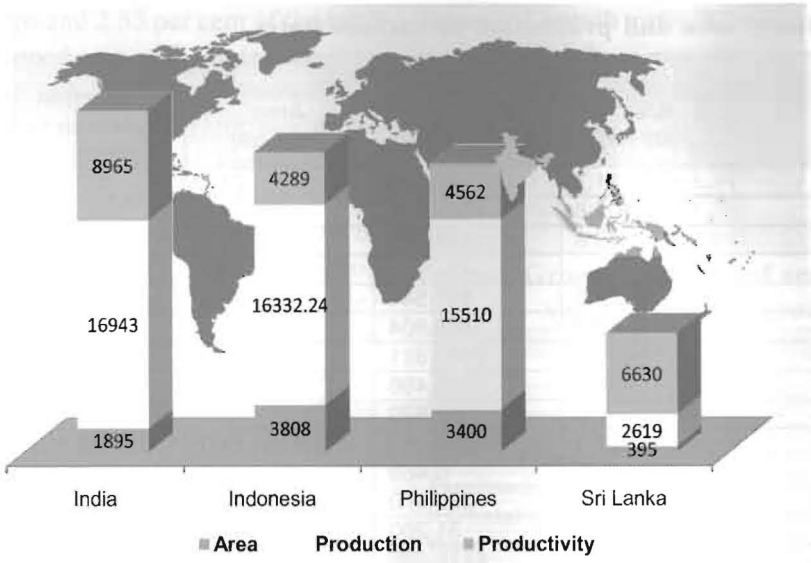
India's population has crossed 1210 million and the country has to feed her entire population. No doubt, food products are becoming scarce day by day. It is in this context, coconut as a food and beverage crop is qualified to be placed at the epitome of food sector.

India was positioned as third in area, second in production and first in productivity till recently with 1.89 million ha of area, 15,730 million nuts of annual production and 8,303 nuts per ha of productivity. This position was as per the statistics released in 2008-09. The latest statistics released by the Horticulture Division of Ministry of Agriculture was in Metric tonnes and the production figure was 10.84 million MT which in terms of whole nuts is equivalent to 16943 million nuts. **This production level gives a facelift to India and positioned her in the forefront of the world scenario** (Table 1). In productivity India was already enjoying the number one status. Now the country could retain the status with a higher level of productivity of 8965 nuts per ha. Indonesia is in the second position with 16,332 million coconuts, followed by Philippines and Sri Lanka with 15,510 million and 2,619 million nuts respectively. These four countries together hold about 74.91% of the total area under coconut and contribute 73.61% to the coconut production in the world. World production of coconut is 64,897 million nuts from an area of 12.15 million ha (Table 2).

In India there is distinct difference in pattern of distribution of coconut. The four southern states; Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are the main coconut growing areas in the country which together account for 90% of area and 93 % in production. In other areas, coconut is not contiguously growing. Major portion of coconut comes from the West Coast comprising of Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra followed by the East Coast of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. The Islands of Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep and the coastal regions of Gujarat are the other traditional coconut areas. Coconut has made inroads to the interior areas of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu which were hitherto considered as non-congenial areas for coconut. In non-traditional states like Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh also coconut cultivation has gained momentum.

Table-1. Coconut area, production and productivity of major coconut producing countries (2010)

Country	Area ('000 ha)	Production (Million nuts)	Productivity (Nuts/ha)
India	1895	16943.00	8965
Indonesia	3808	16332.24	4289
Philippines	3400	15510.00	4562
Sri Lanka	395	2619.00	6630



