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# AN ANALYSIS OF AGRO-BASED COCONUT INDUSTRY IN INDIA

**Article Particulars**

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**Abstract**

*The agro-based industry is of enormous significance for India's development because of the vital linkages and synergies that it develops between the two pillars of the economy, namely industry, and agriculture. The agro-processing industry involves the commercial movement from field to fork.*
***Key Words:*** *Coir Industry, Process, Market, Consumption, Promotion.*

## Introduction

The development of agro-based industries began during pre-independence days. Cotton mills, sugar mills, jute mills were raised in the corporate sector. During the post-independence days, to render more employment and use local sources, small scale and village enterprises were favored. The increasing environmental concerns will give further stimulus to agro-based industries — jute and cotton bags, which have begun to be replaced by plastic bags.

The agro-industry helps in processing agricultural products such as field crops, tree crops, livestock, and fisheries and changing them to edible and other usable forms. The private sector is yet to actualize the full potential of the agro-industry. The global market is mammoth for sugar, coffee, tea, and processed foods such as sauce, jelly, honey, processed meat, spices, and fruit. Only with mass composition coupled with modern technology and intensive marketing can the domestic market and the export market be used to the fullest extent.

It is therefore imperative that coconut producers recognize changing consumer preferences, technology, with modernization, innovation, and incorporation of latest trends and technology in the agro-based coconut industry like coir fiber, coir products, coconut oil, and the like.

## Production of Coconut

The development of the industry depends on the availability of the basic raw material which is taken from coconut. Therefore coconut is of great relevance in the

coir sector. The trend in the production, the productivity of coconut in India from the period 2010- 2011 to 2014-15 is given in Table 1.

**Table 1 Area/Production/Productivity of Coconut in India**

| Year | Area (000ha) | Production (million nuts) | Productivity (nut/ha) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 – 2014 | 2140 | 14911 | 6966 |
| 2014 – 2015 | 1976 | 14067 | 7120 |
| 2015 – 2016 | 2088 | 15256 | 7305 |
| 2016 – 2017 | 2082 | 16486 | 7918 |
| 2017 – 2018 | 2097 | 16413 | 7828 |

**Source**: Directorate of Economics and Statistics and Ministry of Agriculture

The above table shows that the trend in the area under the production of coconut has been increasing. The production has also increased from 14911 million nuts in 2013-14 to 16413 million nuts in 2017-18. But productivity has decreased due to water scarcity and some other problems prevailing in the farm sector.

Coir industry aims at increased utilization of coconut husk for production of coir fiber, growth of the private market, strengthening of research and development to find out new uses of coir fiber especially in the areas of geo-fiber, fire retardant, cement, and gypsum polymer development, acquiring of new technology like PVC tufted coir products, encouragement to co-corporatization and providing social welfare, civic amenities and medical facilities to coir workers.

Emphasis has been given on improving devices/equipment/ machinery through R&D to reduce drudgery and to improve the productivity of coir workers. Development of an improved variety of rates and looms would help in increasing the production of coir yarn spinning, coir mats, etc. to boost exports, the scheme of common publicity/program in the export markets which was begun in the Seventh Plan would be continued.

**Production of Coir**

India is the largest coir producer globally, accounting for more than 80 percent of the total world generation of coir fiber. The coir sector in India is very diverse and involves households, co-operatives, NGOs, producers, and exporters.

The coir industry employs more than 6.4 lakh persons, of whom a bulk are from rural areas relating to the economically weaker sections of society. Nearly 80 percent of coir workers in the fiber extraction and spinning sectors are women.

Coir is the only natural fiber that does not get cultivated solely to extract the coir; jute and sisal are developed only to produce the fibers and, in turn, the spun and woven products. Fibers like jute, sisal, cotton, etc. are derived from short cropping

plants whose coir originates from the near perennial coconut palm.

The coconut palm has been the subject of great admiration and administration across and down the ages. This is possibly the only tree, which has a systematic record dating back to nearly 3000 years before the birth of Christ. Botanists say that the coir was domesticated in Neolithic, Stone age, times. When the 1st Ice Age has of the waters of the world, reducing the distance between the islands and continents, marine tribes found it easy to move between landmasses. They carried coconuts for food and water during their voyages and planted whatever was given over in their new home.

There are several legends associated with the origin of this wonder palm in many countries. The origin of the coir industry dates back to pre-historic times. Still, it is only during the 19th century that coir products were frequently introduced to the other of the world from the homelands of their origin. In Indian mythology, it is thought that this is one of the five wish giving trees that emerged after the churning of the might oceans by the gods.

