

Timely recognition for Thejaswini

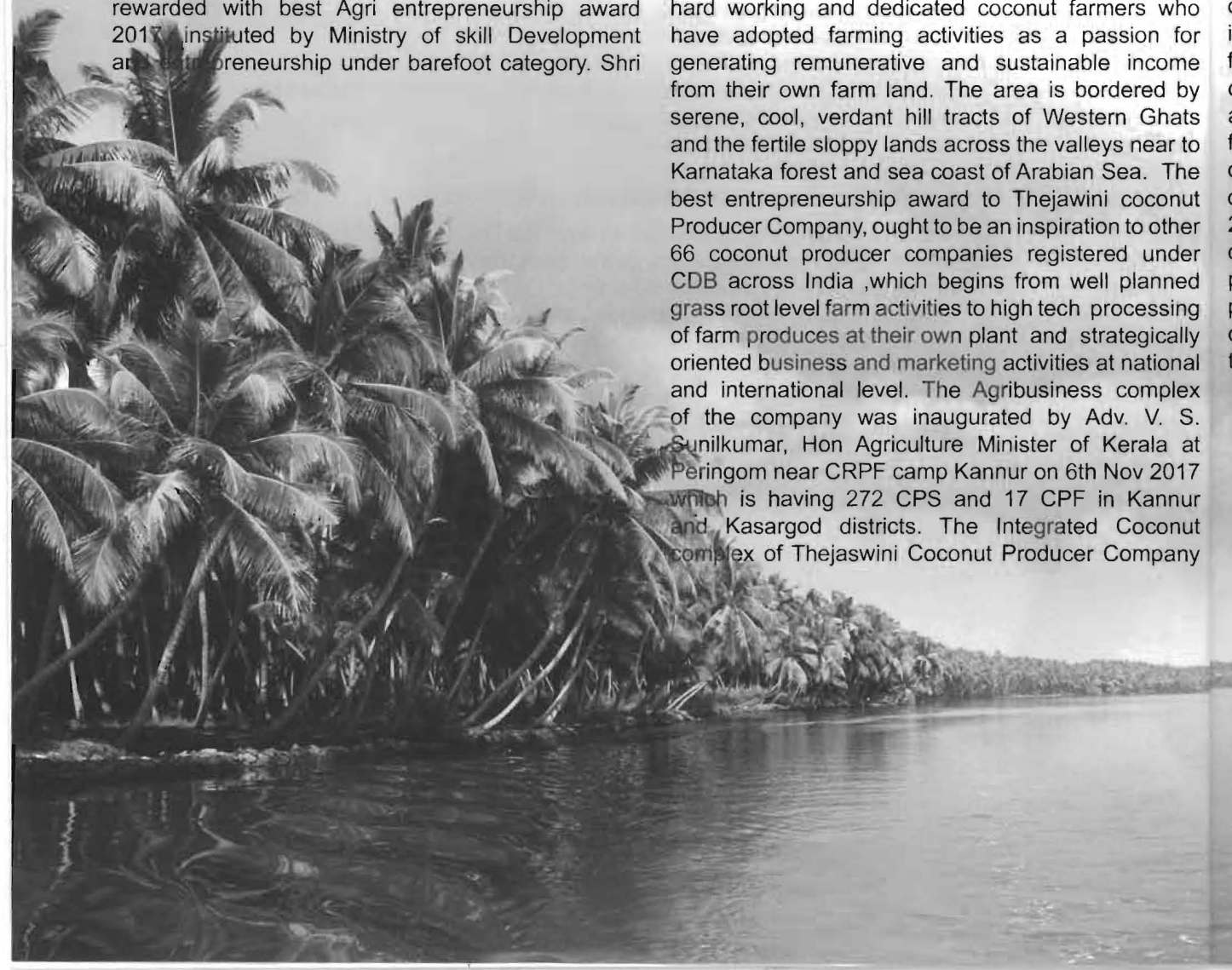
a model FPO for their farm and home activities

