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Examining The Challenges In Production Encountered Bycoir Enterprises In Tamil Nadu To Promote Economic Growth And Sustainability

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Abstract
The article reveals the analysis of production challenges encountered by small coir units, focusing on economic growth and sustainability. The coir industry in India is characterized as an agro-based, village, and cottage industry. Despite its significant contributions to employment and the income of individuals, as well as the overall economy of the country in various ways, the coir sector does not receive the necessary support from the government, banks, financial institutions, and other lending bodies. This lack of support hinders the provision of quality goods and services, the ability to compete effectively, the creation of demand, and the attraction of customers in both national and international markets. Although the coir sector holds considerable potential in India, it is confronted with numerous challenges. The study indicated that, based on mean scores, inadequate financing was the most pressing issue, achieving a mean score of 70.74, which was higher than any other identified problems.
Keywords: *Coir, Agro-based, industry, markets*

INTRODUCTION

India is the largest coir producer in the world accounting for more than 80% of the total world production of coir fibre. The coir sector in India is very diverse and it involves households, co-operatives, NGOs, manufacturers and exporters. This is the best example of producing beautiful artifacts, handicrafts and utility products from coconut husks which is otherwise a waste. The coir industry employs more than seven lakh persons of whom a majority are from rural areas belonging to the economically weaker sections of society. Nearly 80% of the coir workers in the fibre extraction and spinning sectors are women. Coir is a natural fibre that is extracted from mesocarp tissue, or husk of the coconut. As this fibre is golden in colour when cleaned after removing from the coconut husk, it is popularly known as 'The Golden Fibre'. The problems identified in the study would help the policy makers to develop right policy package to overcome the constraints faced by the coir units. Therefore, the study has been undertaken to know various aspects of coir industry in Tirunelveli district.

Significanceof Coirindustry

The current research aims to illuminate the manufacturing and marketing processes of coir units, as well as their economic feasibility, which could facilitate other activities. The findings from this study will provide valuable insights for manufacturers to address the challenges encountered in the production and marketing of coir units. The issues identified in this research will assist policymakers in formulating appropriate policy measures to alleviate the difficulties faced by coir units. Consequently, this study has been conducted to explore various facets of the coir industry in the Tirunelveli district.

Profile Of The Study Area

This section is devoted to present the vital aspects and unique features of the study area, that is Tirunelveli District. It is expected to throw adequate light on the geographical, natural, social, economic and commercial and demographic aspects of this district.

Tirunelveli District was formed in 1790 by the East India company, later came under the direct control of the British Crown Queen Victoria. The name Tirunelveli has been composed from the three Tamil words i.e. 'Thiru – Nel – Veli' meaning Sacred Paddy Hedge.Geographical Location

Tirunelveli District having geographical area of 6759 sq.kms, in the South eastern portion of Tamil Nadu is triangular in shape. It lies between 8°.05' and 9°.30' of the Northern latitude and 77°.05' and 78°.25' of Eastern longitude.

Topography

The district is located in the southern part of Tamil Nadu and surrounded by Virudhunagar District in the north, Western Ghats in the West, Kannyakumari District in the south and Tuticorin District in the

East. The lifeline of the district river Tamiraparani feeds the district and quenches the thirst of residents of Tirunelveli and Tuticorin district too and also supplying drinking water to Virudunagar district.

Administrative Setup

The District has 3 Revenue Divisions consisting of 15 Taluks, 60 Firkas, 19 Development Blocks, 616 Revenue Villages and 425 Village Panchayats.

Demographic Details

The population of the District was 27,23,988 in 2001 Census and 30,77,233 as per 2011 census. The Density of Population per sq.km. was 399 in 2001 census and 460 persons as per 2011 census. Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and Ambasamudram are the most densely populated Taluks in the District as per 2011 census. The Sex ratio is 1023 females for every 1000 males. The Literacy rate is 82.50 per cent in the District as per 2011 census.

Out of total population, males are 13,33,939 and females 13,90,049 in 2001 census and males are 15,20,912 and females 15,56,321 as per 2011 census. Total Schedule caste population is 5,69,714 which represent 18.5 per cent to the total population as per 2011 census. Schedule Tribes are found to be very small in numbers of 10,270 which is 0.33 per cent to the total population.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pylee (1975) in his work analysed the various aspects of the coir industry, viz., the structure, export, internal consumption of coir goods, marketing channel, labour force and crisis of the coir industry. The study stressed the necessity for strengthening the base for export production by manufacturing sophisticated coir products through modernisation.

