



A CASE STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS OF COIR INDUSTRY IN KERALA

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Abstract:

Coir industry is a traditional agro based industry in Kerala which provides employment opportunities and helps in earning foreign exchange. This study attempts to examine the socio economic profile of the people working in coir industry and also the problems faced by the coir industry. 80 respondents were selected using convenient sampling method. Both primary and secondary data was used for the study. The study revealed that the coir industry in Kerala faces many problems but still there is a potential for growth and expansion.

Introduction

India is the largest coir producer in the world accounting for more than 80 per cent of the total world production of coir fibre. The coir sector in India is very diverse and 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 7.00 lakh persons of whom a majority is 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. Historically, the coir industry started and flourished in Kerala which has a long coast line, lakes, lagoons and backwaters providing natural conditions required for retting. However, with the expansion of coconut cultivation, coir industry has also picked up in Tamil Nadu, 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.

Statement of the Problem

Coir industry in India is an agro-based, village and cottage industry which is affected by a large number of problems in the form of labour material, machinery

and finance. These problems may affect the growth and development of the coir industry. Further, it has great opportunities for investment, employment, production, workers, technology, marketing, productivity, profitability and earning more income. Therefore, an attempt is made in the study for indicating various problems faced by the coir industry.

Objectives

1. To study the socio- economic profile of the workers of coir industry.
2. To understand the problems of coir industry in Kerala.

Research Methodology

Source of data: Primary and secondary data was used for the study. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire. Secondary data is collected Secondary data was collected from Annual Report of Coir Board, Kerala Economic review, publications of Kerala State Coir Corporation, National Coir Research and Management Institute, Central Coir Research Institute and several journals and books available in print and web sources.

Sample Size: 80 sample was selected using convenient sampling method.

Data Analysis and Interpretations: Percentages, averages and tables have been used for data analysing and interpretation.

Review of Literature

Vijayachandran Pillai(2003) in his article “Government agencies and coir co-operatives in Kerala” compared the performance of coir units in the co-operative sector with their counterparts in the private sector by taking into account the six variables— return on investment, capacity utilization, average annual production, average number of workers employed, average annual man-days of employment and average annual sales. He stated that all these six variables were found to be better in the private coir sector.

Dr. K. Ramamurthy, G. Brintha K. Kanimozhi. (2013) had coir exports facing challenges of first, the quality of coir products is often difficult to maintain because of the very natural and availability of raw materials like fibre, yarn, dyes and chemicals. Besides the production infrastructure in India is obsolete and often in dilapidated

condition. Second think is inadequate, ready- to- use information keeps the manufacturers mostly running small units, ignorant of the market conditions and consumer preferences. The third on of major problem is the coir industry faces today is the inadequate R&D efforts for product development and diversification.

Srimannarayana (2006) after conducting a study in small business units of the Adityapur Industrial Area located at Jamshedpur of Jharkhand State in his article titled –Human Resource Management in Small Business observed that the small units did not have formal Human Resource Management policies in place, but they did have Human Resource Management practices which were characterized by the respect of recruitment and selection, training and performance appraisal, informality and flexibility on finding the constraints and opportunities of small business units.

Findings:**Socio- Economic Profile**

Variable	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	36	45
Female	44	55
Age		
Below 30	15	19
30-45	14	17
45-60	35	44
Above 60	16	20
Educational Qualification		
Primary	28	35
High School	30	37
Higher Secondary	19	24
College	3	4
Marital Status		
Married	64	80
Unmarried	16	20
Number of members		
2	5	6
3	27	34
4	29	36
Above 4	19	24
APL/BPL		
APL	75	94
BPL	5	6
Annual Income of		

family		
Less than 1,00,000	57	71
1,00,000-2,00,000	23	29
Other Source of Income		
Yes	15	19
No	65	81
House Owned/Rent		
Yes	70	88
No	10	12
Borrowing to meet daily expenses		
Yes	59	74
No	21	26

(Source Primary Data)

Others Findings

1. The coir industry creates some health problems for the workers, mainly 60% of back pain, 33% have allergies and Asthma and remaining 7% have other health problems.
2. Lack of government support and financial issues are the main problems haunting the coir sector. Drying of fibre during rainy season and heavy machinery expenses are some threats faced by the coir industry. The coir industry also faces marketing related issues.
3. Seasonal unemployment also hit the coir sector and workers badly. The major reason for seasonal unemployment is flood related issue followed by lack of demand and the difficulty to acquire raw material for production.
4. 82% of workers revealed that January-march is the high yielding time for the coir sector and july-august is the worst period.
5. Most demanded coir products are ropes, yarn, mats and fibre.

Suggestions

1. There should strong support from the government and other institution to ensure easy availability of finance and raw materials for production. Measures needs to be taken to make the industry reliant.
2. Since majority of the employees are females in this sector establishment of Mahila banks can improve their thrift behaviour.

3. Conducting melas and exhibitions can help to increase the popularity and demand of coir products.
4. There is a potential international market for coir products that needs to be exploited.
5. Measures must be taken to provide financial assistance for medical and educational purposes through co-operatives.
6. Use of modern production and marketing technologies can help to reduce the cost of production.

Conclusion:

Coir industry is a traditional agro based industry in Kerala. There is a large population depending solely on this industry to earn their daily earning. Eventhough the industry faces severe hindrances like lack of raw materials, difficulty to raise finance, high cost of production and flood related issues there is a great scope for flourishing. Coir products are of great demand in international market which needs to be exploited.

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