India is spearheading in expanding the crop

Bestowed with most congenial agro climatic conditions, diverse soil types and abundant water resources, coconut cultivation in India is making inroads and the area under the crop attained more or less a linear growth pattern. There has been perceptible increase in coconut area since the last six decades starting from 1950. Area was increased from 63,000 ha to 18.9 lakh ha with an increase of 18.27 lakh ha. In production too this increase was visible. Production recorded an increase from 3280 million nuts to 16,943 million nuts during this period. Productivity, though was not in commensurate with the pace of area and production it increased from 5238 nuts per ha to 8965 nuts per ha. The formation of Coconut Development Board and its field level network in the length and breadth of the country especially the starting of Demonstration cum Seed Production Farms in different agro climatic conditions in 1980s was instrumental for the expansion of the crop nation wide giving a national image to the crop. The growth rate recorded during the 20 year period from the formation of the Board in area was 2.64 per cent, production 3.88 per cent and productivity 1.21 percent (Table 3) It would be pertinent to have a look at the rate of growth achieved by various states in the country during the same period. While Kerala recorded a growth rate of 1.59, 2.838 and 1.228 in area production and productivity, the growth in respect of Tamil Nadu the next neighboring state was 5.2, 4.667, -0.508. Karnataka's achievement was 3.347, 3.369 and 0.02 while that of Andhra Pradesh was 4.7, 9.889 and 4.94 respectively.

The growth rate achieved by the country in coconut sector during the 10 year period after the formation of CDB was more than what the country had achieved in 30 years of pre CDB. But the years followed, failed to keep the same tempo. The cyclone hit in Andhra Pradesh in 1996 and in Odisha in 1999 pushed the country backward and many states often recorded a negative growth rate. The out break of eriophyd mite in Kerala and its vertical and horizontal spread had left sleepless nights to coconut farmers in the country. This aggravated the setback and thereafter the country never performed well and could not keep the pace of the first half of post CDB period (Table 4). Moreover, the state of Kerala which occupied 51 % of area in the beginning of the turn of the century has lost 16.77% area. This set back continues to reflect in the overall performance of the country. This is vivid from the data that growth in area in the last 10 years was only less than half percent despite the country's achievement in production recording a growth rate of 2.73%. Only states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka recorded tangible increase in area, production and productivity. The rate of growth was 2.41, 6.33 and 3.83 in the case of Tamil Nadu and 2.78, 6.31 and 3.44 in Karanataka. Only Gujarat was in an equable position which recorded growth rate of 3.96, 8.12 and 3.96 respectively during the same period. Therefore it is high time to evolve new strategies for improving coconut area and production. This article reveals among other things the present state of affairs of each state in coconut cultivation. This will help enable to streamline the development strategy for the future.

Kerala, the state which once enjoyed the premier position in coconut cultivation and production is now scarce of suitable land for expanding area under coconut. Instead, the growth in real estate and speedier urbanization and faster

Table-2. Coconut area and production in various states

Sl. No.	State	2009-10		2010-11	
		Area ('000 ha)	Production (Million nuts)	Area ('000 ha)	Production (Million nuts)
1	Andaman & Nicobar Island	21.7	87.528	21.7	102.220
2	Andhra Pradesh	104.0	1042.521	104.0	1042.521
3	Assam	18.8	157.863	18.8	157.863
4	Chattisgargh			0.7	9.847
5	Goa	25.6	137.544	25.6	137.544
6	Gujarat #	16.0	168.804	16.0	168.804
8	Karnataka #	419.0	2339.811	419.0	2339.811
9	Kerala	788.0	6239.496	788.0	6239.496
10	Lakshadweep	2.7	62.520	2.7	62.520
11	Maharashtra	21.0	187.560	21.0	187.560
12	Nagaland	0.9	0.469	0.9	0.469
13	Odisha	51.0	296.970	51.0	296.970
14	Puduchery	2.1	31.260	2.1	31.260
15	Tamilnadu	390.0	5770.596	390.0	5770.596
16	Tripura	5.8	12.504	5.8	12.504
17	West Bengal	28.6	382.935	28.6	382.935
	Total	**1895.2**	**16918.381**	**1895.9**	**16942.920**