According to the Indian coconut committee's "History and Home of coconut" public in September 1954, the coconut palm began in Sri Lanka. In another view, the coconuts drifted in the sea from Polynesia and found new homes in May parts of the world. According to early Greek Chronicles, it was Magasthenes, Ambassador of the Seduces Nicator, who told the Indian King, Chandra Gupta, about the Coconut Palm, found in Sri Lanka in 300 BC. Arab writers of 11th century AD introduced to the uses as ships cables, fenders, and rigging. "Micro Polo's celebrated travelogue of the 12 century mentioned on the uses to which coir fiber and mats were put in use in the sails vessels of Arabs. He later saw the land where Arabs brought their coir and showed it was made out of the fiber from the coconut husk.

The coir industry is broken into two major segments viz., white fiber and brown fiber. White fiber is also known as retted fiber, is extracted from the husk of maturated coconut after a process known as Retting, which is more suited for spinning coir fiber. It is further processed to get products like doormats, matting, carpets, geo-textiles, etc. Brown fiber also extracted from the coconut husk is soaked in water for several days by mechanical means. It is further prepared to get finished products like rubberized coir, curled coir, etc.

According to the coconut development board, out of the annual production of coconut in India, 40 percent is used as tender coconut, and the remaining 60 percent is applied for industries.

The development of the coir industry has all along been in areas where there is a concentration of coconut trees and the availability of coconut husk. Historically, the coir industry started and flourished in Kerala, a long coastline, lakes, lagoons, and backwaters providing natural conditions for retting. However, with the expansion of coconut cultivation, the coir industry has picked up in the States of Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Pondicherry, and the

union territories of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands through the efforts of coir board. The production and processing methods in the coir industry continue to be mainly traditional

Production of coir products is based on the actual exports, trends of external consumption assessed from the movement of coir products by rail/streams/ roads and estimated consumption in the producing centers. The result of coir and coir products is provided in Table 2

**Table 2 Production of Coir Products in India from 2013-2014 to 2017-18**
**(Quantity in Tonnes)**

| Item | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coir Fibre | 5,39,815 | 5,42,000 | 5,49,300 | 5,56,900 | 5,59,400 |
| Coir Yarn | 3,23,900 | 3,25,200 | 3,29,600 | 3,34,200 | 3,35,700 |
| Coir Products | 2,13,800 | 2,14,600 | 2,17,500 | 2,20,500 | 2,21,500 |
| Coir Rope | 64,780 | 65,040 | 65,920 | 66,850 | 67,150 |
| Curled Coir | 64,700 | 65,040 | 65,850 | 66,800 | 67,100 |
| Rubberized Coir | 86,370 | 86,700 | 87,900 | 89,100 | 89,500 |

**Source**: Data Collected from the Annual report of Coir Industry 2013-14 to 2017-18.

From the above Table, it is clear that the production of coir products increased steadily except for the production of coir rope which shows a decreasing trend. Similarly, the details of consumption of coir and coir products during this period are given in Table 3.

**Table 3 Consumption of Coir and Coir Products**

| Item | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coir Fibre | 5,28,135 | 5,80,948 | 5,38,100 | 5,45,550 | 5,48,000 |
| Coir Yarn | 2,72,710 | 2,94,526 | 2,98,500 | 3,02,600 | 3,03,950 |
| Coir Products | 54,138 | 2,30,903 | 2,34,050 | 2,37,300 | 2,38,400 |
| Coir Rope | 59,224 | 59,224 | 60,025 | 60,850 | 61,100 |
| Curled Coir | 44,823 | 49,305 | 49,900 | 50,600 | 50,900 |
| Rubberized Coir | 78,626 | 86,488 | 87,700 | 88,900 | 89,300 |

* up to December 2015.

**Source**: Data Collected from the Annual report of Coir Industry 2013-14 to 2017-18.

The consumption of coir fiber has steadily risen from 5,28,135 tonnes in 2013-14 to 5,48,000 tonnes in 2017-18. The consumption of coir yarn has expanded from 2,72,710 tonnes in 2013-14 to 3,03,950 tonnes in 2017-18. The consumption of coir rope has increased from 59,224 tonnes in 2013-14 to 61,000 tonnes in 2017-18. The consumption of curled coir has expanded from 44,823 tonnes in the year 2013-14 to 50,600 tonnes in the year 2016-17, and then it slightly increased to 50900 tonnes in the year 2017-18. The consumption of Rubberised Coir has expanded from 78,626 tonnes in the year 2013-14 to 88,900 tonnes in the year 2016-17, and then it gradually increased to 89,300 tonnes in the year 2017-18.

**Conclusion**

Using the coconut products for various household and agricultural purposes, the economy our people in a headstall of control and also using the development and increase in the production about coir industries in India will be no doubt provide employment opportunity, encouragement of entrepreneurship. There will be a steep increase in the standard of living.

As the Government and the coconut growers are going hand-in-hand in improving the status of this business, the growth of small scale industries like coir manufacturing units will be mushroomed countless in the number of showers its benefits not only to the people but also for the welfare of the nation both in employment and economic fields.

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