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Popular Article

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Coconut Farmers Trained to Operate Tree Climbing Machines

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The coconut palm is referred to as ‘Kalpavriksha’ – the ‘tree of heaven’ as each and every part of the palm is useful in one way or the other. As per the latest statistics available (2022-23), the annual coconut production in India is 21.28 billion nuts from an area of 2.27 million hectares with an average productivity of 9018 nuts/ha. India ranks third in area and first in production of coconut in the world. The four southern states viz., Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are the major coconut producing states in India, accounting for more than 90 per cent of the area and production. In view of Andhra Pradesh coconut production is about 15.67 billion nuts from an area of 1.11 million hectares with an average productivity of 14,019 nuts/ha. Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh majorly growing coconut is about production 0.23billion nuts from an area of 14,383 hectares with an average productivity of 16,000 nuts/ha. East Coast Tall is the predominant variety in Uddanam area of Srikakulam district. Coconut farmers producing good yields but facing problem with harvesting of coconut trees due to its height and difficulty in climbing and harvesting, getting the services of skilled climbers in time and their high wage are thus perceived as important constraints. With this background Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Amadalavalasa approached Coconut Development Board (CDB), Vijayawada and Cochin for vocational training programme on coconut climbing to create skill to rural youth on climbing with tree climbing machines. A good number of vocational training programmes entitled “Friends Of Coconut Tree” were organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Amadalavalasa, Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, collaboration with Coconut Development Board, Vijayawada since 15 years. Farmers were trained to operate coconut climbing machines through hands on session which would minimize the labour cost and help farmers in quick harvesting. During training period, every day the trainees made to undergo Jogging for half an hour and training on Yoga and breathing exercises to create physically and mentally concentrate on training. Practical sessions on coconut climbing were taught by master trainers to trainees on with different heights viz., 10, 15, 20, 30, 35, 40 feet. Theory sessions on coconut production, protection, harvesting, communication skills and banking

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related lectures delivered with guest speakers during the six days programme. As part of training programme field exposure visit was conducted for trainees to cover the aspects of drip irrigation and intercropping with cocoa and Coconut based value addition factory, Govindapuram. Coconut tree climbing Olympics conducted on final day of training to test the learning capability and given rewards for the winners for the encouragement.

Trainees feedback before training:

The trainees feedback was taken orally and they expressed that the coconut trees are very tall in height, difficult in climbing and harvesting nuts and fall can result in severe injury. Injuries associated with coconut tree climbing, particularly fall from coconut trees are common in coconut plantations of Andhra Pradesh. The workers employed for climbing coconut tree suffer musculoskeletal disorders than any other type of injury or illness.

Trainees feedback After training:

The trainees expressed that the coconut climbing machine is time saving, simple and safe and reduced the harvesting cost. The device was so designed to attract the youth and non-traditional coconut climbers to take up coconut harvesting as vocation. The small farmers with few numbers of coconut trees or having bund plantations were very happy to harvest nuts by their own by using this simple device.

Photographs



Coconut trainees at Krishi Vigyan Kendra Amadalavalasa, Srikakulam



Palm Climbing Practice





Palm Climbing Practice



Group photo with trainees



Coconut palm climber