Perumal (1988) observed that labour cost works out to 30 to 48 per cent of the total cost in the case of yarn produced under the conventional method. The study stated that the labour cost could be kept low as mechanization was introduced in the spinning area.

Minnie Mathew (1992) in her study, "Coir fibre based Products" found that, Coir industry is the backbone of rural employment generation in a densely populated state like Kerala. product innovation or development as compared to other competing floor coverings. Failure to meet production deadlines and delivery schedules is another serious handicap faced by the industry.

Jaya Prapakaran (2016) in his article analyzed the production and exportation of coir in India, highlighting that the coir industry, which has been in existence for 150 years, is primarily located in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka due to the availability of coir husk, a by-product of coconut farming. The industry boasts an annual turnover of Rs 1300 crores and maintains a consistent growth rate of 10%. In India, the coir industry originated and thrived in Kerala, which features a lengthy coastline, lakes, lagoons, and backwaters that provide the natural conditions necessary for the retting process. Additionally, the industry has gained traction in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Tripura, thanks to the initiatives of the coir board. India produces over two-thirds of the global supply of coir and coir products. Kerala is recognized as the heart of the Indian coir industry, especially for white fibre, contributing to 61% of coconut production and over 85% of coir products. Despite India's extensive coastline lined with coconut trees, the development of the coir industry in other coastal states has been minimal. Currently, less than 50% of the coconut husks are utilized within the coir industry, with the remainder being used as fuel in rural communities.

Poornimadevi (2017) examined the challenges and opportunities present in the coir industry located in Pollachi, Coimbatore district, and found that most coir entrepreneurs reported being satisfied with the income generated from this sector. Although this is a positive finding, it is essential for both the government and relevant organizations to work together to advance the industry further. The study revealed that Indian coir product exporters have a wealth of opportunities to gain market share internationally. It is incumbent upon industrialists to manufacture and promote high-quality products that can compete globally alongside international competitors for sustainable long-term success.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Any rigorous study necessitates a cohesive and meticulously planned methodology. An understanding of the methodology offers a solid foundation regarding the methods and tools of research, particularly for the research worker, and empowers him to conduct his research in a more effective and scientific way. It aids the researcher in cultivating scientific and disciplined thinking, as well as a proper inquisitive mindset to objectively observe the field and the relevant issues. Thus, to address a research problem, a robust methodology is fundamentally crucial. The rationale behind the selection of the study area, data

collection, sampling design, study duration, and analytical tools related to E-commerce technologies are examined here in Research Methodology.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 : Production Problems Faced by Small Coir Units.

S. No.	Problem	Mean Score	Rank
1	Inadequate finance	70.74	I
2	Non availability of raw materials	68.07	II
3	Higher rate of wages	63.46	III
4	Non availability of skilled/semi-skilled labors	57.26	IV
5	Price fluctuations of raw materials	52.49	V
6	Power cut	49.64	VI
7	Problems of drying fibre during rainy session	45.84	VII
8	Climate change	43.17	VIII

Based on the average scores, inadequate financing was identified as the most significant issue, achieving a mean score of 70.74, which was higher than any other challenges. The second most critical issue was the lack of availability of raw materials, which received a mean score of 68.07. The third position was occupied by the elevated wage rates, with a mean score of 63.46, followed by the non-availability of skilled and semi-skilled labor, which ranked fourth with a mean score of 57.26. Price fluctuations in raw materials and power outages secured the fifth and sixth positions, with mean scores of 52.49 and 49.64, respectively. The challenges of drying fiber during the rainy season and the impacts of climate change were ranked seventh (mean score of 45.84) and eighth (mean score of 43.17), respectively.

CONCLUSION

This current research concludes that the expansion of coir units, as evidenced by the number of registered units, the investments made, the employment generated, and the total production achieved, has been significant in the study area. Small units exhibit higher gross revenue compared to micro units, with a notable variation in revenue between these two categories. The marketing efficiency is greater in channels with fewer intermediaries. The District Industries Centre and the Coir Board play a crucial role in promoting coir units by providing financial support and training programs for coir manufacturers. The development of improved varieties of rats and looms would enhance the production of coir yarn spinning, coir mats, and similar products. Furthermore, the promotion of research and development aimed at production enhancement, product diversification, and modernization is essential to reduce drudgery and pollution. The study also emphasizes the necessity for further research to foster economic growth and sustainability.

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