Mini Mathew, Publicity Officer
Coconut Development Board, Kochi-11

Introduction

The first farmer producer company registered under CDB formulated with a group of coconut farmers of Kannur and Kasargod districts in Kerala titled Thejaswini Coconut Producer Company is rewarded with best Agri entrepreneurship award 2017 instituted by Ministry of skill Development and entrepreneurship under barefoot category. Shri

Sunny George, chairman of the company and then Karshakasree award winner had received cash award of Rs 5 lakhs, certificate and trophy from Shri. Arun Jaitley Hon Finance Minister on 9th November 2017. The Company is situated under the lap of Western Ghats which is blessed with a group of hard working and dedicated coconut farmers who have adopted farming activities as a passion for generating remunerative and sustainable income from their own farm land. The area is bordered by serene, cool, verdant hill tracts of Western Ghats and the fertile sloppy lands across the valleys near to Karnataka forest and sea coast of Arabian Sea. The best entrepreneurship award to Thejaswini coconut Producer Company, ought to be an inspiration to other 66 coconut producer companies registered under CDB across India, which begins from well planned grass root level farm activities to high tech processing of farm produces at their own plant and strategically oriented business and marketing activities at national and international level. The Agribusiness complex of the company was inaugurated by Adv. V. S. Sunilkumar, Hon Agriculture Minister of Kerala at Peringom near CRPF camp Kannur on 6th Nov 2017 which is having 272 CPS and 17 CPF in Kannur and Kasargod districts. The Integrated Coconut complex of Thejaswini Coconut Producer Company



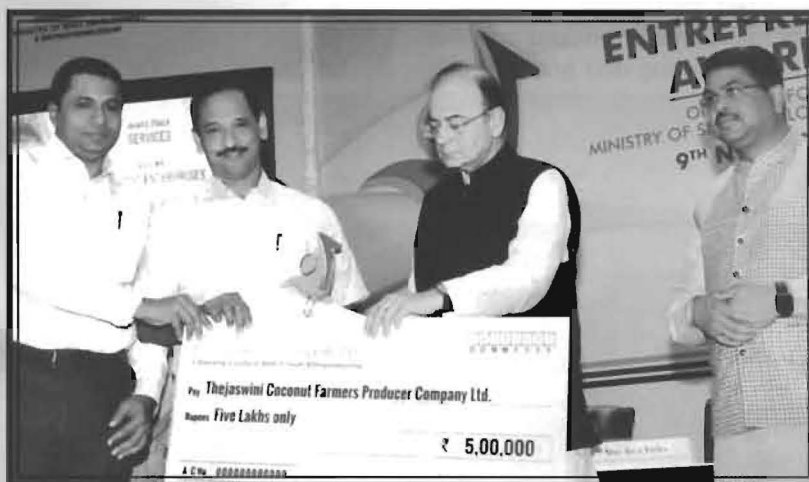
Ltd is set up at Peringome Panchayath, 60 kms north-east of Kannur town opposite to Government PWD guest house and CRPF camp, Peringome with an investment of Rs.10 crores. At present, the company has collected equity shares worth of Rs. 164 lakhs from 347 allotted share holders and still issuing shares to individuals under CPS/ federations and CPSs as Institutional shareholder. Thejaswini Coconut Farmers Producer Company Ltd is implementing the central schemes of Government of India by adopting projects of CDB under Technology Mission on Coconut (TMOC), Schemes of NABARD, RKVY and SFAC and schemes of government of Kerala for promoting agri business activities of small and marginal farmers who are the shareholders of the company.