Source :Advisor(Hort), Horticulture Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India
#Coconut Estimate for 2009-10

substitution of coconut area for more remunerative crops like rubber have resulted in decelerating growth in area under coconut. However, the growing population warrants increase in production of coconut in the state. Despite its 28 per cent share in the total cropped area in the state, the state is losing its share to other competitive states. The share in area and production of coconut reached 42 and 37 per cent respectively. There are about 3.5 million holdings and 42 lakh families in the state which depend on coconut for their livelihood. The average size of coconut holdings in the state is only 0.2 ha. The contribution of the crop to the annual income of the state is around 15 per cent and to the agricultural income is 35 per cent. Of the 14 districts in the state, 11 are having area more than 11000 ha. The toppers in area and production are the districts of Kozhikode and Malappuram and these districts possess more than 1 lakh ha under coconut. Total area under coconut in the state is 7.88 lakh ha.

Tamil Nadu ranks second in production of coconut in the country. Coconut occupies 4.7 per cent of the total cropped area of the state and is the largest horticultural crop grown in the state. It is grown in all the 28 districts of the state and the present area is 4.19 lakh ha, as per the statistics released by the state government. Major coconut growing districts which are in forefront with maximum area under coconut are Coimbatore, Tirupur, Thanjavur, Dindigal, Kanyakumari, Krishnangiri, Velloor, Theni, Salem, Thirunelveli and Erode. Area in these districts ranges from 10,000 ha to 80,000 ha. In productivity too Tamil Nadu has in credit distinctive records. The production of coconut which was pegged at 1945 million nuts in 1985 has now reached to 58,942 million nuts. Thus Tamil Nadu has overtaken the lead in production of coconut of Kerala. Coconut cultivation and allied industries have now become the main source of livelihood and employment security for the chunk of the population in the state. It has been reported that there are 3.52 lakh coconut holdings in the state of which 95.4 per cent are less than 1.25 ha. There are coconut based industries in the state which provide employment opportunities to more than a lakh people in the state. Tender coconut market is another typical example of State's pioneering spirit in coming to the forefront. Tamil Nadu has emerged as the hub of coconut market and Pollachi the hub of tender coconut market in the country.

Karnataka accounts for around 22 per cent of area under and 14 per cent of production of coconut in the country. Coconut is the second largest horticultural crop of the state occupying 31 per cent of the total area under horticultural

crops and 2.85 per cent of the total cropped area of the state. The crop is grown in all the districts of the state and is mainly grown under rainfed conditions. The total area under coconut in the state is 4.19 lakhs ha. The annual production of coconut in the state is 2340 million nuts. Despite the area under coconut being the second highest in the country, the state recorded a lowest productivity. Among the coconut growing districts Tumkur ranks first in area and production of coconut in the state. The other important districts are Hassan, Chitradurga, Chickamangalore, Mandya, Mysore, Uduppi, South Karnataka, Ramanagaram, Davengere and Chamarajnagar. All these districts are having more than 10,000 ha. About 95 per cent of the edible copra produced in the country is Karnataka's share. Similarly Karnataka hold the hegemony of desiccated coconut powder production. Maddur in Mandya district is considered as the largest tender coconut market in the country. The first manufacturing unit of packaged tender coconut water unit in the country was established in Maddur during 1999 with the technology developed by CDB and DFRL Mysore.

Andhra Pradesh is the fourth largest coconut growing state in the country. East and West Godavary, Srikakulam and Vishakapattinam are the districts in forefront in coconut area. In productivity almost all districts show higher level. The state accounts for 5.50 per cent in area and 6.15 per cent of production of coconut in the country. Total area under coconut is 1.14 lakh ha.

Table-3. Growth rate (%) of area, production and productivity in various coconut growing states (1980-2000)

	Area	Production	Productivity
Kerala	1.590	2.838	1.228
Tamilnadu	5.201	4.667	-0.508
Karnataka	3.347	3.369	0.021
Andhra Pradesh	4.712	9.889	4.944
All India	**2.641**	**3.882**	**1.209**

Table-4. Growth rate (%) of area, production and productivity in various coconut growing states (2000-2010)

