

Revolutionizing coconut sector



Sheshagokul Shrinivasan, Executive Director, Apex Coco and Solar Energy Limited aged 23 has taken his Bachelor's degree in Science from PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore and Masters in International Business from Hult International Business School, San Francisco. He started his career as a Marketing Analyst in a Fashion studio in New York in the year 2014 and later in 2015, established a company "Bayridge Tex" dealing with fabrics and accessories for Garment manufacturing.

Manoj Prabagar Executive Director, Apex Coco and Solar Energy Limited aged 25 has taken his Masters in Business Administration from the University of Toledo, OHIO and in the year 2013, started a domestic brand called "Avarnas" featuring women's and kid's wear.

Both Sheshagokul Shrinivasan and Manoj Prabagar belong

to agricultural families. Their grandparents were all in agriculture sector and their parents were the 1st generation entrepreneurs who had ventured into textile business and set up a factory in Tirupur.

Moghan father of Manoj, started garment manufacturing export house Anugraha Fashion in the year 1989. At present the company has an integrated set up right from spinning to garment manufacturing unit, working with a turnover of 250 crores. Mr. Shrinivasan father of Sheshagokul, basically a chemical engineer started Aalfa Dyes and Chemicals in 1997, manufacturing Dyes and Auxiliaries. From there Alpine Knits India Pvt. Ltd was established in the year 2002. Alpine deals with garment machineries and has a spinning sector. The company is working with a turnover of 200 crores. In 2015 Sheshagokul Shrinivasan along with Mr. Manoj Prabagar started research on coconut-based

products and its worldwide market.

It was on realizing that India, the largest producer of coconut is earning an income of just \$10 per metric ton in exports, whereas Thailand with only 1/10th production capacity of India, earns \$288 per metric ton that both Sheshagokul Shrinivasan and Manoj Prabagar decided to venture into coconut sector. They started to study on how Thailand's coconut export differed from India. They realized that Thailand is utilizing coconut for making value added products like coconut water, milk, cream, VCO, etc. whereas, 95% India's coconut export consisted of coco peat and activated carbon.

The above study resulted in venturing into manufacturing of coconut-based products where this two young entrepreneurs are expecting sea of opportunities in future. They are hopeful that this would enable them to diversify from textile field and enter into

agriculture sector. Therefore they decided to enter this field and subsequently started collecting data. Alpine, Anugraha and other five other companies collaborated to form Apex Coco And Solar Energy Limited. This company has invested 36 Mega Watt of solar energy. The team also met Shri.T.K, Jose IAS, Chairman, CDB and was provided with a new perspective on how to go about in this field.

The growing demand of coconut products in countries like US, Europe and other parts of the world, offers additional scope to venture into the industry. The masters degree

from US has also added to the know how of these entrepreneurs to place themselves in these markets.

The team is planning to manufacture products like coconut milk, desiccated coconut, virgin coconut oil, coco peat, coco fiber and activated carbon. They are aware that youngsters are not willing to come into farming due to low returns on the produces. The new culture prevailing within the youngsters is to focus on smart work rather than hard work. The farmers are not looking to increase the yield of coconut trees using proper scientific methods and none of the farmers are looking for

new plantations.

Sheshagokul Shrinivasan and Manoj Prabagar wishes to help the coconut farmers by using information technology for collecting data and implementation of systematic programs to improve the soil condition through organic manure. They are confident that this will increase the productivity and income of the farmers. The ultimate aim is to revolutionize this sector, which is untapped to its potential limits. They are confident that the agriculture sector will have a great future in the years to come which will add to the country's GDP. ■

Aspiring to become the leading exporter of coconut products

Ms.S.Arunya(24) an engineering graduate in Information Technology hail from an agricultural and business family and her father is her inspiration for being in this field. She always had a passion for business as she is growing up seeing her father's hard work and development in business. During her college days, she started learning about her father's business that primarily manufactures Desiccated Coconut Powder (DCP) With his support and guidance, soon after completing her under graduate degree she started Cocoshell Agro Product – a partnership firm in 2013 that manufactures Coconut Shell Powder and now she is the Managing Partner of the company.

With self-learning and her father's motivation, she was able to start direct export of DCP, before which they were selling their products to merchant exporters. The company is increasing their direct export volume gradually. Looking after the business gave her good exposure and experience in business field.



Being from an agricultural family and known about struggle that farmers go through, she wishes to start business relating to it so that they can also be benefited. She doesn't want to go for jobs with which only she and her family can lead a good life. She looks up to her father as he is giving employment to nearly hundred people and she wants to follow his footsteps. Even if the employment count happens to be small change comparatively,

she wants to make it. Coconut Development Board has given her good assistance and extended support for her above projects whenever required. This also gave her the confidence to go for her own project and the board guide for our betterment continuously. These reasons combined with her family's motivation, help and her passion and having gained good experience and confidence, now she has started one more new manufacturing unit named Indian Coconut Product, a proprietorship concern for manufacturing Desiccated Coconut Powder. It is located in Pollachi, the best coconut producing area of the country. The unit has production capacity of 6.5 MT per day and the processes involved will be made more organized. She plans to promote and expand the business from DCP and Coconut shell powder to various range of coconut products. Her aim is to be the leading manufacturer and exporter of coconut products in India.

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