

Kalpavruksha - God's gift

Thushara T V & APK Padmanabhan
Padmasree Nivas, Karippal, 670581

Introduction

Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), kalpavruksha is God's gift to mankind, is a tree of abundance and is consumed to lead a sound, healthy and active life. It is indispensable in day today life from birth to death. In all religious and social functions its presence is very auspicious.

Cultivation and production

Coconut is a major and commercial crop grown in India, especially in southern states like Kerala which producing a major share of coconut in the country. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Odisha, Gujarat and Maharashtra also have emerged as leading states in coconut production. Other major producing countries are Indonesia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. Indonesia is the world leader in coconut production. Coconut is grown in 90 countries over 11 million hectares and 80 million people depend upon on coconut and its processing for their livelihood. India shares 15 percent of world area and produce about 25percent of world coconut production.

Scope

A lion's share of the production of coconut in India is consumed domestically for food preparation and extraction of oil and a very small quantity of coconut is exported to gulf countries. In the recent times, reduction is noticed in coconut production in India. It is because of the unforeseen fluctuations in climatic conditions, global warming, tsunami, floods, insects and pest attack etc. Also more area of coconut cultivated lands are often converted for other development and construction activities.

However the government has taken many steps to increase the area of coconut cultivation and diversification of production including schemes for introducing value added products to gain more profit to the farmers. Only selling coconuts is not going to benefit the farmers. What is needed is diversification of manufacturing value added materials to cater to various industrial applications and exports to fetch more profit and thereby improving the financial position of agriculturists and the nation as well. There is scope of preparing 60 by-products from coconut palm.

Propoganda on the ill effects of coconut was rejected by the experts and scientific community and it is proven that coconut oil is beneficial for maintaining human health. Professor Hegde has clarified that coconut oil is a functional food that gives to human body calories and increase health and life.

Coconut contains	
Protein	4.5%
Fat	41.8%
Carbohydrate	13%
Fiber	3.6%
Calcium	0.01%
Phosporus	0.24%
Iron	1.7%
Minerals	1.0%