	Area	Production	Productivity
All India	0.48	2.73	2.25
Kerala	-1.83	-0.46	1.39
Assam	-0.74	1.56	2.31
Andhra Pradesh	0.13	1.11	0.98
Tamilnadu	2.41	6.33	3.83
Karnataka	2.78	6.31	3.44
West Bengal	0.00	-0.78	-1.11
Odisha	2.37	8.09	5.62
Maharashtra	3.20	-7.64	-10.49
Tripura	10.27	-17.97	-25.39
Goa	0.30	0.31	0.01
Gujarat	3.96	8.12	3.96
Andaman & Nicobar Island	-1.60	-0.51	1.11
Puduchery	-0.49	3.49	4.05
Lakshadweep	0.07	0.84	3.67

In West Bengal coconut is grown in 28,600 ha. Murshidabad, 24 South Parganas, Midnapore East, 24 East Parganas, Howrah, Midnapore West, and Koochbehar are the districts in forefront. Goa is another traditional coconut growing state. North Goa and South Goa cultivate coconut in 25, 600 ha. Odisha is another state which recorded unprecedented increase in coconut cultivation. Puri, Gangam, Cuttack, Nayagar and Khurda are the districts where coconut is grown more. Area under coconut in the state is 53,000 ha. The growth rate recorded by the state for the last 10 years is 2.37 and in production in 8 %. In productivity it was 5.62 per cent. Maharastra too is a fast growing state in the country in coconut sector. Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Raigad and Thane are the premier coconut growing districts, which together contribute a production of 187 million nuts from 22, 259 ha. Gujarat is another state in the West Coast. Junaghat, Bhavnagar and Valsad are the leading districts. Coconut is spread in 16, 600 ha in Gujarat producing 16.88 crores with productivity of 10,343 coconut per ha.

Coconut is grown in 3 UTs viz., Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry. In Andaman, coconut is largely grown in Car Nicobar, Carmorta, South Andaman, Rangat, Camban Bay, Diglipur and Little Andaman spreading in 21, 700 ha producing 102 million nuts. Coconut in Lakshdweep has got many unique features. Coconut crop is cultivated there in organic way. Area under coconut is 2, 700 ha and production is 62.5 million nuts. With the highest productivity level of 20, 000 nuts per

Table-5. Districtwise area, production and productivity of south Indian states having 25000 ha. or more under coconut cultivation (2009-10)

Districts	Area ('000 ha)	Production (Million nuts)	Productivity (Nuts/ha)
Kerala			
Kozhikode	119166	8680	7284
Malappuram	108380	10630	9808
Kannur	78024	4790	6139
Thrissur	77509	5380	6941
Thiruvananthapuram	71376	5910	8280
Palakkad	57186	4170	7292
Kollam	56675	4120	7270
Kasaragod	54224	4160	7672
Ernakulam	44475	2350	5284
Alappuzha	39816	2570	6455
Kottayam	28185	1410	5003
Tamilnadu			
Coimbatore	79532	11508	14470
Tirupur	47826	1848	3864
Thanjavur	32077	4951	15435
Dindigul	27113	5474	20190
Karnataka (2008-09)			
Tumkur	132587	9945.66	7501
Hassan	61880	3471.67	5610
Chitradurga	42563	2915.91	6851
Chikmaglur	37990	1844.78	4856
Andhra Pradesh			
West Godavari	50247	5273.82	10496

ha this small Island occupies the number one position in the country in productivity. Puducherry, Mahi, Yanam and Karackal are the coconut growing districts in Puducherry. Coconut growing area is 2, 100 ha and production is 31.26 million nuts. Productivity is 14, 549 nuts per ha.

The North Eastern states viz., Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland are setting records in coconut expansion. Coconut cultivation was in a very limited extent in the beginning of 2000. Today the districts in Assam viz., Nagon, Barpetta, Kamrupa, Sonitpur, Nalbari, Golaghat, Kachar, Karimganj, Morigav, Udalpuri, Darang, Bongagaon, Baska and Shivsagar are leading in coconut cultivation. Area ranges from 500 to 2000 ha in these states. The South and West districts of Tripura are making inroads in coconut cultivation. Nagaland also cultivates coconut in 920 ha. At present among the North Eastern states, the states reflected in the national statistics released by the Central Government are only Assam, Tripura and Nagaland. Board has taken effective steps to spread coconut cultivation in all suitable belts of North Eastern regions and disturbed areas in the country.

