

## **Coir Defibering Units of Kannur District**

The women of Kannur District are running a Coir Defibering unit which had been the first of its kind from Kudumbashree Mission in the state. Launched as per the special directions of Dr T.M Thomas Issac, Minister of Finance, Government of Kerala, more horizons of job opportunity are opened to the women. The initiative had not only helped to find a new livelihood for the women but also it is strengthening the coir industry sector in the state. The programme would be extended to all the districts in the state gradually. Let's see how the programme is progressing in the district!

### **Coir**

Coir which is also known as 'The Golden Fibre', is extracted from the husk of a coconut and it is found between the hard internal shell and the outer coat of a coconut and is widely used for making various products such as floor mats, outdoor mats, Cordage , ropes, aquarium filters and even different handicrafts like ornaments etc.

### **Coir Industry in Kerala**

Coir Industry is an important agro based employment oriented traditional cottage industry in the state of Kerala. The History of coir in Kerala dates back to 19th century. Kerala, the tropical paradise of waving coconut palms lies between the

Western Ghats on the east & Arabian Sea on the west. Kerala is one of the most beautiful states of India and also the largest producer of Coir & Coir products in India. In fact even the name 'Keralam ' means 'Land of Coconut' in Malayalam and is evolved from the word 'Keram' which means coconut in Malayalam language. Coir industry enjoys the status as the largest cottage industry in the state of Kerala giving employment to over a million of people.

Coir being the geo textiles come in a mind boggling range of woven & non woven varieties available for bio engineering including geo meshes, geo grids, anti-weed blankets, erosion control blankets, geo-rolls, geo-webs, and fascines etc as well.

### **Coir Defibering Programme of Kudumbashree**

Coconut defibering units are being set up for creating more job opportunities for the members of Kudumbashree Mission. The programme aims at extracting coconut fibre from raw coconut husks. The Coir Board will procure the fibre from the units.

The infrastructure for the programme is met from the side of Local Self Government Department institutions. The Kerala State Coir Manufacturing Company, Alappuzha would provide the defibering machine absolutely free to the women who are interested to start such units, which would enable them to extract fibre from raw coconut husks. The mechanised system will help to increase the production and it would increase the physical strain. For operating this machine for 8 hours, 8000 husks are needed per day. The procurement of

these husks will be done by the units itself. The units may also find extra income by selling the coir pith, the byproduct of the fibre extracting process.

It is planned to start 30 units across the state in the first phase. The main objective is to start Coir Defibering units in association with Kerala Coir Machine Manufacturing Company in all potential Panchayats of Kerala. The end product will be bought back by Coirfed.

The first of its kind was opened in Pariyaram of Kannur District. The programme was officially inaugurated by Dr. T.M Thomas Issac, Minister for Finance, Government of Kerala. The programme aims to secure job & income for Kudumbashree women and thereby strengthen the coir sector. The expert NHG women in this area therefore can make use of their free time in a fruitful way and can find income out of it.

It's regarding the acceptance for the coir products in other countries and for improving the use of the same, that Kudumbashree Mission framed this programme.

Preference would be given to those who wish to start micro enterprising units and who make high quality coir and value added products from this fibre. It is also planned to start units which would produce floor mats, door mats, aquarium filters and coir geo textiles.

The first phase activities had already been started in different panchayaths of other districts and this would undoubtedly attract more women to this sector and thereby the coir products would get maximum promotion.

## **Coir Producing units set up in Kannur**

Kannur District Mission had been implementing the programme in the district with utmost importance. Having the potential enough to scale up, the programme is progressing gradually but systematically in the district. Mechanized Coir producing units which had started working in the state would create new job opportunities for Neighbourhood Group women. The expert NHG women in Kannur area had started making use of their free time in a fruitful and effective way and had started finding income out of it.

As a start, the District Mission of Kannur had identified 6 women who had shown willingness to start a defibering unit. The building of the block panchayath was availed for them and were given subsidy. The coir defibering unit at pariaram therefore started functioning on 13 July 2017. The women themselves found find the coconut husks and the end product would be collected by the Coirfed once 100 bundles are completed. Each bundle should weigh 30 Kgs. For each Kilo of coir, the Coirfed is paying an amount of Rs 17. That means for each bundle they would get Rs 510 each.

Out of the coconut pith, which is the byproduct of coir defibering, the women had started preparing organic manure as well. By setting the coconut pith, urea, mushroom seeds and cow dung in a pit of 4 inch tall, 5m length and 3 m breadth for few days, the organic manure is prepared and is sold at a rate of Rs 10 per kilogram. The technique for making the organic manure out of the coconut pith was provided by the Pepper Research Station, Panniyur.

Given below is the details of the number of bundles supplied by the women of the Coir Defibering units so far and the amount received from Coirfed regarding the same:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of Bundles Supplied</b>	<b>Amount Received</b>
July 2017	Nil	Nil
August 2017	990 Kg	Rs 16,830
September 2017	1720 Kg	Rs 29,240
October 2017	2565 Kg	Rs 43,605
November 2017	2550 Kg	Rs 43,350
December 2017	1980 Kg	Rs33,660
January 2018	3000 Kg	Rs51,000
February 2018	Nil	Nil
March 2018 ( Till 6 March 2018)	3000 Kg	Rs 51,000

The defibering units are enabling the women to use their time in a fruitful way and have started generating income out of it. The team had availed Rs 2 lakh prior to the start of the unit and now each one has got an amount of Rs 27,000 of their own. They are investing their savings in the enterprise itself to scale up the unit to more heights.

The support extended by Kannur District Mission for developing the coir defibering unit had been immense. It is notable that the coir defibering unit set up at Kannur is being a replicable model to many!