

# Marketing strategies for coconut and its value added products in Odisha

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The coconut is a benevolent tree, a nature's gift to mankind, as it is a source of food, beverage, oilseed, fibres, timber, health products and is an important source of earning livelihood to the people. The total area under coconut in Odisha is 55297 hectares with a total production of 2942 lakh nuts, thereby occupying the fifth position among Indian states in area and production of coconut (2013-14). The productivity of coconut in the state is 6080 nuts/hectare, which is low compared to coconut productivity of India. Of the 30 districts in Odisha, about 60 per cent of the area and production of coconut comes from the undivided coastal districts of Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, Nayagarh and Ganjam.

Marketing of any product is communicating the value of a product, service or brand to customers, for the purpose of promoting or selling that product, service, or brand. The activities relating to marketing or market promotion of coconut, copra and coconut oil alone during the previous years has resulted in remarkable changes. So the scope of marketing has been extended to cover a variety of coconut products.

## Status of value addition in coconut in Odisha

As far as Odisha is concerned, value addition in coconut is confined to coconut oil. In the state, coconut is mainly used for religious purposes and only a very small population is using coconut oil for culinary purposes. But small scale units are emerging in the state for the production of cookies and sweets from coconut.

A survey was conducted in major



supermarkets in Bhubaneswar, like Big Bazar, Reliance fresh, Vishal for exploring the availability of various value added products of coconut. The major products identified were packed coconut water, coconut biscuit and coconut oil, coconut sweets, coconut milk powder, coconut milk, coconut cookies, coconut milk, enriched coconut hair oil, nourishing hair oil, sugar sprinkled coconut biscuits, conditioner, body lotion (coconut butter), ball copra, body lotion (coconut milk), shampoo etc.

## Marketing of coconut in Odisha

The presence of middlemen in the marketing channels prevent farmers from obtaining a higher share of the final product price. It is seen that a number of intermediaries are grabbing a greater proportion of the price paid by the consumers. RMC Sakhigopal is the hub of coconut trading in Odisha. Since 1979, RMC has enforced regulation (compulsory buying and selling in the yards) and

price discovery mechanism through competitive auctioning of coconuts.

Co-operative marketing societies by acting as an agency in marketing of coconut can help the growers by reducing, if not eliminating the various malpractices such as arbitrary deduction from the real prices of the produce, manipulation of weights etc.,. It can also increase the growers' share in the consumer price by eliminating the middlemen. The major marketing centre for coconut in Odisha is Puri. The marketing activities are being carried out by Sakhigopal Regional Co-operative Marketing Society (Sakhigopal RCMS) and Brahmagiri Regional Co-operative Marketing Society (Brahmagiri RCMS). Coconut oil is consumed mainly during winter and its trade is confined mainly to rural areas. Trade in coconut was essentially monopsonistic in nature with a large number of cultivators selling their products only to a few village traders, local copra makers and agricultural co-operative societies and this is one of the major reason for the cultivators not being able to get a fair price.

In addition to the traditional products of copra, coconut oil and copra meal, coconut has the advantage of producing a wide variety of edible and non edible products which are used both domestically and for the export market. The availability of value added products of coconut in Odisha is very less. The existing products in the market are getting higher price. This indicates the huge scope of coconut based products in the market. In order to ensure higher income to the coconut farming community, the marketing strategies need to be strengthened. ■