The fifth state in the country next to the southern four states is Odisha with 53000 ha. In the country there are 20 districts with more than 25, 000 ha, 11 in Kerala, 4 in Tamil Nadu, 4 in Karnataka and 1 in Andhra Pradesh (Table 5). Board is in the process of evolving separate development agenda for these districts by opening field units for bestowing special attention in implementing development programmes.

Besides Coconut Development Board, State department of Agriculture, Horticulture, State Agricultural Universities, Research Institutes and other related organizations in government and private sector contribute to the over all growth of Indian coconut sector.

Coconut Cultivars in India-the Best in the World

The varieties and cultivars of coconut grown in the country are the best performers and are mostly released by research institutions and State Agricultural Universities through selection and hybridization. The local Talls of Kerala are, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Goa are West Coast Tall, East Coast Tall, Tiptur Tall, Lakshadweep Ordinary, Goan Tall and Sakhigopal. The growing preference of dwarf for tender nut variety resulted in the release of varieties suitable for tender nut. Chowghat Orange Dwarf is suitable variety for tender coconut. Chowghat Green Dwarf has been released under the name Kalpasree which is mainly utilized for crossing programme in root wilt tolerant hybrids. Gangabondam, a local semi dwarf variety from Andhra Pradesh is also cultivated in selected areas (Table 6&7).

India is the first country where hybrid vigour was first exploited in coconut. It was in 1932 by Dr. J. S. Patel, by evolving a TxD coconut at Nileshwaram, Kerala. Many Tall x

Table-6. Tall cultivars released in India

Varieties of coconut	Characteristics
Chandra Kalpa	Drought tolerant, High oil content
Kera Chandra	High yield
Kalpa Prathibha	Drought tolerant, High oil content
Kalpa Mithra	Drought tolerant, High oil content
Kalpadhenu	Drought tolerant, High oil content
Kalpatharu	Drought tolerant, High oil content, Suitable for ball copra
Prathap	High yield
Kamrup	High yield
Aliyarnagar Tall	High yield
VPM-3	High yield, Drought tolerant
Kera Bastar	Drought tolerant
Kerakerala	Drought tolerant
Aliyar Nagar tall-2	Drought tolerant

Table-7. Dwarf cultivars released in India

Varieties of coconut	Characteristics
COD	Suitable for tender coconut
Kalparaksha	Root-wilt tolerant, High yield
Kalpashree	High oil content, High yield
Gauthamiganga-4	Dwarf, High yield, suitable for tender coconut

Table-8. Hybrid cultivars developed in India

Hybrids	Parental Combinations
Chandra Sankara	CODxWCT
Kera Sankara	WCT x COD
Chandra Laksha	LOxCOD
Laksha Ganga	LOxGB
Ananda Ganga	AOxGB
Kera Ganga	WCTxGB
Kera Sree	WCTxMYD
Kalpa Sankara	CGD x WCT
Kalpa Samrudhi	MYDxWCT
Kera Sowbagya	WCTxSS Apricot
VHC-1	ECT x DG
VHC-2	ECTxMYD
VHC -3	ECTxMOD
Godavari Ganga	ECT x GB
Konkan Bhatye Coconut Hybrid 1	

Dwarf and Dwarf x Tall parental combinations have been evolved in the country. Besides intra varietal hybrids like Tall x Tall and Dwarf x Dwarf are also produced in the crop improvement programme of disease and drought tolerant varieties. Hybrids in general are high yielders and comparatively disease and drought tolerant. In India, so far 15 hybrids have been evolved by various research institutions (Table 8).

