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## Suggested extension strategies for enhancing coconut production of east Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh

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**Abstract**

Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) originated in Indo-Malayan region is one of the most important commercial horticultural crops. It is often regarded as KALPAVRISHA, "The Tree of Heaven" as each and every part of the tree is useful for the mankind. It occupies a prominent role in moulding the social livelihood of people of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. The district tops in area and production of coconut in the state. The present study deals with the extension strategies suggested by the coconut growers needed for enhancing the production and marketing. During the study, majority of the respondents suggested the strategies like direct marketing (71%), labour availability (67%), better transport facilities (63%), mechanization (58%), better remunerative prices (51%), providing financial subsidies (49%), promoting extension activities (47%), providing processing and storage facilities (43%) for enhancing coconut production.

**Keywords:** Suggestions, extension strategies, east godavari district, coconut growers

**Introduction**

The coconut palm which is commonly recognized as KALPAVRISHA, botanically known as "*Cocos nucifera*" is economically very important horticultural plantation crop. It provides a variety of products like copra, tender nuts, coconut water, coir, shell-based products, fuel, toddy and coconut leaves are used for roofing and thatching purposes in rural areas. It is a complete rich food with many calories, vitamins, and minerals. A medium-sized nut carrying 400 g edible meat and some 30-150 ml of water may provide almost all the daily-required essential minerals, vitamins, and energy of an average-sized individual. Coconut is an important commercial plantation crop in India. Over one crore people in the country are dependent on coconut for their livelihood. Globally India ranks third in the area of coconut after Indonesia and Philippines and first in production and productivity. In India more than 90% of the total coconut production is from four major coconut growing southern states i.e., Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In this context it is stated that coconut is an important cash crop as well as crucial in shaping social livelihood of people of India and Andhra Pradesh. This research paper provides some suggestions stated by the farmers that can enhance the production of coconut.

**Methodology**

An ex-post facto research design was used for conducting this study. The State of Andhra Pradesh was selected purposively for the present investigation as it occupies fourth place in the country in area and production of coconut superseding the top three states in productivity. The district of East Godavari was selected purposively as it ranks first in area and production of coconut in the state. The district has 7 revenue divisions namely, Amalapuram, Etapaka, Kakinada, Peddapuram, Rajamahendravaram, Ramachandrapuram and Rampachodavaram with 65 mandals. These mandals consist of 1,374 villages. The research under reference was carried out taking one revenue division out of seven available in the East Godavari district of A.P. The selection of the particular revenue division was also made with the same assumption that it occupies first place in terms of area and production of coconut. Altogether there were 65 mandals in the district out of which the present study has been carried out in two mandals

namely Ainivilli and I.Polavaram mandal based on the similar criteria as adopted in the selection of the district. Further four villages two from each mandal were identified based on the same assumptions. They were Chintanalanka, Madupalle from Ainivilli mandal and Pasuvullanka and Yedurulanka from I. Polavaram mandal. A total of 100 coconut growers were randomly selected from all the four villages. 25 from each village were drawn as the sample of the study. The data was collected using a well-structured interview schedule in personal interview mode. The collected data was analyzed using frequency analysis and percentage analysis. Figure 1 depicts the sampling procedure adopted.

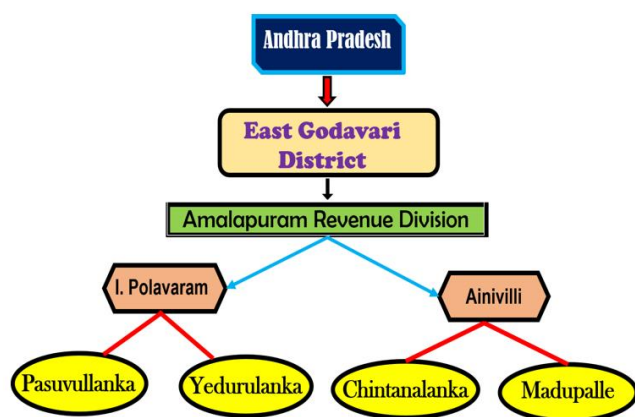


Fig 1: Sampling Procedure

## Results and Discussion

The respondents opined different suggestions during the course of study that increase the coconut production and also aid in maximizing their profits. The obtained suggested extension strategies as given by the respondents were ranked according to their frequency and presented here through the table 1 given below:

Table 1: Suggested extension strategies for enhancing coconut production

S. No.	Suggestion	Frequency	Rank
1	Transport	63	III
2	Direct Marketing	71	I
3	Labour Availability	67	II
4	Promoting Extension activities	47	VII
5	Processing and storage facilities	43	VIII
6	Financial Subsidies	49	VI
7	Mechanization	58	IV
8	Better Remunerative prices	51	V

The selected respondents during the study suggested some strategies for improving coconut production and its marketing practices. The frequency of each strategy as suggested by them was analyzed and ranked according to its occurrence. Among all the items suggested, direct marketing of coconut was ranked first with a frequency of 71 followed by labour availability with a frequency of 67. Transport facilities and mechanization occupied 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> ranks respectively in order of importance for enhancing the coconut production and also receiving the profits as opined by the respondents.

There were no direct marketing facility or local markets available for marketing the harvest in the study area. Hence, maximum number of growers were selling the harvested nuts of coconut to middlemen and were getting low returns. However, the middlemen buy the nuts from the farmers at

lower price and sell them at higher prices to the consumers. The margin of the middle men in marketing was very high and the marketing channels were so long which creates impediment in producer's share in consumer's rupee. It was put under loss to both producers and consumers. So, majority of growers opined that direct marketing to consumers or processing units or government co-operatives without involvement of any middlemen would help to increase their economic returns. They also opined that they need more labour as the inavailability of labour during the peak need is high and they are forced to pay large wage rate to the existing labour to make their activity done.

The majority of the respondents were facing extreme problem of marketing in the study area. There were no nearby markets available and no transportation facilities to access the distant markets. The markets situated in Amalapuram and Ambhajibeta area which are far away and difficult in terms of accessibility of the coconut growers from the selected villages. The selected respondents were in urge of better transport facilities as the infrastructure facilities of the village which were very meagre and mostly the roads were laid with mud clay which on arrival of rains become slippery and hard to move with the harvested produce. There were no pucca roads which provide smooth and safe travel of the harvest from the produced area to market place. So, they were opined that transport facilities should be enhanced to aid easy buying of inputs and marketing of output.

The respondents also opined that mechanization mainly for harvesting were required to substantiate labour scarcity during peak period. The labour requirement in coconut prevails almost every month for harvesting the nuts and there was inadequacy and scarcity of the labour available as majority of them were attracted towards MGNREGP and the labour available were not acquainted with the techniques of climbing the coconut palm and harvesting the nuts which when performed without proper technique is often risky and may become even a life threat. Hence, majority of the farmers opined mechanization should be brought to aid in harvesting of coconuts. Palm climbing devices developed by various institutions should be provided with subsidy so that it will be affordable to coconut growers of all categories including marginal and small farmers.

The respondents also felt that remunerative price fixed by the government should be increased in order to get more economic returns. The Government should also render its helping hand in providing financial subsidies, and establishing processing and storage structures. The extension activities like field visits, demonstrations, trainings should be carried out for enhancing the knowledge and skill of the coconut growers related with different cultivation practices. Extension agents should give equal preference coconut growers along with farmers cultivating field crops.

The suggested strategies if implemented would certainly help in enhancing the economic conditions of the growers involved in coconut farming and also encourage other farmers to opt for coconut cultivation. Hence suggestions given by the coconut growers as evident from the findings of the study are to be deeply analyzed by the administrators, policy makers, extension personnel, and officials to implement the required strategies and enhance the production of coconut and income of the coconut growers.

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