Thejaswini Company was registered under CDB in June 2013 with the intension to do group activities in coconut including production, procurement, processing and value addition for ensuring fair, reasonable and steady price for coconut and its value added products for improvising the standard of living of coconut farmers in Kannur and Kasaragod districts in Kerala. It is a collective of nearly 30000 coconut farmers who are venturing to produce and market coconut and its various value added products. As a first phase, the company has established an unit for the production of copra, coconut oil, soap unit, organic manure unit and biogas plant. The coconut oil manufacturing unit (with a capacity to process 25,000 coconuts per day), automatic machine for dehusking 1200 coconut per hour, bio manure production unit, Coconut oil based soap unit having production capacity of 5000 soaps per day are under operational stage in the Agro Processing Complex of the company.

The area surrounded by company is blessed with natural scenic beauty of evergreen hill stations, rivers, backwater, streams etc wherein company has adopted plantation tourism as part of responsible tourism project of Kerala State Tourism Department. They will launch the Responsible tourism project immediately with the objective of integrating products, services and local communities. Adventure tourism, ayurveda, arts and culture are involved in it. Home stay and farm stay facilities will be provided to the tourists. In this regard, cultivable area and hilly areas are being revived by the company.

Various projects of Thejaswini

Ten farmers from Cherupuzha in Kannur had formulated an eco farm society in 2010 was converted into Thejaswini Coconut Producer Company in 2013 under the Chairmanship of Sri. Sunny George Illamthuruthy. The company chairman and director board members are bringing out innovative ideas to make the activities of the company more successful and each member of Director Board is having specific responsibility for the progress of the company. At present Thejaswini produces Samridhi brand organic manure; palm fresh Neera, Thejas beauty soap, Thejas coconut oil, organic turmeric powder etc. Total number of 500 coconut farmers are engaged in organic farming. Shri.Sunny, Chairman Thejaswini informed that organic farmers need to get 50% additional income for each product when their farm products are manufactured organically. Shri.Joy Perumattikkunnel a share holder of the company has received state award for Best Organic Farmer in Kerala during last year. Besides company had bagged first price in business plan competition organized by CPCRI, Kasargode for FPOs in the





country. Thirumeni Federation of the company had bagged National Award of CDB for the best Coconut Producer Federation in the country.

By utilizing the share of coconut farmers, profit received from selling of samridhi organic manure and Rs.2 crore loan from NABARD, the building construction was carried out cost effectively. Contour terracing has been adopted for construction of the factory and reduces the cost of construction. Company expects more orders for Samridhi organic manure from ten Panchayaths of Kannur district. Besides, there is good demand for bio manure from the member farmers also.

NABARD has sanctioned Rs. 2 crores for the project of bio manure unit, nursery unit and copra drier unit. Varieties of coconut seedlings, seeds and plants of different fruits and vegetables, tuber crops etc are available in nursery titled Cherupuzha coconut nursery. In order to produce good quality coconut oil with the purpose of export, modern oil expeller unit is constructed with good quality alloy steel. There is a facility to transfer dehusked coconut to expeller unit from the defibering unit and coir pith to the bio organic manure unit through conveyer belts at a time. A vinegar unit is also established to utilize the coconut water which is presently being wasted

in the unit. Expeller unit is having the capacity to process 800 kg copra per hour. The project cost of integrated coconut complex is Rs. 2.70 crores. A jack fruit processing unit is also planned in the integrated complex with the financial assistance of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) where in jack fruit chips, pulp; sweets are available. 50% of diversified products will be recycled to the producers (Farmer groups) for consumption and local sale and 50% will be utilized for export purpose. They are planning to start virgin coconut oil, DC and coconut milk units as 2nd phase. The profit of the company



Cost effective construction of integrated complex.



Expeller unit

can be increased to manifold if all parts of coconut are processed, value added and marketed. According to the company Chairman an integrated processing unit is essential to make more profits for a coconut based enterprise. Since its establishment this FPO has been actively supported by the Coconut Development Board under the guidance of Shri T. K. Jose IAS, then Chairman of CDB.