Besides Malayan Green Dwarf has been released as a suitable variety for root wilt affected areas under the name Kalparaksha. Other cultivars released through selection are Kalpadhenu, Goudamiganga, Kalpaprathibha, Kalpamithra, Chandrakalpa, Kerachandra, Kalpatharu. Kalpadhenu is recommended for Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Andhra Pradesh. Kalpa Prathibha is suitable for Kerala, Maharastra, Tamil Nadu, and coastal Andhra. Kalpamithra is for Kerala and West Bengal and Chandra kalpa is for Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharastra and Kerachandra for West Coast, coastal Andhra, and West Bengal. Kalpatharu is recommended for Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Released cultivars Pradap, Kamarupa, Kera Bastar, Kalyani and Kerakerala are suitable for the respective states.

Research on plantation crops including coconut received adequate attention under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Central Plantation Crops Research Institute under ICAR is the mandated organization for coconut research among other plantation crops. State Agricultural Universities, other ICAR Institutes, Agriculture, Horticulture Departments of States, UTs, organizations like, NAFED, Kerafed, Marketfed etc. and private institutions are involved in the research and development of coconut in the country.

Consumption Pattern and Demand Projection - Poised for a leap

Coconut is utilised both as tender nut and mature nut. Now nuts are categorized as temple nuts too. The coconut utilised for industrial purpose is 35-40 percent consumed for traditional uses is 50 percent and tender nut purpose is 15 per cent. Milling copra and coconut oil continues to be the major commercial products from coconut. Barring the 50 percent consumed for traditional usage, 15

Chandrasankara

Chowghat Orange Dwarf

Kalpasankara

per cent is utilized for tender coconut. Roughly 30-35 per cent is used for milling copra for oil extraction.

Out of the total production of coconut oil, it is estimated that 40 per cent is consumed for edible purpose, 46 per cent for toiletry use and about 14 per cent for industrial uses. The demand for coconut oil for edible uses is mainly confined to Kerala and to lesser extent in Tamil Nadu. At the all India level the toiletry sector is the major consumer of coconut oil, since coconut oil is used throughout the country as a hair oil and body massage oil either as such or in medicated form. In the production of toilet soaps, liquid soaps, shaving cream and natural shampoo coconut oil finds use as an important raw material. The efforts of the Board is dovetailed in such a way that minimum 40% of the balance 50 % is to be converted into value added products and 25% into tender nut purpose. The rest 25 % only need be diverted to copra and oil purposes. This indicates that India is a country where entire production is utilized domestically. Domestic markets are huge and if the demand is fully met India's production is quite insignificant to feed the Indian population.

Board is now developing innovative marketing strategies for the marketing of coconut products within the country. A country where the population has crossed 1210 million, annual production of 16, 943 million coconuts gives a per head availability of 14 nuts only. To begin with, the Board is concentrating on 63 cities where the population is more than 10 lakhs or in the state capitals or tourists centres. Production of coconut products will be accelerated, so also the marketing of products. Hereafter coconut sector has to rely increasingly on non traditional products and explore new markets. Tender coconut water is becoming the world's finest natural drink and its demand in bottled form is growing manifold. Apart from tender coconut water, in the product basket identified by the Board there are coconut cream, coconut milk, milk powder, coconut chips, ice cream, desiccated coconut powder and ball copra. India will try to cash in the opportunity by finding markets and promoting all the products in these cities.

Board is also trying to popularize the sweet sap tapped from the immature inflorescence of coconut. This product has drawn the attention of many, especially in south India as one of the potential products of future which can bring prosperity in coconut sector. The sweet sap can be further processed into down stream products like palm jaggery, syrup, honey, granulated sugar etc., In countries like Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand tapping and value addition of products have gone a long way and they earn sizeable export value out of it. India, especially traditional coconut growing states like Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, will try to follow the suit to widen its coconut based economy and to attract more farmers and entrepreneurs to coconut farming. Board is trying to create sufficient manpower of neera technicians to work in this sector. India will thus shine in production of neera and its down stream products to compete with other countries.

New Development Strategy and Programmes to Position India in the Forefront

India has already attained the prestigious status of number one position in production and productivity. The turn is now to flourish in export and marketing sector.

