

Preface

Sustaining of rural workforce through sustainable employment generation in the rural areas is a challenging task for the state government if it were to prevent to some extent, rural-urban migration. Therefore, government's budgetary support through various grants and programmes has been highly prioritised for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) to reinforce them for continuous employment generation as well as value addition from locally-available natural resources. The coir industry is categorised under small and village industries, which continues to have high potential for value addition to raw coconut apart from being instrumental in poverty alleviation through employment generation for economically weaker sections, particularly rural women. However, coir industry continues to suffer from lack of modernisation and technology upgradation to meet the changing demands of the market. Recognising both weakness and its contribution to economic growth of rural areas, the budgetary support has been extended by the state government, particularly for modernisation and technology upgradation. Consequently, these industries have embarked upon a modernisation drive under both state government budgetary grant and Kaigarika Vikasa Yojana. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these programmes continues to pose challenges in order to address adequately, the ability for employment generation, resource use efficiency, sustained production, marketing and long-term sustainability. In this context, the evaluation study on the performance and effectiveness of the implementation of various programmes in various coir production centres was undertaken. The data collected and analysed in the study are from secondary and primary sources of implementing agencies; coir production centres and village beneficiary households, spread over 15 coir production centres in 9 largest coconut growing districts of the state.

The major findings of the study are:

1. Although the coir production centres have high potential to produce more output and generate more employment opportunities for the rural poor, owing to poor planning and weak implementation of various programmes by KSCDC, the coir production centres were unable to realise the set objectives.
2. The performance of coir industry continues to suffer despite technology upgradation and infrastructure development mainly due to the lack of economic incentives to managers and workers at coir production centres, which largely resulted in work inefficiency and low capacity utilisation of capital assets.
3. Various central and state programmes/schemes implemented in various coir production centres had little impact on employment generation and value addition to natural resources.

4. Continuous demand for coir products, both at national and international market, had failed usher in effective tapping of the market opportunity because of poor marketing strategy in a deepening and expanding market.
5. The corrective measures for improving the performance of CPCs, which continue to act as instruments for rural poverty alleviation, have been suggested in the report.

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