Skill Development Training

As part of Skill Development Training Programme of Coconut Development Board, Company has conducted 30 batches of FoCT and 5 batches of Neera Technician training programmes at its training centers. FoCTs are functioning as a labour force for carrying out main farm activities of company including harvesting and plant protection. Around 80 neera technicians have already been trained successfully under Neera technician training programme of CDB. They are tapping Neera with skill and expertise at different coconut plantations under the jurisdiction of the company. Nowadays company imparts training to interested farmers in the FPO itself after entering into an agreement with them that they shall be in the field for a minimum period of 2 years. Imparting training to farmers was also an inspiration to other companies while labourers from other state seems leaving during off season and not coming back for carrying out the job for next year. The model is being adopted by other FPOs during the current financial year. Progressive farmer Shri. Shaju Appachan is a model Neera technician of the company. He generates income equivalent to a class 1 officer in government department.

Eco – Farm Tourism

Eco farm tourism promotion attracts tourists from different destinations across the country and abroad for enjoying and experiencing the agriculture activities at farm level and for tasting delicious local cuisine prepared from organically grown vegetables and cereals. Company is planning to engage around 300 genuine and interested organic coconut farmers as part of eco farm tourism project. Such farmer groups will offer accommodation and food in the farm itself so that the guest can observe and involve in



FoCT's involved in tender coconut harvesting and its sale



Neera tapping process



Shri.Joy Perumattikkunnel rearing bees



farming activities. 100% organic food will be served to the guest. Accordingly tourists can experience real organic holidays at their farms. All these farms have been received organic certification from Indocert. Those who are having interest for trekking can visit Palavayal trekking and wellness centre, Tabor hills etc. Bamboo rafting in Thejaswini River is another attraction for tourists. Thejaswini River originates from Mundhari forest in Karnataka as a branch of Kaveri River. 'Tourism can be promoted effectively after the opening of Kannur airport' says Shri. Sunny George. All facilities including transportation from airport, railway station, accommodation, food etc will be made by tourism committee of the company. Irikkur, Thrikaripur, Thalipparambhu, Payyannur are the main eco spots of the company for promotion of responsible tourism project. Projects in this regard has been submitted to the state tourism department and the same is under implementation stage. The responsibility for promoting farm tourism is entrusted with Shri. Jose Urumbukkatil, one of the directors of the company. For promoting farm tourism company is planning to purchase 10 acre land at vegetative hill station in the locality wherein demonstration of special organic farms of fruits and vegetables, ayurveda, yoga, handicraft training etc will be arranged. Demonstration of Neera tapping, serving of Neera along with traditional cuisines etc will be arranged as part of tourism project.

As part of tourism promotion company has arranged visit to some specific tourist locations. One among them is the organic farm of Shri Joy Perumattikunnel. His areas of interest are growing pepper, arecanut, turmeric, cocoa, fruit trees, vegetables etc. This farm-home visit can provide firsthand information of how Mr. Joy maintains a sustainable food and agricultural farm with economical benefits. He is also specialized in honey bee rearing. After the visit people will get an idea of how the bees live in the hive, how honey is extracted, how a new hive is set etc.



Visit of foreign tourists



They have arranged trekking to Kottancheri. It is surrounded with dense forest. Kottancheri Hills is a home for many of the rare and endemic species found in the Western Ghat such as deer, wild pigs, wild elephants, wild dogs, rare birds, butterflies etc. Camping at Tabor Hills Tabor, the exclusive and integral constituent of Palavayal Trekking and Wellness Centre (PTWC) is an area of magnificent grassland, surrounded by valleys, embedded with beautiful hamlets and towns. Surely the hardworking nature and unity of the members of this barefoot enterprise had already beaten odd realities to attain higher rewards. ■

For more details, Contact :

Shri. Sunny George, Chairman, Mob: 9495147228

Shri. Abdul Razak, Executive officer, Mob: 9495492600
Thejaswini coconut producer company.



'Ready to serve' Neera drink