At present India is not coming under the first 22 countries in value addition and first 25 countries in export. This back seat driving is not suited for a country like India which has topped in many other areas. Though productivity of the country is number one among other major players the country has not fully exploited its vast potential. Many states and Union Territories achieved the productivity level of even upto 20, 000 nuts per ha where the average national productivity is only 8965 nuts per ha. The country has therefore to go a long way.

The productivity oriented programmes will thus be continued with more thrust and emphasis. Reaching a productivity level of 10, 000 nuts is the targeted goal. The Replanting and Rejuvenation programme aimed at improving productivity level in the country will be continued in more areas. Encouraging farmers in more coconut based farming system models in non traditional and north eastern regions will also get priority in the future programmes in the country. Handholding and convergence with related organizations is yet another strategy. National Horticulture Mission, RKVY, NRLM, MNREGS, SFAC, State Agricultural Universities, Research Organizations and Financial Institutions are coming under the ambit of convergence. Formation of farmer collectives, ie., Coconut Producers Societies, Federations and Companies have come true. Development programmes will be implemented only through these systems. They will be attracted to enterprises for value addition and the Board will facilitate the whole delivery system as a catalyst. So far 2100 CPS and 73 Federations have been formed. Formation of 3 Companies is in the offing. 10,000 CPS, 500 Federations and 100 Companies are targeted in the 12th Plan period.

Development programmes carried out in the country are dovetailed in such a way that India shall become the world leader in production, productivity, value addition and export. Coconut Development Board is acting on behalf of Government of India. It takes state government departments, research institutions, state Agricultural Universities and other national and state level organizations along with it to achieve this envious status.

Starting from production and distribution of quality planting material throughout the country, it focuses on expanding the crop to non traditional and North Eastern states including the disturbed areas, replanting and rejuvenation of existing traditional coconut gardens, farmer participatory collaborative research through academic institutions, equipping sufficient labour force through Friends of Coconut Tree (FoCT) training programme, converting neera production into a business enterprise, encouraging value addition through Technology Mission – all have their own objectives which ultimately give a holistic approach for the development strategy. In value addition, it is targeted to establish 500 more processing units apart from the existing 215 units. India is eyeing for a quantum jump in export growth through these measures. Having notified as the Export Promotion Council, the Coconut Development Board is so keenly watching the heartbeat of the export sector in coconut.

New Marketing Strategy

India is a lucrative market for quality products as is evidenced from many edible product sectors in the country. The fact that 31.16 per cent of Indian population ie., around 37.7 crores live in urban

Value added coconut products

areas underlines this vast potential. The September issue of Indian Coconut Journal portrayed the innovative marketing strategy of the Board, on which the country now rely on. The apprehension is as to whether the value added products now focused on have potential for marketing. The strategy evolved is to see that these products are reached in all domestic and international markets. The 63 JnNURM cities in India are aimed as the potential market. The product basket selected consists of products like packaged tender coconut water, coconut chips, desiccated coconut, virgin coconut oil, coconut milk. milk powder, milk cream, ball copra, branded coconut oil and coconut water vinegar. Board has already planned to increase the production potential of the units running in India and also to encourage the manufacturers of each product to form consortiums or associations, collaborating with other commodity boards for creating basic marketing infrastructure, introducing business meets, introducing the products before the public, and by conducting proper media campaigns. Thus these products can be sent to the nook and corner of the Indian markets. The same strategy can be adopted for marketing products in international markets. Quality and attractive packing are important in international marketing. The narrowing gap in the domestic and international markets is also a welcome development to push our entry in the international trade. The marketing strategy proposed in the country is to make the global presence of Indian products.

Rocketing Export Growth – a silver lining

International trade (import and export) plays a vital role in economic development of a country. The global competitiveness of a sector is truly reflected in the volume and value of trade achieved by a country in that sector. The export and import scenario of coconut products in India is not so significant. The export of coconut oil and other coconut products from India is comparatively negligible, as the whole production is largely utilized for domestic consumption. Till recently the lions' share of country's export realization was from coir and coir products. India being a prominent coconut growing country with a production of 16,943 million coconuts from 18.9 lakh hectares of coconut cultivation possesses good potential for growth, owing to the unique quality of Indian products. Indian coconut oil as toiletry oil through value addition has made its presence in the international markets despite its higher price. Similarly, there is growing market for coir and coir products for diversified uses in the scenario of eco-friendly environment consciousness. This growing market could be tapped appropriately if the country takes appropriate development measures. The major countries importing coconut products from India are USA, Nepal, U.A.E., Bangladesh, China, U.S,S.R., Germany, Singapore, Kuwait, Japan and Egypt. The main product imported is coconut oil.

Making a drastic shift from the major export earnings from coir, now an alternative product of more commercial importance is emerging in the export scenario ie., activated carbon. Export earnings from activated carbon have recorded a growth rate of 56 % over the last year. The export earning has crossed Rs. 500 cr within the past 3 years from a very low level. There exist huge markets for activated carbon in North America, South America, Africa, Western Europe and Eastern Europe. The product has an incremental growth rate of 18-20 % and there are about 20 companies spreading in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka manufacturing activated carbon. Contribution from activated carbon may overtake that of coir in the near future. It is targeted to reach Rs. 5000 Cr. during the next five years and the total export will touch new heights which will remove the backseat driving of India as a low contributor in international trade.

Consolidation of farmers –the Strong Way out for attaining the goal

The Board under the auspices of Government of India entered into more farmer friendly activities in the country, by uniting farmers under the platform of Coconut Producers' Societies (CPS) and Federations.

Forming farmers collectives are the permanent answer to the widely scattered small coconut holdings and highly unorganized farming community. Formation of Coconut Producers' Society (CPS) of 40-100 farmer members in contiguous areas made a kick start in 2011. By completing 2100 CPSs and 73 Coconut Producers Federations (CPFs), the Board continues its efforts with confidence in bringing a landslide victory in scientific management of gardens, farm level

Packed tender coconut water and desiccated coconut powder, value added coconut products with attractive packaging

processing and aggregation of produces and export of value added products through these collectives. Federations will give way to Coconut Producing Companies (CPCs). In this plan period 10, 000 CPSs, 1000 CPFs and 100 CPCs are targeted. CPSs and Federations can take up programmes like coconut nurseries, coconut cluster programmes and small processing activities like manufacturing coconut chips, vinegar etc. To make available sufficient tendernuts CPS/CPFs should plant minimum 5 lakh tender nut variety seedlings. They should not sit idle due to the present price crash. Producer Companies could take up mega projects like packing of tender coconut water, coconut milk powder, coconut ice cream, desiccated coconut or shell powder and activated carbon units.

CPS / Federations and Companies will be given more opportunities in implementation of programmes and for finding out solutions for their problems. The CPS integrated to Federations will have 1 lakh coconut palms under their ambit. Coconut based medium level industries could be started in such circumstances. Coconut Producer Company, a group of 10 Federations will have 10 lakh farmers under their limit. Company shall have farmer equity participation and have equal contribution from central and state governments. The Company can serve as business entities with managerial and technical skills. Integrated processing of higher capacity, export of coconut products both in domestic and international sector, branding of products and many more pathways of development in coconut sector could be fulfilled through Companies.

The Government has started caring and listening to farmers voice and concerns. **The announcement of Government of India, offering of Rs. 10 lakhs each for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO) and setting apart Rs. 50 crores for a single year 2013-14 is the ring tone of the beginning of a positive and congenial ambience to coconut farming sector.**

Being a food and beverage crop, coconut continues to enjoy the prime place among all horticultural crops in the country. Coconut Development Board being the mandated agency functiong under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India is taking all efforts to place Indian industry in number one position in value addition and export also in the coming years apart from production and productivity where India now dominates. The efforts of the Board are therefore dovetailed in this direction through innovative ideas, novel development strategies, linkage and diverse integration with various departments and aggregation of farming community.